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## **The Gentleman, the Tradesman, the Patriarch and the Rake: The Different Types of Masculinities in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*\***

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### **Abstract**

This thesis aims to provide a thorough analysis of the masculinities portrayed by the four selected male characters of Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. First, based on the articles of Hobbs (2013) and Reeser (2020), the concepts of hegemonic and alternative masculinities as introduced by the work of R.W. Connell are explained. Second, the construction of masculinity in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as their reception in contemporary society are the topic of discussion, with the intention of providing a historical background for masculinity during Austen's lifetime. Stafford's (2008) article on the late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine* is used for this discussion, and Cohen's (2005) work on masculinity in the same time. Finally, an analysis is conducted on the characters of Mr. Darcy, Mr. Bingley, Mr. Bennet, and Mr. Wickham. This analysis will vary depending on the characters, since they all portray different types of masculinities thus the focus of the chapters will differ as well. This is conducted with the application of scholarly arguments to each character, combined with a close reading of *Pride and Prejudice*. Lastly, the conclusions of Stafford's (2008) study of the *Gentleman's Magazine* is used to evaluate the masculinity of the four men selected. Mr. Darcy's analysis is based on his role as a gentleman, Mr. Bingley as a tradesman, Mr. Bennet as a patriarch, and finally, Mr. Wickham as a rake.

### **1. Introduction**

“It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife,” as it asserted in the very start of *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen 2020, 3). This sentence alone implies the sentiment of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, which as Sharma (2021) explained, to some extent, includes the commodification of men. Sharma goes on to say that whenever Austen introduces a male character, she does so starting with his fortune, and consequently, men are reduced to their financial background, and other aspects, such as their character remains unappreciated (Sharma 2021). Sharma proposes that Austen is indeed aware of the commodification of men that was prevalent in the time period *Pride and Prejudice* was written (Sharma 2021). However, I suggest in agreement with Sharma, that while it may be true that Austen commodifies men in *Pride and Prejudice*, I do not agree with Sharma's assertion that the personalities of the men are less developed because of this, as there is much to be said about how they individually represent the popular themes of contemporary masculinity.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in England encompassed many important events, such as their war with France, and the French Revolution, both of which greatly influenced the country's history and contemporary society. Amongst a myriad of responses to both of these events, a shift in gender roles and definitions occurred, which act as the basis of our modern understanding of them. In terms of masculinity, as noted by Cohen (2005), politeness, even though still prevalent, was replaced by the notion of chivalry. As in every society at every given moment in time, there are preferred, and less favored notions of masculinity, and the late Georgian period is

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\* BA Thesis. Supervisor: Anna Zsófia Tóth.

no exception. The preferred notions of masculinity are encompassed by the term of hegemonic masculinity, whereas the less preferred are termed as alternative masculinities. In order to gain information on what these hegemonic and alternative masculinities consisted of during the late Georgian period, Stafford's (2008) analysis of the contemporary *Gentleman's Magazine* will be of help.

Therefore, in this thesis, I aim to discover the notions of masculinity that Mr. Darcy, Mr. Bingley, Mr. Bennet and Mr. Wickham each represent, and how those fit in the context of the late Georgian period in England in which *Pride and Prejudice* is set. In Chapter 2, Mr. Darcy's masculinity will be analyzed based on him conforming to the ideal gentleman described by Edmund Burke, and will include discussions of his social standing as the landed gentry. While contemplating the masculinity of Mr. Bingley in Chapter 3, important topics, such as his emerging from England's new middle class as a tradesman, and his training to perfect his performance of English polite masculinity are not to be omitted. Mr. Bennet's irony and his love of ridiculing the social conventions around him, as well as him assuming the role of an indifferent father and a patriarch incapable of completing his duties in connection with his masculinity will be discussed in Chapter 4. Lastly, in Chapter 5, Mr. Wickham's schemes of a reckless fortune hunter, whose goal to secure a wife with fortune is facilitated by him joining the militia is going to be analyzed based on how it affects his masculinity. The analysis will be conducted on each character with the combination of close reading of *Pride and Prejudice*, which will provide evidence to the arguments made by a variety of different scholars. The edition of *Pride and Prejudice* that I will be using is the ninth reprint, which is a version of the edition first published in 2014 that was published in 2020.

## 2. The Construction of Masculinity: Hegemonic and Alternative Masculinities

The concept of masculinity in the field of masculinity studies has undergone quite a transformation with the groundbreaking work of R.W. Connell, who introduced the term of hegemonic masculinity in the 1980s. In this chapter, I intend to provide an overview and comparison of both the articles of Alex Hobbes and Todd W. Reeser in order to explain the terms of hegemonic and alternative masculinities and how they interact with one another.

R.W. Connell introduced the term of hegemonic masculinity during the 1980s with the intention of reforming an older definition of traits connected to the "male sex role," as explained by Hobbes (Hobbes 2013, 385) in her article entitled "Masculinity Studies and Literature". Reeser (Reeser 2020, 20) in his work of "Concepts of Masculinity and Masculinity Studies" cites the description of hegemonic masculinity defined by Connell as "a question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance." The introduction of the term acknowledged that there were many masculinities, not only one, which, based on a common thought at the time, defining gender as a binary (Hobbes 2013, 385). Reeser (Reeser 2020, 21) claims that this signifies the shift in the field of men's studies from studying a single masculinity, to the acceptance of multiple ones. However, even though scholars were slowly accepting of the coexistence of multiple masculinities at the time, the traits of "homophobia, power and dominance over women" still prevailed amongst men (Reeser 2020, 14).

Reeser (Reeser 2020, 13–14) also discussed the "male sex role," and added they were thought to be essential for the human psyche and the psychological development of a person. He elaborated that even though they were seen as innate, a need imposed on humans by a supernatural entity, these sex roles were, and are, learned behavior (Reeser 2020, 14). According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity defines the most accepted and celebrated characteristics and attributes of a man at a given time in history, and men's masculinity is evaluated against that hegemonic masculinity, as Hobbes discusses Connell's arguments (Hobbes 2013, 385). Hobbes (Hobbes 2013, 387) elaborates

that hegemonic masculinity is always evolving in accordance with the culture and society that surrounds it, as well as its definitions based on Connell's description. It is also emphasized that most men do not, in every way, act according to the hegemonic masculinity at a given time in history, however, they "benefit from it because it reinforces the patriarchal divide" as well as reinforcing the notion of viewing gender as a binary (Hobbes 2013, 385). As hegemonic masculinity is considered the dominant type of masculinity, the other alternative masculinities are described as inferior to it (Hobbes 2013, 386). Reeser (Reeser 2020, 21–22) emphasized that the relationship between hegemonic and alternative masculinities, as well as the definition of hegemonic masculinity are always in the process of changing with the evolution of gender.

In conclusion, R.W. Connell defined hegemonic masculinity as "a question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (Reeser 2020, 20). Furthermore, alternative masculinities consist of characteristics that do not align with those of hegemonic masculinity, and are inferior to their hegemonic counterpart. Both notions of masculinity are capable of evolving over time, and their definitions vary from culture to culture.

### 3. Masculinity in the Regency Period

In his article "Gentlemanly Masculinities as Represented by the Late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine*", William Stafford (Stafford 2008, 47) aims to describe the different types of gentlemanly masculinities, which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* between 1785 and 1815. He examines the masculinities based on texts sent by readers, and published by the magazine (Stafford 2008, 47). The magazine was a monthly periodical published during the eighteenth century, aimed at upper-class men of Great Britain (Stafford 2008, 47). Stafford discusses claims made that gender between 1785 and 1815 underwent a reconstruction because of the French Revolution and the war between France and Britain, in addition to an onset of gender panic, both of which he examined. He makes it clear that this article alone based on the findings from *Gentleman's Magazine* is not a representative of all the masculinities of that time, but it does display a wide variety of them (Stafford 2008, 47).

The readers of the magazine are said to be "clergymen and academics, medical men, lawyers, officers in the armed forces, town and country gentlemen, a few entitled persons," in addition to "professionals, merchants, financiers and even some traders, manufacturers and farmers" (Stafford 2008, 49). Stafford concludes that most of the magazine's readership consisted of loyalist and conservative and Anglican men (Stafford 2008, 50). A gender panic of men and masculinity due to French influence is thought to have occurred in this period (Stafford 2008, 51). However, Stafford (Stafford 2008, 53) argues based on the content of the magazine that there was still opportunity for a more effeminate expression of masculinity, as masculinity was institutionally secure.

To provide an example, the obituaries found in the magazine mention men by their full name, but women appear only in relation to someone, mainly a male relative, but never by their names (Stafford 2008, 52). Furthermore, men are described as public persons, their roles explained within the patriarchy as head of the household, as leaders who hold power over those below them, while women are typically private beings (Stafford 2008, 53). Masculinities in the magazine such as a man who is logical, reasonable, possesses stoicism and fulfills his role as a patriarch is praised, meanwhile men, albeit usually young, who abandon their patriarchal responsibilities, are impolite and have qualities of a libertine are perceived negatively, as are those who behave in a barbaric and aggressive manner (Stafford 2008, 59–60).

During the early nineteenth century, the definition of a gentleman transformed, which affected how masculinity was described as well (Cohen 2005, 312) Be that as it may, there is scarcely an agreement amongst historians in terms of the reason behind the change, much less about what con-

stituted the new definition of masculinity and gentleman (Cohen 2005, 312). Cohen (Cohen 2005, 312) points out that there are several definitions of gentlemen described by historians, however, in the eighteenth century, a “polite and refined gentleman” (312) constituted hegemonic masculinity. Cultural tools, such as “conduct manuals, moral literature, popular periodical essays like the *Spectator*, and educational ideals and practices” (Cohen 2005, 313) reinforced the polite gentleman as a hegemonic masculinity (Cohen 2005, 313). Although with politeness came the fear of effeminacy, it was considered an art form, as self-control was a key element of polite conduct, which aligned with the classical notion of stoicism (Cohen 2005, 313). As it was mentioned above as well, the *Gentleman's Magazine* highlights that stoicism among gentlemen was a celebrated trait, (Stafford 2008, 59–60) which Cohen also stated (Cohen 2005, 313).

When polite society collapsed at the end of the eighteenth century, a change in regards to how masculinity and gentlemen were described had occurred as well (Cohen 2005, 313). The previous notion of politeness was slowly replaced by chivalry, as chivalry was less prone to cause worry of effeminacy on the part of men, and it combined “national identity with enlightenment notions of progress and civilization” (Cohen 2005, 15) (Cohen 2005, 314–315). Many were inclined to find chivalry preferable due to “generosity, justice and courage” (Cohen 2005, 315) having been associated with it, although many different definitions of chivalry that coexisted at the time, and we cannot reduce it to just one, Cohen emphasizes (Cohen 2005, 15–16). The reappearance of chivalry is connected to the Gothic Revival in the nineteenth century, and it possessed characteristics such as love of women, “bravery, loyalty, courtesy, truthfulness, purity, honor, and a strong sense of protection towards the weak and oppressed,” (Cohen 2005, 326) which were arguably more masculine traits than those associated with politeness (Cohen 2005, 325–326). In spite of the preference of chivalry over politeness, performing chivalry in superfluous amounts resulted in uncertainty (Cohen 2005, 321).

In conclusion, the construction of masculinity has experienced a transformation at the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This transformation included the preference of chivalry over politeness, although overlaps of the two notions were present. Although some historians argue that during this period, a gender panic occurred, Stafford's work provides evidence that masculinity as an institution was secure, since in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, men were afforded their full names as well as their professions, but women did not receive the courtesy of their being used, they were only referred to by their husband's name. More accepted performances of masculinity included the fulfillment of patriarchal roles and carrying oneself with a logical, stoic manner, and libertine, irresponsible masculinity was not as well liked.

#### 4. Character analysis

##### 4.1. Mr. Darcy: The Ideal Burkean Gentleman Improved

In this chapter, the masculinity of Mr. Darcy will be discussed. I will attempt to argue that even though Mr. Darcy does in many aspects conform to the ideal of Burkean masculinity that was prevalent in the Regency period, and even though he fits into the category of hegemonic masculinity, he is not as chivalric as Burke would prefer. Mr. Darcy is the ideal gentleman in that he has generational wealth, heritage and property, and even though for that he is admired, that is not enough for Elizabeth. However, his willingness to improve his character definitely helps him in coming closer to Burke's ideal gentleman, and even exceeding it. Mr. Darcy is capable of self-reflection, which allows him to correct his manners as he grows increasingly aware of the limitations of nineteenth century English society and its rules of conduct, and with this realization, he is able to grow as a person, and consequently enrich his hegemonic notion of masculinity.

The majority of Jane Austen's characters in *Pride and Prejudice* illustrate England's construction as a society in the early nineteenth-century, it is only natural that Mr. Darcy should fit this pattern (Hamilton 2008, 5). Mr. Darcy portrays how hegemonic masculinity was constructed and performed in a patriarchal society in the nineteenth century, which was based on positioning men in the forefront, and women in the background, by his behavior and character (Hamilton 2008, 5–6). He is the ideal English gentleman as theorized by Edmund Burke, which romanticized a "man of ancestral heritage; he is noble, well mannered, and upholds the majesty and tradition of his Pemberley estate that symbolizes his aristocratic lineage and grounds his cultural authority" (Kramp 2007, 74). This reference to ancient Greeks, as mentioned above in the late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine*, expresses a preferred type of masculinity over others (Stafford 2005, 59–60). Kramp (2007) additionally describes Mr. Darcy as someone who possesses discipline, as well as "virile yet genteel, romantic yet responsible" (74) therefore further expressing the ideal Burkean masculinity.

Although Kramp (2007, 74) categorizes Mr. Darcy as a Burkean gentleman, Malone adds that there are instances, when Mr. Darcy does not act as a chivalric man of gentility (Malone 2010, 75). For example, he does not wish to engage in dancing at the ball at Meryton, in addition to him acting hurtful towards Elizabeth when he first proposes to her (Malone 2010, 75–76). Upon Mr. Darcy's introduction in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen explains that during his first appearance at the Meryton ball, even though he is considered a "fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien" (2020, 8) at first, the public's opinion of him transforms into dislike once "he was discovered to be proud" (8) and his "disagreeable countenance" (8) were revealed. Thus, it is apparent that Mr. Darcy might have a "large estate in Derbyshire," (8) his manners are too unforgivable for the people at Meryton, for he cannot be redeemed yet (Austen 2020, 8). Mr. Darcy's unchivalrous behavior further continues when aside from one or two exceptions, he refuses to dance at the ball, since he "detest[s] it" (9) and he does not engage in conversation with anyone other than his group, and lastly, he does not wish to be "introduced to any other lady" (8) (Austen 2020). Based on this evidence, I agree with Malone (2010, 75–76) in that Mr. Darcy does not elicit all that is the Burkean ideal masculinity, as he breaks the chivalric code on numerous accounts which is a crucial aspect of said masculinity.

As opposed to the other male characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy is the true embodiment of the country gentleman (Hamilton 2008, 20–21). Although untitled, he is part of the landed gentry due to his upper class upbringing and generational wealth, which was "ten thousand [pounds] a year," (Austen 2020, 8) he was provided a thorough education, was well read, and those around him treated him with the utmost respect, as Austen described, "he was looked at with great admiration" (8) (Hamilton 2008, 21–22). Precisely because of his high social standing, he is also in possession of information and means to solve a difficult situation in a fast manner, such as the affair of Lydia Bennet and Mr. Wickham (Hamilton 2008, 22). Once Elizabeth had shared the treacherous news of Wickham and Lydia fleeing to London from Brighton with Mr. Darcy (193), it was only a matter of time that he "came to town [London] with the resolution of hunting for them" (226) (Austen 2020). Since Mr. Darcy viewed this obstacle as his responsibility to solve, as he kept Mr. Wickham's true colors concealed, he sought after Mrs. Younge in London, Miss Georgiana Darcy's former governess, whom was "intimately acquainted with Wickham," (226) and with the help of "bribery and corruption" (226) he was able to locate Lydia and Wickham (Austen 2020). That Mr. Darcy should have this valuable information is a further indicator of his portrayal of hegemonic masculinity, as men "view having information as a form of hierarchy" (Hamilton 2008, 22).

In addition to treating him with respect they thought was due, they considered him as an example to follow, as did Mr. Bingley, since Darcy was a person with authority due to his excellent upkeep of his property of Pemberley (Hamilton 2008, 22), which will be discussed later. Alistair Duckworth in his monograph entitled *The Improvement of the Estate* discusses that Pemberley holds an

immense amount of value in that it has all the qualities of an estate in prime condition according to the judgement of Jane Austen, which Duckworth described as “beautiful trees, well-disposed landscapes, a handsome house, and finely proportioned rooms” (2020, 123). Duckworth suggests that when Elizabeth travels to Pemberley with her aunt and uncle, it is expressed that “she felt that to be the mistress of Pemberley might be something!” (Austen 2020, 171), it indeed might mean that she understood not simply the monetary value of the estate, but that having such a magnificent home as Pemberley indicates a good “moral character” (124) as argued by Duckworth (2020). Hamilton further discusses Duckworth’s analysis of *Pride and Prejudice*, explaining that according to Duckworth, an estate’s structure is indicative of other structures, such as “society as a whole, a code of morality, a body of manners, a system of language – and ‘improvements,’ or the manner in which individuals relate to their cultural inheritance” (Duckworth, cited in Hamilton 2008, 33). Building on Duckworth’s argument, Hamilton engages with the work of Juliet McMaster (1998) by stating that Pemberley is supposed to indicate Mr. Darcy’s personality, and that it is a “visible manifestation of his masculinity” (33) and it is a symbol of his position in the landed gentry, as well as symbol of his “patriarchal right of inheritance” (Hamilton 2008, 34).

Hamilton explains that the pride Mr. Darcy elicits in *Pride and Prejudice* is an expression tied to his conformity to hegemonic masculinity, as Darcy is proud of his heritage and of his responsibility to guide society around him in a positive direction (Hamilton 2008, 28). An example of Mr. Darcy’s pride would be his reply to Elizabeth at Netherfield: “Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed. But pride – where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be always under good regulation.” (Austen 2020, 42). This sentence reveals that Mr. Darcy does indeed believe that feelings of pride and superiority are justified if they are true, although one can wonder, what constitutes their being true. Masculinity was represented by families with generational wealth and property, whose ancestral and economic standing granted them power over the state (Hamilton 2008, 27–28). Mr. Darcy’s sense of pride and honor, originated from his heritage and the hegemonic mode of masculinity as a product of it, suffers the most when he is confronted by Elizabeth (Hamilton 2008, 28–29). Elizabeth does not believe Darcy is behaving in an honorable manner in regards to her, which is equivalent to him not abiding by the social code he prides himself on upholding (Hamilton 2008, 30–31). Darcy’s first proposal to Elizabeth perfectly encompasses both his pride and his breaching social decorum by openly admitting that Elizabeth is inferior to him.

He spoke well, but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority – of its being a degradation – of the family obstacles which judgement had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit. (Austen 2020, 135)

Although Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy is aware that he is expected to act as a gentleman and his responsibilities as a patriarch, he still acts in a derogative manner towards Elizabeth, and emphasizes her inferiority (Hamilton 2008, 31). According to Hamilton, this behavior reveals how Darcy, someone adhering to hegemonic masculinity truly considers women to be below him, and as a group, he has control over (31). As Rothman explains, Darcy believed that due to his social and economic standing as a patriarch, his proposal could never be refused, as it would be a blessing in the eyes of “any woman of subordinate status” (Rothman 2011, 22). Whilst proposing to Elizabeth the first time, Mr. Darcy reportedly “had no doubt of a favorable answer” (135) and “his countenance expressed real security,” (Austen 2020, 135) which highly indicates that due to his (justified, in his opinion) pride, as Rothman (2011, 22) argued, he was perfectly sure that Elizabeth would marry him, as he saw himself as superior to her.

Therefore, Elizabeth's refusal humbles Mr. Darcy's pride, and he has to come to the realization that he may be a gentleman by birth and class, his manners are not yet akin to one, which results in him bettering himself in order to rise to Elizabeth's standards (Rothman 2011, 22–23). Mr. Darcy admits to Elizabeth "[M]y behavior to you at the time had merited the severest reproof. It was unpardonable. I cannot think of it without abhorrence..." (Austen 2020, 259), and with his aforementioned chivalric actions of saving Lydia and the Bennet family's reputation shows that he has indeed changed and took Elizabeth's criticism seriously. Darcy goes on to explain, "I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. As a child I was taught what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper." (Austen 2020, 260) which means that he is capable of self-reflection and is able to recognize his faults and the shortcomings of his upbringing. His improvement of his manners results in him eliciting more chivalric behavior, which contributes to his development as a gentleman (Rothman 2011, 24). Aside from Mr. Darcy having to realize his manners do not match those of a gentleman, he is also confronted with having to reconsider his social standing and power as part of the landed gentry and a patriarch, which in turn facilitates his union with Elizabeth (Sharma 2021). That Elizabeth was the reason for his change of character is apparent when he confesses to her, that "[b]y you, I was properly humbled... You showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased." (Austen, 2020, 260). Although the patriarchal hierarchy that Mr. Darcy was born into, and wishes to continue was founded on unequal distribution of power, he is still capable of attaining self-awareness in order to overcome the restrictions of the rules that the class of landed gentry, and his hegemonic masculinity have imposed upon him (Hamilton 2008, 42–43).

In summary, Mr. Darcy's masculinity does match the Burkean ideal masculinity in that he comes from generational wealth, is part of the landed social class, and he assumes the position of a leader in many instances, such as helping Mr. Bingley become a proper English gentleman, and solving the difficult situation of Lydia Bennet and Mr. Wickham and fulfilling what he deems as his duty. Mr. Darcy's magnificent estate of Pemberley is also an emblem of his heritage and contributes to his hegemonic masculinity. However, he is only able to fully act as a gentleman when Elizabeth humbles him, upon which he chose to reflect and correct his pride and the selfish manner due to which he grows as a person, and his Burkean masculinity becomes more complete in that he starts behaving in a more chivalrous manner.

#### 4.2. Mr. Bingley: The Journey of a Tradesman Becoming an English Gentleman

This chapter will elaborate on Mr. Binley's masculinity. Mr. Bingley's social standing as a tradesman who has recently acquired money is an interesting aspect in regard to the masculinity he performs. Since he was not born with the knowledge of how an English gentleman should act, he is indebted to Mr. Darcy's authority on this topic. Darcy, with his ancestral heritage teaching proper masculinity to Bingley, who is part of England's emerging middle class, will be of emphasis during this chapter.

As it was mentioned before, Jane Austen's characters are products of their time in British history. Michael Kramp, a professor who specializes in masculinity studies and nineteenth century British literature and the author of *Disciplining Love: Austen and the Modern Man*, argues that most of Austen's work is a reflection of the society and time period that she lived and created in, therefore *Pride and Prejudice* is no exception to that (Kramp 2007, 17). Kramp explains that most European nations underwent a transformation during the Revolutionary period, which resulted in the modernization of concepts such as nation, gender, class, etc. (Kramp 2007, 18). Kramp also notes that during the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, the English nation also progressed into its modern form (2007, 18). At this time, which marked a period of social and economic renewal, "political, philosophical, and literary writers" (18) were producing a myriad of arguments

about gender roles of both men and women, which consequently resulted in multiple descriptions of ideal men and masculinity (Kramp 2007, 18).

In addition to the advancements occurring due to the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution was also a catalyst of change at the end of the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the nineteenth century (Kramp 2007, 19). An emerging middle class was now present in English society, constantly threatening the pre-established power of the landed upper class nobility, whilst widening the horizon of possibilities available for advancing in society for those not part of said nobility (Kramp 2007, 19).

Both topics of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution and their consequences on the British nation's society and economy constitute a significant part of Jane Austen's novels (Kramp 2007, 17). In her work, male characters are subject to the results "socioeconomic transformation," and provide answers to the aforementioned arguments on the topics of gender roles during the late eighteenth century (Kramp 2007, 17). In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen focuses on the topic of the shifting of power from nobility to the emerging middle class, and England moving away from relying on agriculture to a more industrious production in terms of economy (Kramp 2007, 76). When discussing masculinity portrayed by Mr. Charles Bingley, it is necessary to include discussions of such "socioeconomic transformations," (17) as it is highly intertwined with his character (Kramp 2007, 76-77). The socioeconomic background of *Pride and Prejudice* in connection with the new gender roles is crucial to understanding the type of alternative masculinity Jane Austen presents us in the person of Mr. Bingley, as argued by Kramp (2007, 77).

Slothouber (2013, 61) explains that Mr. Bingley can easily be mistaken for a gentleman at first glance, as Austen states that he "was good-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners." (Austen 2020, 8). However, as more information is revealed about him, whether or not he really is a gentleman becomes ambiguous (Slothouber 2013, 61). When Mr. Bingley arrives at Meryton, it is explained that he is temporarily residing at Netherfield Park, has a considerable amount of income, him and his sisters have the means to afford travelling by coach are all important financial aspects of being a gentleman (Slothouber 2013, 50). As Austen explains, the inheritance of Mr. Bingley is "...nearly a hundred thousand pounds from his father, who had intended to purchase an estate, but did not live to do it." (Austen 2020, 12), which explains how he can afford to live such a luxurious life. Furthermore, Jane and Elizabeth discuss that Bingley's inheritance was "acquired by trade," (Austen 2020, 12) as Slothouber (2013, 60) also notes, and is not the product of money accumulated throughout many generations, such as the case of Mr. Darcy. Slothouber explains that since Bingley does not have property, he is not descended from the landed gentry, although he did inherit 100,000 pounds from his father. Therefore, the Bingley family (Mr. Bingley and his two sisters, Caroline and Louisa) are new to money, and as it was mentioned earlier, their father expressed intention to buy property, but he passed away before he could (Slothouber 2013, 51).

Slothouber also adds that the Bingleys are "from the north of England," (Austen 2020, 11, as cited in Slothouber 2013, 51) which was a highly industrious part of the country at the time, and although it is never mentioned in *Pride and Prejudice*, according to Slothouber (2013), there are a number of academics who believe Mr. Bingley's father to have had connections to the cotton industry. Since their father managed to attain wealth, Mr. Bingley and his sisters were considered part of the gentry, even though their transition was incomplete, as there were matters that they could not settle due to the rapid rise from one social class to another, such as "possessions, manners, and confidence" (Slothouber 2013, 56). One could also argue that the Bingley sisters received an education, which could point to them wanting to achieve a better their social standing, as Austen writes, "[the sisters] had been educated in one of the first private seminaries in town..." (Austen 2020, 11). Kramp (2007) explains that Mr. Bingley is now part of "England's emerging middle class," (75) and he intends to advance in society and better himself, for which his choice of tutor

is none other than Mr. Darcy (Kramp 2007, 75). The Bingley family wanting to reach a higher social standing, I argue, is also apparent in Austen's description of the Bingley sisters, who "[...] were in habit of... associating with people of rank, and were therefore in every respect entitled to think well of themselves [...]," (Austen 2020, 11) as this would suggest that they were social climbers who were aiming to solidify their place in the higher ranks of society.

Kramp (2007) argues that in *Pride and Prejudice*, the transition of society and economy, and the new definitions of gender roles of both men and women as it was mentioned above, is a thoroughly explored topic (17). Austen portrays how the ancestral landed gentry forms a relationship, and ultimately guides the middle class by the relationship of Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley (Kramp 2007, 76). Their friendship is described by Austen as "... a steady friendship, in spite of great opposition of character," (2020, 12) and as "on the strength of Darcy's regard Bingley had the firmest reliance, and of his judgement the highest opinion." (12), meaning that Bingley did look at Darcy as a trusted tutor, and relied on his opinion very much. Mr. Darcy, as part of the landed gentry with generational wealth, tries to tutor Mr. Bingley on how to perform traditional English masculinity, but no matter how much progress Bingley achieves, he can never truly become an equal to Darcy, as explained by Kramp (2007, 76). Kramp (2007) argues that even though men of trade, like Bingley, can have important contributions to their society, they cannot assume the leading roles of the English nation in terms of "moral and social development," (76) since their "historical class status" (76) prohibits them from doing so, as that is reserved for the landed gentry, such as Mr. Darcy, and the nobility. Therefore, in Kramp's opinion, since Mr. Bingley can never reach Mr. Darcy's place in society, he can also never fully conform to the Burkean ideal masculinity that Darcy portrays (2007, 76). According to Kramp, historically, men of trade have never been a part of the long-standing tradition of landed gentry, therefore they cannot belong to the "mythologized English national heritage" (76) that Burke described and deemed necessary for the ideal gentleman to have (2007, 76).

Another aspect, which highlights Mr. Bingley's non-traditional masculinity is his lack of books in his leased home, Netherfield Park. As in *Pride and Prejudice*, it is noted by Caroline Bingley, "... that my father should have left so small a collection of books" (Austen 2020, 27), and Mr. Bingley himself admits that he is not in possession of many books (Austen 2020, 27). In comparison, Mr. Darcy's home at Pemberley has a large collection of books, a personal library, that has been amassed throughout the generations of Darcys that have lived at Pemberley, and in *Pride and Prejudice*, this is juxtaposed with the small number of books the Bingleys have (McCann 1964, 69). Upon Caroline Bingley praising the library of Mr. Darcy, he replies "It ought to be good... it has been the work of many generation" (Austen 2020, 27), meaning that he is positive of his library's excellence, since it was accumulated throughout a long period. It was previously explained in the work of Hamilton, that according to R.W. Connell, the amount of information a man has is in direct correlation with his standing in the hierarchy of masculinities (Hamilton 2008, 22). The possession of information translating to value in terms of hierarchy of masculinities is a phenomenon applicable in the case of Mr. Bingley as well. That Bingley should have less books than Darcy also has the possibility to mean that Bingley has less access to information than Darcy does, which leads me to believe that this is another example of Bingley's non-hegemonic masculinity. I theorize that this can also as an additional explanation as to why Mr. Bingley would choose Mr. Darcy as his tutor in traditional English masculinity: due to his enormous amount of information, Darcy is well-equipped to teach Bingley.

As claimed by Kramp (2007), Jane Austen utilizes Bingley's character in that she shows the process of Bingley learning to conform to "Burke's model of traditional male behavior" (77) and that of other contemporary writers, and all the trials and the tribulations that this road to conformity encompasses. Kramp explains that Bingley's persona also acts as a guide to other men akin to him, meaning others from the emerging middle class with newly acquired money, in that Austen emphasizes how members of said middle class need to act in order to play an important

role in their society (2007, 77). Although Bingley's intention is to progress in terms of his family's socioeconomic state, and is working to achieve that progress, he is aware that there are obstacles which he may not be able to overcome, as expressed by Kramp (2007, 77–78). He explains that Bingley only leasing Netherfield is an obstacle of this nature, and his lack of a permanent home, or an estate, which is also what differentiates him from Darcy (Kramp 2007, 78). As it was mentioned before, Mr. Bingley did not inherit an estate from his father, nor has he purchased one by the time *Pride and Prejudice* starts, despite his intention of owning one is being highlighted in the novel, and him being "established only as a tenant" (Austen 2020, 12). Kramp (2007, 78) presents the following dichotomy. On one hand, Pemberley, the Darcys' estate is an ancestral home, which fits in the framework of Burke's ideal English masculinity in that it highlights the importance of a man being a part of the English nation's leading class. On the other hand, Bingley is not the owner of such an estate, and even if he purchased one, it could never have the same value as Pemberley, an ancestral home that was occupied by the Darcys for the duration of centuries prior. Although at the end of the *Pride and Prejudice*, after marrying Jane Bennet, Bingley does become a homeowner, therefore progresses even more in terms of his socioeconomic state, he is still "socially and sexually inferior to Darcy" (Kramp 2007, 82). As Austen explains, Mr. Bingley became the owner of an estate located "in a neighboring country to Derbyshire," (Austen 2020, 272) and his and Darcy's home of Pemberley are quite close to each other (Austen 2020, 272). I argue that this signifies Bingley coming closer to obtaining more qualities of the ideal masculinity that Burke advocated for, since now he has property, and Bingley is also closer to solidifying his social standing as part of the landed gentry.

In terms of social life, in *Pride and Prejudice*, one of Bingley's character traits is that of being easily impressed and pleased by occasions such as balls and other social gatherings, and perhaps his love for Jane Bennet, as explained by Kramp (2007, 78). This easy-going nature of Bingley is present at the Meryton ball as well, as it was mentioned above, in that "he was lively and unreserved, danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early, and talked of giving one himself at Netherfield" (Austen 2020, 8). Therefore, since Darcy acts as a teacher to Bingley, Darcy pays attention to guide Bingley in a way that does not encourage Bingley's impulsivity and impressionability, since those are not characteristics of Burkean English masculinity, and can easily damage Bingley's newly acquired social standing as pointed out by Kramp (2007, 79). That Mr. Darcy would truly be an advisor to Bingley appears in instances such as Bingley's marriage to Jane Bennet, as Darcy is against their union, and because of this, they do not tie the knot until the end of the novel (Austen 2020, 140). In his letter to Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy explains that the reason for diverting Mr. Bingley to another part of the country was that he did not believe Jane to be in love with Bingley, and his fear that she may use him to earn more connections and solidify her future through Bingley's fortune (Austen 2020, 140–141). Elizabeth pokes fun at how much Bingley respects Darcy's opinion, "That is to say, you had given your [Darcy's] permission. I guessed as much," (Austen 2020, 261) noting the amount of influence Darcy's opinion has on Bingley's actions. Kramp (2007) argues that Bingley's manners are also a subject that need Darcy's guidance, as Bingley speaks quite freely and lacks eloquence, which Burke calls for whilst describing ideal masculinity (80).

In summary, Mr. Bingley is an example of the new middle class in England at the time. Because of this, he lacks the traits, which define the ideal Burkean man, who is in possession of both property and ancestral heritage, due to which he is equipped with the according manners. Bingley, in order to achieve a more ideal expression of masculinity, is trained by Mr. Darcy, who as a part of England's landed gentry, is a model to be followed. Whilst tutoring him, Darcy is met with the dangers of Bingley's impressionability and easy-going, somewhat unserious manners, which prove to be a difficulty. By the end of *Pride and Prejudice*, Bingley is significantly closer to the ideal Burkean masculinity, as he has purchased property.

#### 4.3. Mr. Bennet: The Antithesis of a Patriarch

In this chapter, the masculinity of Mr. Bennet will be discussed. Since his primary role in *Pride and Prejudice* is that of a father and a patriarch, the topic of this section is how Mr. Bennet failed to fulfill those roles, and how his failure affects his masculinity. I intend to explore the qualities that were associated with the preferred type of fatherhood between 1750 and 1830, then based on studies on the character of Mr. Bennet, analyze how he does, or more often, does not conform to those traits, and how that appears in *Pride and Prejudice*. These aspects include the ability of Mr. Bennet to provide financially for his daughters, as well as assessment of his role as the patriarch of the Bennet family.

Based on the late Georgian magazine, in his article about the masculinities in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Stafford concludes that men's ideal role in the English society during this time period consisted of fulfilling their roles as patriarchs, heads of households, and were tasked with the responsibility of leading those socially beneath them (Stafford 2008, 59–60). Additionally, Stafford (2008) notes that men who possessed the ability to perform and act according to logic and reason, and who were capable of acting as a patriarch were approved and these expressions of masculinity were preferred as to men who renounced their responsibilities as heads of households (60). The men who renounced their "paternal responsibility" (Stafford 2008, 60) mostly belonged to the younger generation, and qualities such as not possessing self-restraint in regards to their wants and desires, as well as not abiding by socially acceptable polite behavior were associated with them, as Stafford explains. What Cohen described as hegemonic masculinity in the eighteenth century as "polite and refined gentleman," (Cohen 2005, 312) I propose can be connected to what Bailey described as "man of feeling" (Bailey 2010, 271) whilst discussing fatherhood in the late Georgian period (Bailey 2010, 271 and Cohen 2005, 312). Cohen argued that politeness was based on the notion of a person prioritizing not themselves, but others, and its goal was to fulfill the needs of others (2005, 314). Additionally, Cohen also discusses that polite behavior was connected to the domestic sphere, which consequently lead to the fear of effeminacy, since domesticity was typically the space of women, thus the reason that men were increasingly afraid to perform politeness (2005, 314–315). Domesticity is also an aspect of the "man of feeling" (271) as Bailey (2010) explained in her article, characteristics such as "embodied emotion, sensitivity and gentleness" (271) in a "domestic setting" (271) were key constituents of this type of masculinity. Frequently, these preferred traits were accompanied by others, such as "fortitude, stoicism and courage," (272) appealing characteristics of traditional masculinity, as Bailey elaborated (2010). Therefore, one can suggest that fatherhood and the position of head of household are part of patriarchal duty, and fulfilling these roles as a patriarch is a trait of hegemonic masculinity.

Aside from fathers acting as tyrants in their households, a man assuming an indifferent role as a father was not favored in the period between 1750 and 1830 either, as argued by Bailey (2010, 278). An indifferent father acted in a way that placed their children in the background and prioritized other, less crucial aspects of their lives (279). The author also argues that this type of fatherhood was characterized as "unfeeling," (Bailey 2010, 279) in opposition to the ideal "tender paternity" (274) role, which included treating a child with love, caring about their health and schooling all throughout their lives whilst providing the child with "compassion and solicitude" (Bailey 2010, 274). The "tender paternity" (274) as described by Bailey (2010) included further qualities such as "sensitive, moderate, domesticated, devoted to babies and to promoting children's instruction and advancement" (274). In *Pride and Prejudice*, one can argue that Mr. Bennet is a clear example of an indifferent father. Mr. Bennet is aware of his responsibilities as a patriarch and of his role according to the customs of the beginning of the nineteenth century, but he is incapable of fulfilling them, as he is too overwhelmed by them (Burgan 1975, 538–539). His refusal to adhere to these rules and inequalities of the patriarchal hierarchy is portrayed by Austen through his constant use of irony,

especially towards the Bennet family, and his choice to spend most of his time in his library as opposed to actively participating in family life (Burgan 1975, 539). Although there are many, an example of such an instance appears in *Pride and Prejudice* during Mr. Collins' visitation to Longbourn, and Mr. Bennet is very eager to leave his company, so he can retreat to his library (Austen 2020, 52). Additionally, Austen explains that Mr. Bennet even communicated it to Elizabeth, that "...though prepared, as he told Elizabeth, to meet with folly and conceit in every other room at the house, he was used to be free from them there [the library]." (Austen 2020, 52). Thus, Mr. Bennet's uttermost preference to hide among his books from his wife and children is especially highlighted here, which contributes to his passivity as both the head of the Bennet household, and as a father, I argue, in agreeing with the following claims of Burgan. As Burgan in her article claims, since Mr. Bennet is overly focused on these tactics of refusal, he is incapable to live up to both his fatherly and patriarchal duties, and although his irony has a comic function, it is important to note that that is partly the reason of him abandoning said responsibilities, which cannot be overlooked (Burgan 1975, 539–540). There is a myriad of situations in which his love of ridiculing social conventions and those around him is portrayed by Austen, but in order to highlight one, I am going to focus on Mr. Bennet's opinion and attitude towards Mr. Collins during his aforementioned visitation (Austen 2020, 48–50). Austen writes, "Mr. Bennet's expectations were fully answered [after inquiring Mr. Collins about his patroness, Lady Catherine]. His cousin was as absurd as he had hoped, and he listened to him with the keenest enjoyment..." (Austen 2020, 50), which clearly shows how his love for such "ridiculousness," in addition to his refusal to take those around him seriously.

Alistair Duckworth, in his monograph entitled *The Improvement of the Estate* (2020) is an agreement with Burgan, as he states that Mr. Bennet "refuses to adopt the role of the father and landowner" (128). Mr. Bennet mostly comments on what happened around him, pointing out the irony of a social situation, but he never assumes an active role in any of said situations, especially those that are a part of his patriarchal and/or fatherly roles (Duckworth 2020, 128). His refusal of participation may also be aspect of him portraying an indifferent father, since instead of raising his children and ensuring a good future for them financially, Mr. Bennet chooses to hide among his books, where he is free from his responsibilities. Duckworth also points out that while Mr. Darcy's library at Pemberley is a symbol of responsibility, in the case of Mr. Bennet it is the aversion of that (Duckworth 2020, 129–130). Mr. Darcy is aware of his duties as the master of Pemberley and completes them accordingly, and as it was discussed before, he is proud of his library, because "it has been the work of many generations" (Austen 2020, 27), (Duckworth 2020, 129). Mr. Bennet's library, on the other hand is a symbol of avoiding those duties, since he occupies it when he does not wish to be disturbed by the Bennet family (Duckworth 2020, 129–130). Therefore, in order to solidify Mr. Bennet's role as an indifferent father, I am going to provide some examples in which he acts in this manner with his closer family unit, not solely with Mr. Collins. As it is a theme in *Pride and Prejudice*, that Mr. Bennet is constantly teasing his wife, Mrs. Bennet, it is introduced in the very beginning of the novel with Mr. Bingley's arrival in Meryton (Austen 2020, 3–5). Mr. Bennet acted extremely indifferent towards Mr. Bingley's arrival in front of Mrs. Bennet, who was very adamant about arranging a visit in order to ensure the marriage of at least one of their daughters, as well as continuously teasing her about her eagerness (Austen 2020, 3–5). However, it is then explained, that "Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go..." (Austen 2020, 5), which he did not intend to reveal until much later, and even then, he did so with immense teasing of his wife and daughters (Austen 2020, 5–7). Therefore, I propose that Mr. Bennet does so only to fuel his own amusement that he gains by watching his family around him become distressed due to his antics, which further adds to him not acting as a caring father.

Bailey (2010, 279) argues that providing for one's children was also necessary in terms of ideal fatherhood, in terms of having a sufficient income to cover the children's basic needs, as well as emotional care. Bailey cites the *Art of Governing a Wife*, according to which "careful of providing for the house, diligent in looking after his estate, prudent in bearing the importunities of his wife [and] zealous of the education of his children" (Bailey 2010, 279) is what constitutes a "good husband" (Bailey 2010, 279). In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Bennet's thoughtlessness in money matters is apparent, as argued by Hume (2013, 308). His annual income is said to be 2000 pounds, and he has not spared any of it, which is a difficult situation, as Mr. Bennet has five daughters, all of whom he would need to provide dowries for (Hume 2013, 306–307). In *Pride and Prejudice*, it is highlighted that "Mr. Bennet's property consisted almost entirely in an estate of two thousand a year, which, unfortunately for his daughters, was entailed, in default of heirs male, on a distant relation [Mr. Collins], and their mother's fortune..., could but ill supply the deficiency of his." (Austen 2020, 20). Hume (2013, 306) notes that Mr. Bennet is part of the landed gentry, and their estate of Longbourn calls for a number of inside and outside staff for its maintenance, which cannot be omitted when talking about their economic standing. The existence of servants in their household becomes apparent during the dinner between the Bennet family and Mr. Collins, when the latter inquired, "which of his fair cousins is the excellence of its cookery was owing." (Austen 2020, 48), to which Mrs. Bennet replied that they are indeed equipped with a cook in Longbourn (48). Hume (2013, 307) notes that with Mr. Bennet's income resembling that of a baronet's, and the Bennets not having accumulated debt, it appears the household is not as impoverished as one might think. Hume argues that Mr. Bennet discarded his responsibility, and with regret, has not saved any of his annual income, meaning that when he passes, his wife and daughters will be in danger financially, which Mrs. Bennet mentions several times, and is very much a matter of anxiety in the Bennet family (2013, 307). Had there been a son in the Bennet family, who would be the heir to Longbourn, and take on the responsibility of caring for Mrs. Bennet and any sisters whom were still unmarried, the family would not experience such troubles regarding their financial standing, as suggested by Hume (2013, 307).

Fathers offering protection for their daughter in order to save them from suspicious suitors who could potentially threaten their social standing and reputation was deemed an important aspect of ideal fatherhood by contemporary society, as Bailey (2010) explains in her article (282). This notion of protectiveness, and shielding his daughters from the possibility of ruining their reputation, is, however, not a trait or willingness that Mr. Bennet possesses. His handling of and behavior towards the elopement of Lydia Bennet and Mr. Wickham are proof of his thoughtlessness (Burgan 1975, 542) additionally to his incapability to settle money matters in regards to their elopement (Hume 2013, 309). Mrs. Bennet's brother, Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Darcy are the ones able to solve the unfortunate situation, as they organize the wedding of Lydia and Wickham (Kramp 2007, 84–86). As it was discussed before, in her letter to Elizabeth, in regards to the settlement of the marriage between Lydia and Wickham, Mrs. Gardiner admitted in secrecy that it was Mr. Darcy who provided the financial background for the elopement (Austen 2020, 225–229), which one could argue, would be the responsibility of Mr. Bennet. Mr. Darcy was also generous enough as to give money to Wickham that acted as the dowry of Lydia (Austen 2020, 227), which instead of discussing with Mr. Bennet, he chose Mr. Gardiner as his confidant (Austen 2020, 247). Mr. Darcy's reasoning behind not choosing the person who is truly responsible for Lydia and the reputation of their family, Mr. Bennet, was the following: "He did not judge your father to be a person whom he could so properly consult as your uncle..." (Austen 2020, 227). Darcy's argument may indicate that Mr. Bennet's irresponsibility is not unknown to those around him, in fact, it is possibly something associated with his character. Therefore, Burgan (1975, 543) states that since Mr. Bennet could not fulfill the role of the family's protector and figure of authority, Mr. Gardiner assumed it instead of him, helping the Bennets avoid deterioration of their socioeconomic status.

Hume (2013, 309) emphasizes that aside from Mr. Gardiner acting as the head of the Bennet family, Mr. Darcy is also a vital part of the equation, since he pays Wickham's debts as well as providing Lydia a dowry, which Mr. Bennet, her own father, was not able to help Lydia with, as it was mentioned above. Upon hearing that Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Darcy have handled the situation, Mr. Bennet exclaims if it were Gardiner, who paid for the marriage and the dowry, Mr. Bennet would be obliged to pay him back, although Hume (2013, 309) questions how he would intend to do that.

In this chapter, Mr. Bennet's inadequacy of fulfilling his role as a patriarch and as a father were the topic of discussion. Firstly, the expectations of fathers and patriarchs in the late Georgian period were explained, based on which Mr. Bennet was concluded to be an indifferent father, as he chose not to be involved nor in the life, nor the future of his daughters. Instead of acting according his role as a caring father, he opted to live in the safe confines of his library, as he did not have to be constantly confronted with the fact that he could not live up to the expectations of a patriarch if he did not see the consequences of his actions. Mr. Bennet also failed to provide dowries for his daughters, a situation that caused an ever-present distress for Mrs. Bennet, who was desperately trying to marry off her daughters in order to ensure a secure future for them, and instead of helping her, Mr. Bennet only worsened their situation by his irony and love of ridiculing those around him. Lastly, that Mr. Gardiner had to overtake the role of the patriarch of the Bennet household instead of Mr. Bennet himself, should equate to him finally losing every shred of dignity he ever associated with his position as the head of the household. Even though Mr. Bennet is conscious about his retreat from the world of responsibilities, as well as all that expected of him and the stress that accompanies them, additionally to his failure, these should not redeem him. In conclusion, in terms of completing the entirety of the duties as head of the household and succeeding as a patriarch, which based on what Stafford's article analysis of the *Gentleman's Magazine* found was the most acceptable form of masculinity, Mr. Bennet does not fit this criteria, therefore he is not part of the hegemonic masculinity ideal.

#### 4.4. Mr. Wickham: A Libertine in the Militia

The masculinity of Mr. Wickham is going to be the topic of discussion in this chapter. Since the persona of the rake and Wickham's position in the militia are both important factors of his masculinity, I would like to elaborate on those aspects. Wickham is a fortune hunter, whose irresponsible gambling forces him to find new ways to bring fortune to his name by marriage. Therefore, he enlists in the militia, which grants him the ability to construe a new personality for himself and the opportunity to social climb. Even though his masculinity is not that preferable due to his being a rake, Mr. Wickham still manages to secure a good future for himself, through twisted events.

Since the persona of a rake is integral to understanding the character of Mr. Wickham, I want to provide a quick overview of the definition of a rake, its traits and its origin. As Mackie (2005) notes, the figure of the rake, which is strictly masculine, is connected to the English Restoration, during which period this type of masculinity attained the title of a "culturally mythic outlaw" (Mackie 2005, 129). According to Mackie, criminality and sexually indecent behavior are also a part of a rake's persona, which contribute to his definition as an outlaw (Mackie 2005, 129). During the 1660s and 1670s, Mackie also explains, the figure of the rake was highly popular in terms of its portrayals in theatrical settings and literature, however, the over the course of the succeeding two centuries, his persona received immense attack (2005, 131). This basis of this attack was that of the emergence of a "polite masculine ideal," (131) to which the romanticized criminality of the rake and his alleged gentlemanliness could not compare with, as pointed out by Mackie (2005, 131).

According to Stafford's (2008) study on the *Gentleman's Magazine*, it is clear that the consensus on men, who portray qualities of a rake, or a libertine, are judged negatively (60). Rakes were thought to behave in a manner that did not align with their patriarchal responsibilities alongside being

impolite, Stafford claims (2008, 60). As it was mentioned above, Mackie explains that the masculinity of the rake was competing with the persona of a polite gentleman, who, as it is described in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, is the more ideal masculinity in terms of the Georgian period (Stafford 2008, 60). Whereas the masculinity of a gentleman who performed his duties as patriarch, had the skills of logic and stoicism received a positive evaluation, the irresponsible rake did not (Stafford 2008, 60). Based on R.W. Connell's framework of hegemonic and alternative masculinities which was elaborated on in the works of Hobbs (2013) and Reeser (2020), the polite gentleman who conformed to the responsibilities expected of him in a patriarchal society can be interpreted as the hegemonic masculinity, and the rake, who rebelled against the expectations set for him, can be considered an alternative masculinity.

As a part of his mask, Mr. Wickham does in fact appear to act in a gentlemanlike manner during the beginning of his appearance (Bittner 1994, 77). Upon his arrival as part of the militia in Meryton, he is thought of as a gentleman with pleasant manners accompanied by good conversational skills, and quite charming (Morgan 1975, 58). Austen introduced the character of Mr. Wickham as "...he had all the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure and a very pleasing address" (Austen 2020, 52), as well as "The introduction was followed upon his side by a happy readiness of conversation – a readiness at the same time perfectly correct and unassuming" (Austen 2020, 52–53). The latter quote was highlighted by Morgan as well, in order to emphasize Wickham's seemingly perfect first impression, which in actuality does not reflect on his "qualities or nature" (Morgan 1975, 58) merely his "looks and manners" (Morgan 1975, 58). Agreeable indeed, he even manages to extend his likability to Elizabeth, whom he manages to fool with his fabricated persona, as in reality, Wickham is a "fortune hunter" (Morgan 1975, 59). That Wickham's primary incentive is to amass fortune by marriage is made clear by Wickham himself, after having run away with Lydia Bennet, which is presented below (Austen 2020, 227).

Mr. Darcy asked him why he had not married your sister [Lydia] at once. Though Mr. Bennet was not imagined to be very rich, he would have been able to do something for him, and his situation must have been benefited by marriage. But he [Mr. Darcy] found, in reply to this question, that Wickham still cherished the hope of more effectually making his fortune by marriage in some other country. (Austen 2020, 227)

Therefore, it is illustrated by the quote above that Mr. Wickham's plan all throughout *Pride and Prejudice* was to achieve financial security by marrying someone with more fortune than him, and he was ready to abandon Lydia because her father could not provide a good enough dowry in Wickham's eyes. I thus agree with Morgan's assertion that Mr. Wickham is a "fortune hunter," (Morgan 1975, 59) since even Wickham himself explicitly explains it. He invents an entirely new personality, which functions as a tool for him to win the approval of the people in Meryton, and acquire a bride with good fortune (Morgan 1975, 60). During their time together in Meryton, Wickham engages Elizabeth in conversation, and he begins to talk about Mr. Darcy to her (Austen 2020, 56). He acts in a very innocent manner at first, sharing with her that since he has known Darcy since birth, it would not be very proper of him to disclose what he thinks of him, as it would be extremely partial (Austen 2020, 56). However, as the conversation progresses, Wickham finally reveals his opinion of Darcy to Elizabeth by explaining:

'I cannot pretend to be sorry', said Wickham after a short interruption, 'that he or that any man should not be estimated beyond their deserts, but with him I believe it does not often happen. The world is blinded by his fortune and consequence, or frightened by his high and imposing manners, and sees him only as he chooses to be seen.' (Austen 2020, 57)

Thus, by stating that Mr. Darcy is not necessarily who he claims he is, Wickham alludes that there is a side of Darcy that not many have a knowledge of, but makes it clear that Wickham is in possession of such information. Wickham then finally shares the distorted tale of their conjoined past, concluding that it was Mr. Darcy who committed offense against him when removing Wickham from the will of Mr. Darcy's father after his passing, which he is greatly hurt by, but adds that he would be open to receiving an apology from Darcy (Austen 2020, 57–58). After detailing his misfortune caused by this event, Wickham does indeed gain the sympathy of Elizabeth (Austen 2020, 59), therefore succeeding at curating the reputation of an innocent, unfoundedly wronged man.

Aside from his immoral behavior and personality based on lies, Mr. Wickham's gambling activity also contributes to his rake persona (Burgan 1975, 60). Even after arriving in Meryton, Wickham is adamant on leading an irresponsible life, frequently gaming, thus acquiring a considerable amount of debt, because of which he often travels out of town (Wilson 2004). Sharma also argues in her 2021 article, much like Morgan, that Wickham has a reputation of searching for wives with good fortune, both for assuring a life without financial troubles for himself, as he is not part of the landed gentry, and to finally pay his debt he amassed over the years. His behavior of attempting to seduce Mr. Darcy's sister, Georgiana, who is in possession of a large fortune to run away with him, therefore providing him with the means to achieve economic stability, is an example of Mr. Wickham's search for wealthy wives that Sharma (2021) enunciated. Wickham's role of a "fortune hunter" (Morgan 1975, 59) as it was argued by Morgan previously is present in his intentions with Miss Darcy as well. In his letter to Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy readily provides the whole truth about Wickham's character and past to her, and thus revealing Wickham's true intentions (Austen 2020, 143–144). Darcy explains, that "About a year ago, she was taken from school, and an establishment formed for her in London, and last summer she went with the lady who presided over it to Ramsgate; and thither also went Mr. Wickham, undoubtedly by design..." (Austen 2020, 144). He also informed Elizabeth that Wickham seduced his sister, and managed to persuade her to elope with him, and had Darcy not surprised them with his unexpected presence, the marriage would definitely have happened (Austen 2020, 144). Finally, Wickham's reason for seducing Georgiana is without a doubt, is access to her fortune, which was "thirty thousand pounds," (Austen 2020, 144) as well as "the hope of revenging himself on me [Mr. Darcy]" (Austen 2020, 144). However, despite Wickham's unsuccessful endeavors, he becomes freed from his debts, although due to a series of unfortunate events. After an excursion to Brighton with his regiment, on which Kitty and Lydia Bennet accompany him, he compromises Lydia, and they consequently run away together (Bittner 1994, 77–78). Sharma argues that Wickham's seduction of Lydia was not due to him wanting her fortune, but rather an irresponsible act driven by his sexual desires, because he is hesitant about marrying Lydia, as she is without fortune (Sharma 2021). This claim of Sharma would be in agreement with that of Morgan's (Morgan 1975, 60). As it was mentioned before, due to Mr. Bennet's economic irresponsibility, he did not provide his daughters a dowry, therefore Lydia did not have one, making her an unfit candidate for Wickham's criteria. Despite Wickham not wanting to marry Lydia, in order to save Lydia's reputation, Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Darcy arranged the elopement, and Mr. Darcy paid Mr. Wickham's debts, relieving him of his responsibility (Bittner 1994, 78).

In this section of the analysis of Mr. Wickham's masculinity, my aim is to provide information about how Wickham's profession as a soldier affected his masculinity. Therefore, before analysis, I want to provide a brief historical explanation of the British militia and its perception during the late Georgian period, in order to offer context for how it was portrayed in *Pride and Prejudice*. For this, I will use the article of Tim Fulford's article, "Sighing for a Soldier: Jane Austen and Military Pride and Prejudice" published in 2002, which will explain the facts as follows. The end of the eight-

teenth century marked Britain's war with France due to colonial conflicts, which coincided with the period in which Jane Austen lived and wrote (Fulford, 2002, 153). Due to the war, the militia was present again in Britain, with the goal of protecting the nation from potential danger from the French (Fulford 2002, 154). The landed gentry were tasked with the responsibility of creating and assuming leadership of the regiments in their vicinity (Fulford 2002, 155). Even though their purpose was to protect Britain, with their fashionable uniforms, they acted as a source of entertainment and amusement for the nation (Fulford 2002, 155). As the war progressed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the militia was now stationing everywhere in Britain, and its responsibilities consisted of training, marching from one location to another, and attending various social gatherings (Fulford 2002, 156). In some parts of England, the officers did not enjoy a decent reputation due to them requiring too much funding and their indecent sexual behavior, however, it is important to mention that the soldiers did have the possibility to climb the social hierarchy, which was not common in Regency England (Fulford 2002, 156-157).

Fulford argues that since Mr. Wickham was assigned to serve in a different part of England than his home allowed him the freedom to curate an entirely new personality and past for himself, as he was now an officer, one whose true colors were protected by the uniform he was wearing (2002, 157). I agree with Fulford due to the fact that Wickham's ploy of marrying for fortune was to be carried out in a manner that included shielding his real past from the inhabitants of Meryton, which was only possible because his person was unfamiliar to those around him. As Fulford explains, Wickham was in the militia, for which no one was required to ever have fought on in a battle, and to own land in the vicinity of their assigned regiment, and that is what gave soldiers the opportunity to move away from their potentially troublesome past, which was the case of Wickham (2002, 157). Aside from granting the right for soldiers to social mobility, the militia never even partook in the important battles for the English nation, the real heroes who fought battles fortuitously were enrolled in the navy, and this certainly did not help the public opinion of the militia, as Fulford further elaborates (2002, 157). The militia was also famous for their "sexual and financial corruption" (Fulford 2002, 159), which added further to their already tainted reputation (Fulford 2002, 159). Fulford claims that in *Pride and Prejudice*, the aforementioned morally corrupt ways of the militia was highlighted as it spread to the countryside (2002, 164).

Fulford also highlights that "the militia officer can no longer see what it is to be a man," (2002, 172) since at one point in the novel, the militia is nonchalantly playing dress-up with Lydia, which results in feminization of the soldiers and endangers their masculinity (2002, 172). Fulford (Fulford 2002, 172) also quotes the scene in *Pride and Prejudice* in which Lydia and Kitty "dress up Chamberlayne in women's clothes on purpose to pass for a lady..." (Austen 2020, 156) Lydia describes the event as "only to think what fun," (Austen 2020, 156) and tells of her amusement when the other soldiers appeared, including Wickham, whom had no idea it was their fellow colleague dressed as a woman (Austen 2020, 156). This provides evidence of Fulford's description of the militia as a source of entertainment for the people around them, as they were likely to participate in foolish acts without considering their reputation (Fulford 2002, 159).

To conclude, in this chapter I have discussed the following points in regard to Mr. Wickham's masculinity. Mr. Wickham's personality of a rake was elaborated on, since he has the typical qualities of one, such as his constant gambling and large debts, which can be connected to the rake's criminal activities. In addition to this, Mr. Wickham reinventing himself in order to avoid the consequences of his actions, and trying to gain fortune by preying on women with money are also important parts of his masculinity. The militia allowed him to continue with his irresponsible acts, and even though he succeeded in the end, his masculinity with its overarching qualities of the rake is definitely not something that the contemporary society would approve of, as it is apparent in *Pride and Prejudice*.

## 5. Conclusion

In this thesis, my main objective was to analyze the different types of masculinities of the characters of Mr. Darcy, Mr. Bingley, Mr. Bennet and Mr. Wickham from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, as well as to find out whether their masculinities belonged to preferable, or less preferable performances of masculinity in their time. In order to carry out the analysis, I have used the work of Reeser and Hobbs to explain the terms of hegemonic and alternative masculinities. I have also incorporated the work of Stafford and Cohen to provide examples of both acceptable and less acceptable masculinities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in England. With this theoretical background, I have examined the masculinities of Darcy, Bingley, Bennet and Wickham. Since their characters are vastly different, and they portray different aspects of masculinities in the late Georgian period, the focus varies from chapter to chapter. The importance of this research is that it covers a wide variety of expressions of the features of hegemonic and alternative masculinities in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, while providing the historical context of said masculinities.

Chapter 2, discussions of Mr. Darcy's proximity to fully embodying the Burkean ideal masculinity, and his categorization as the hegemonic masculine ideal in *Pride and Prejudice* were carried out. His generational wealth, his social class as the landed gentry and his assuming leadership positions in many instances, as well as his estate of Pemberley contribute to Darcy's portrayal of hegemonic masculinity. However, when Elizabeth humbles him, due to which he corrects his pride and shows growth, his manners improve as well, therefore comes even closer to the ideal masculinity that Burke described.

In Chapter 3, Mr. Bingley's masculinity was elaborated on with special attention of the fact that he represents England's new middle class in the late Georgian period. Since he is newly come into money, Mr. Darcy helps him act accordingly to the standards of a proper English gentleman. Bingley's carefree nature and his affinity to pleasure, however, is an obstacle that needs to be overcome for him to conform to Burke's ideal masculinity. By the end of the novel, Mr. Bingley has come significantly closer to this ideal, since he is settled with a property.

In Chapter 4, Mr. Bennet's role as both a patriarch and a father were studied, and how they reflected on his masculinity. He proved to be an indifferent father, since he always hid in his library, as he wanted to avoid his fatherly responsibilities that he knew was incapable of completing. Mr. Bennet's callous attitude resulted in the lack of dowries for his daughters. He also lost his role as the head of the household when he was unable to settle the elopement of Lydia and Wickham, his wife's brother had to act instead of him. Due to the abandonment of duties as a patriarch and careless behavior, Mr. Bennet cannot be considered to elicit hegemonic masculinity.

In the final chapter, I have discussed the masculinity of Mr. Wickham. His characterization as a rake included amassing debt and irresponsible sexual conduct. Wickham's end goal was to gain fortune by marriage, and in order to achieve that, he joined the militia, which gave him the opportunity to continue his attempts. Although he does reach his goal, his methods are highly unapproved of by those around him, and his masculinity is definitely not held in high regard.

Limitations of the analysis of the four men in regard to hegemonic and alternative masculinities are the following. The aim of this thesis was to carry out research of the four aforementioned characters and suggest their categorization of hegemonic or alternative masculinities based on their historical background. However, it does not provide a complete examination of all of their traits that can be connected to their masculinity, and can be regarded as incomplete in this sense. It focuses on the most important aspects of masculinity based on the character. Furthermore, it does not contain analysis of all the men of *Pride and Prejudice*, so it would also call for completion concerning this. In future research, the two previously stated points can be expanded upon.

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