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„Images and Counter-Images of the Ideal Woman in Jane Austen's Major Novels"

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List of Abbreviations

MP: Mansfield Park

PP: Pride and Prejudice

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1. Introduction

English society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was rooted in patriarchal ideology. Women, in such a society, were not equal to men. A society rooted in patriarchal ideology understands that men are responsible for taking care of the family, meaning that they are the ones who bring the bread to the table, and women are responsible for domestic life. Men rule over the political and working aspects of life, while women are responsible for the children and home. Therefore, social classes of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century society valued paternalistic authority. Patriarchal ideology "teaches" society the differences between men and women and places emphasis on men being the pillars of society. As such, women are believed to be inferior to men, and they are seen as easily manipulated. Until girls grow up, they are under their father's rule, i.e. their fathers are the ones who make decisions for their daughters and take care of them financially. When they become adults, and if they want to become "independent," women have to get married. As Elizabeth McElligot argues, women's main role in the English society was to marry and to take a position in a husband's home (80). Women had very little economic freedom in patriarchal society in England. They did not have to get married by law; however, as "[a]n unmarried woman [she] could become a governess, but this [was] a position beneath the social rank and status of middle and upper class young women and thus [was] regarded as humiliating" (Swords n.p.). Therefore, to retain social rank, women were supposed to get married.

Jane Austen lived and wrote her works in a patriarchal society. During her lifetime, there were written rules aimed at young women regarding how to behave appropriately on varying occasions. A highly popular genre that discusses such themes is known as conduct literature. One wonders then, what kind of picture Jane Austen portrays in her works – what are the characteristics of an ideal woman of this period and did such women even exist? How does Jane Austen portray ideal women and their counterparts? To understand the answers to these questions, it is necessary to investigate written pieces of the period that discuss conduct and what the characteristics of an ideal woman were.

This thesis focuses on three of Austen's novels: *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Emma* (1816). These novels have been chosen because they feature a common portrayal of behaviour and manners. There is a correlation between Austen's novels and the writings of conduct literature. In order to determine which characters possess ideal or counterideal female qualities, the analysis of Austen's works will rely on theoretical works of her period, namely, conduct literature. James Fordyce and John Gregory, the authors of two

conduct writings, *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) and *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774), stress the importance of manners and the behaviour of young women. Their idea of conduct as a recurring image will be explored in this thesis. Austen's novels will not be analysed in order of their publication. Each chapter will feature the concept of ideal or nonideal images presented by female characters which are shared by all the analysed novels.

The first chapter after the introduction will be devoted to the definition of conduct literature in general, conduct literature in Jane Austen's time, and its teachings. The aim of this chapter is to review the characteristics of proper behaviour which Austen incorporated into these three novels. Furthermore, the chapter will examine the works of moralists of the period, James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* and John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*. Their works form the foundation of the ideal woman in the nineteenth century. Even though they were written in the eighteenth century, they were widely read in Austen's time, and even Austen herself mentions Fordyce's *Sermons* in one of her novels, *Pride and Prejudice*. Beside proper conduct, education and accomplishments were an important part of a young woman's life; their influence played a major role in a family's life from the time that girls were born.

The next chapter focuses on the analysis of female characters, along with descriptions of their relationships with other characters. The characters will be examined to see how they relate to the ideal the moralists write about and whether they adhere to the given advice. In three novels, Austen presents various models of women in order to expose the ideal that people believed existed. Each section examines a female character and how she fits the ideal described in conduct books. Some characters deviate from the described ideal more than others, and some do not. *Pride and Prejudice* deals with the themes of behaviour and personal development, while *Mansfield Park* presents the battle between proper and improper behaviour. *Emma* exposes the impossibility of obtaining the characteristics of the ideal female. Thus, this chapter will be divided into three sections describing the characters of all three novels and how close they come to the notion of the ideal woman.

The first section examines two characters, Fanny Price and Jane Bennet, who are most likely to be seen as ideal women. The next section describes women who, for the most part, present characteristics of almost being an ideal woman. However, depending on the situation in which they find themselves and what kind of information they dispose of, they display, what would be considered in that society, their flaws. The last section belongs to women who do not adhere to the moralists' advisories. Some women present thought-provoking behaviour which is, on the one hand, tolerable due to their position, whilst on the other hand, is looked down upon.

There are several issues that are important when analysing the characteristics of an ideal woman and the counter images. Whether any of the characters portray the nature of an ideal woman or not is to be viewed through their accomplishments, their behaviour, their manners, and in the end, even through their relationships with one another. In the end, this thesis will demonstrate how far or how close Austen's female characters come to the notion of an ideal woman as described by Fordyce and Gregory.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Conduct literature

Jane Austen's world is governed by different societal rules which are imposed upon the characters in her novels. The societal rules tell how the characters are supposed to behave in certain situations and relationships with/towards other people. The rules dictate what is considered to be ideal in every society. Therefore, the rules of the eighteenth-century English society dictated what was considered perfect or ideal in their country. Those rules which define the picture of an ideal woman were usually written down in conduct books.

Conduct books became even more popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially with a rise of the middle class in England. With the rise of the middle class and a new culture of sociability in public spaces, people moving up the social scale had to learn new modes of behavior when in contact with either the opposite sex or the same. It was a time when the society experienced the rise of the novel as well. The rise of the novel as well as conduct books gave way to the ideas of what made a woman desirable (Armstrong introduction). In other words, conduct literature drafted a model of womanhood which defined the ideal woman of the time (Armstrong 63). Furthermore, *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age* defines conduct books as books on female conduct which were "giving advice on the proper behavior of ladies, and the disciplines for forming the moral character of young women and girls […] They promulgated a conservative ideology of women's subordination and dependence, and presupposed family and religious sanctions […]" (Barbour n.p.). Many conduct writers used religious writings as their starting point for rules which women should apply in their lives.

Conduct books were not the only books that influenced women at the time but a new type of books, namely novels had influence over women's behavior. As already mentioned, the emergence of novels was of great value for conduct literature. Katie Trumpener argues that novel reading "trains women to draw inferences from details, parse interactions, fathom unspoken conversational subtexts, assess character, develop social intelligence, and make informed marital choices" (444). Contemporary novelists of the period believed that novels were good for their readers; novels were supposed to have a moralizing effect. However, many critics did not agree with it. They claimed that the novels had the opposite effect. On the one hand, conduct books were seen as authoritative pieces on human behavior, and on the other hand, novels were seen as fictional works that did not portray the reality people lived in.

Nevertheless, both types of books were read, and they influenced readers' thoughts and beliefs of what is proper behavior and what is not.

The focus of conduct writing is the individual, which, when looked at a bigger picture, would lead to the influence over families, and in the end the proper conduct (written down in the books) would influence the whole society. In their books, conduct writers instruct women on manners and behavior. Conduct literature was meant to help women to improve their own character. However, the improvement of the character is cultivated for the good of women's future husbands rather than their own good. Conduct writing results with the concern of women being in the public eye. One could say that writers of conduct books "control" people's private lives, especially over women and their conduct in society. The conduct of daughters in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a reflection on families and thus it was important for the girls to act appropriately in order not to bring an embarrassment and ruin on their family and its members. Mary Poovey claims that conduct books were "directed primarily to the middle classes and [were] intended to educate young girls (and their mothers) in the behavior considered 'proper,' then 'natural,' for a 'lady'" (15). When girls are old enough for a public outing, they should know how to behave in a public eye so that they do not embarrass their family.

Young women are a part of the male gaze once they enter the public eye. Women are abstracted into perfect and almost impossible virtuous beings by the male gaze because most of the conduct writers were men. Even though there were also female writers of conduct books, the male writers were more popular at the time. Conduct books represent a very traditional, patriarchal family which was typical of the period (*Eighteenth Century Literature* n.p.). The male writers took the role of the moral and spiritual educator. The ideals represented to women in these books "reflect male interests and wishes, and that women accept it only to identify themselves with the dominant patriarchal power […]" (Kina 7). Conduct books show how one could influence female authors and its readers, and in the end the whole society.

Jane Austen portrays the society and its behavior she lived in in her novels. To understand what and how they lived and behaved, it is necessary to look at a few examples of conduct books, as they were in great demand in Austen's period (Fritzer 1).

2.2. Conduct literature in Jane Austen's period

The existence of conduct literature is not new in the eighteenth century. Conduct books were always present in societies in one form or another. The message which that kind of literature offers is very similar to the eighteenth century conduct books. However, books that spoke about conducting oneself and about manners were not intended for everyone. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, conduct books were not read by everyone and not everyone had access to them. They were usually private conduct guidelines written for the daughters of the good standing families and guidelines that were focused towards upper classes.

Conduct books may seem to be different from one another, however, they are not. Sarah E. Newton claims that a study of conduct writing shows how "conduct writers argue that an absolute, virtually unchanging and unchallengeable standard of ideal behavior does exist and may – indeed must – be achieved" (4). Women behaved according to those rules of conduct, therefore, the rules they were following became a part of a societal standard. If women did not behave according to standard, then they were misbehaving and were threatened with various discipline methods or punishments. Conduct books play an important role in the English society and they, in a way, "rule" over women. They pose as a powerful tool in society where women have to adhere to the rules of conduct written, usually, by men.

Such were the times when Jane Austen wrote her novels. Conduct literature was popular reading aimed towards a female audience, therefore, Jane Austen was familiar with the topics of manuals. Furthermore, she read some of the books on conduct and her thoughts on them can be seen in the novels as well as in her private letters to her sister Cassandra (Honnan 308). Her novels focus greatly on behavior and manner; thus, one can see a correlation between her novels and the conduct literature of the period. In *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, Austen refers to Fordyce's *Sermons* through the character of Mr. Collins. Austen was, besides Fordyce, aware of other works as well. She presents differences in behavior between the women and men in society – what is acceptable for women and what is not. Furthermore, Austen explores the accomplishments and moral standards that people believe make women into ideal women of the English society. She uses the teachings of conduct literature and implements it in her novels. Her heroines are not the exemplary characters of what the conduct literature teaches young women in the English society. Austen portrays real women with flaws and argues through her novels that the "perfect" woman represented in literature of the period does not exist. Her heroines do not possess all the accomplishments that conduct writers write about. However, every one of her heroines is perfect in her own way which makes them distinguished in society.

As Austen lived in a society that was organized by men for men, the goal of the conduct literature was also oriented towards male "wishes," the goal of the conduct manuscripts was to prepare and to teach young women how to behave in order to find a husband. Therefore, the writers wrote about female accomplishments and their behavior that were pleasing to men. Women were taught to please and attract a man's interest. There are several issues of female social roles and their representation that will be approached through the representations of various conduct manuals and analysis of Austen's characters. To analyze Austen's female character and see which one of her characters is perfect and which is not, it will be needed to approach the subject that concerns the matters that presents a woman's life at that time. The matters that will be looked in the conduct literature are important for the analysis and understanding of Austen's characters and society in general. The following essential matters are: education, accomplishments, and marriage.

2.2.1. James Fordeyce's Sermons to Young Women

The Scottish Presbyterian minister James Fordyce (1720-1796) was one of the writers on conduct for women. He was very observant of the changes English society was going through in the eighteenth century and thus he dedicated a collection of sermons to women on appropriate conduct in society. *Sermons to Young Women*, also known as *Fordyce's Sermons*, is a two-volume collection of sermons published in 1766. It enjoyed a popularity in society, and it reached its sixth edition in the same year it was published. In his sermons, Fordyce instructs women how to behave; how to be dutiful and submissive, as well as how to dress. Furthermore, *Sermons* concerns itself with the development of a character of young women. Susan Allen Ford points out that:

> Fordyce defines his principal motives for these *Sermons* in terms of a devotion to women and their role in society as well as for the pleasure of trying his own voice […] Young women are significant to Fordyce primarily in terms of their social roles – defined of course by their relationship with men […] Fourteen sermons cover the subjects of the importance of the female sex, modesty of apparel, female reserve, female virtue (over five sermons, during which he defines the accomplished woman), female piety (three sermons), good work, and female meekness (two sermons). (n.p.)

James Fordyce's *Sermons* is a set of rules of conduct where he describes what is and what is not desirable in young women based on religious texts and society, as well as how men see and believe women should behave and live by. Thus, Fordyce does not only speak from his position as a clergyman who bases his sermons on religious texts ("[…] the passage of St. Paul which I

have selected for my text […]" *Sermon I* 3), but he also speaks as the representative of men. He uses both his social status and his sex to give advice to women and claims that the sermons are a result of "an unfeigned regard for the Female Sex; from a fervent zeal for the best interests of society, on which he believes their disposition and deportment will ever have a mighty influence" (Fordyce *Preface iii*). Even though the purpose of the *Sermons* was to teach Christian values and principles, Fordyce offers pieces of advice to women how to become perfect women. However, he focuses more on the nature of the fairer sex and prepares women for their future life as perfect wives for their men.

Fordyce sees the need for a manual of conduct in the society he lives in because of all social and cultural changes occurring in the eighteenth century. He is aware of the importance of women in those changes. He argues that women influence men and, as a consequence, they are important for the well-being of their society as a unity. Fordyce's emphasis of the importance of women is significant for the reason that only women of virtue and understanding will have an impact on men. Therefore, with such statement, Fordyce gains power over women by creating a wish in them to become virtuous and understanding (of men) so that women could have impact over men and, in the end, over society (Fordyce *Sermon I* 11-12). Even though women could have impact over society in general, they are still imperfect by nature, unlike men. On that account, they have to control themselves and they need a set of rules for a propriate behavior and conduct. That is why he writes to women what is acceptable and what is not.

Fordyce addresses women as their preacher, friend, and brother: "I have taken the liberty to address you in that of zeal and friendship; […] Suppose me speaking to you as a brother" (*Sermon III* 43). As such, it is his duty to help them for their well-being so "that they may appear as becomes their high birth, and the noble expectations they are encouraged to entertain" (*Sermon III* 43). He allows himself to commend and chastise women when necessary through his preaching and writing. Fordyce does not only chastise women in some parts of his sermons, but also, he chastises the parents and even men. Overall, he criticizes society they live in. On the one hand, Fordyce urges women to be respectful to their parents and to listen to them because they "are really concerned for your virtue and welfare" (*Sermon I* 6). On the other hand, he argues that women can be spoiled by the various temptations of the times they live in. He goes even further and says that their parents do not help them in growing up to a respectable young woman by allowing their daughters all the pleasures there are around them:

> —Great God! are there then any of thy creatures so unnatural, as to neglect the culture and happiness of the children thou hast given them? Yes, and worse than to neglect it. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this!" There are beings called Parents, and Christian parents, who are at pains to introduce their unexperienced offspring to folly, to vice, to every practice that can plunge the in misery! —" (*Sermon I* 6)

In the times when everything seems to be changing, even parents do not parent their daughters, so Fordyce enables all women pieces of advice of proper conduct by writing these sermons.

Furthermore, Fordyce claims that the society they live in is built on double-standards because some irregularities done by men are overlooked whereas by women are not (*Sermon I* 8-9). Some people of higher social class may have been aware of the fact, but it has not changed the social structure of the period. Society has its eyes on women and how they behave, so to prevent anything bad from happening and to taint their reputations (as well as their families' reputations), women are supposed to act in a certain manner. It may seem that women have to fight the double-standards of society by doing exactly what society expects of them. Fordyce continues with his instructions and stresses that there are consequences for women if they misbehave. As already mentioned, woman's reputation is a tender thing and it is "hard to preserve, and when lost [it is] impossible to recover" (*Sermon II* 23-24). Women can be shunned by the society if they lose their good reputation. If women fall for wrong men or ruin a picture of their virtue, then it is a woman's fault that she succumbed to the temptation.

The importance of female virtue is important in the eighteenth century. Jean Grimshaw argues that "the eighteenth century saw the beginning of an idealization of family life […] A vision of the subordinate but virtues both defined and underpinned 'private' sphere of domestic life, came to dominate a great deal of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thought" (221). Female virtue holds an important place not only in the family and domestic life, but also during the woman's time of singleness. Women have to undertake certain tasks in order to avoid being tempted or to be strong enough to refuse alluring offers. They should be careful in their comportment and show upmost propriety at all times. Female virtue should be presented on both fronts – in their behavior and in their clothing style as well, according to Fordyce.

> Were a young woman now a days, from a peculiar sense of the sacredness and refinement of female virtue, to appear with any very singular severity in her dress, she would hardly, I fear, escape the charge of affection; a charge, which every prudent woman will avoid as much as possible. But let the license of the age be what it will, I must needs think that, according to every rule of duty and decorum, there ought ever to be a manifest difference between the attire of a Virtuous Woman, and that of the one who has renounced every title to the honourable name (*Sermon II* 23 – 24).

In the eighteenth century, female virtue should be guideline to women in everyday behavior and it should look natural. Fordyce emphasizes the importance of virtue in women because having a good principled virtue is one of the most important characteristics in women. Having in mind what men like in women, Fordyce teaches women about being modest, meek, shamefaced, and sober. He bases his teachings upon the Bible and what the apostle Paul, in one of his many letters, wrote to Timothy about shamefacedness, modesty, and submissiveness. Namely, Paul writes following:

> Likewise the women are to dress in suitable apparel with modesty and self-control. Their adornment must not be with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive or expensive clothing, but with good deeds, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. A woman must learn quietly with all submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. She must remain quiet. For Adam was formed first and then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression. But she will be delivered through childbearing, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with self-control (*Bible* 1 Timothy 2:9-15).

Fordyce uses Paul's letters to teach women of moral as well as of a religious light. He lists qualities that are consistent with the Bible and by which the society should live by. Due to the spirit of time, the position of men, who enjoy more privileges than women, are not under such scrutiny of society as women are. There are people in society who take Paul's teaching differently and use it to their benefit. Therefore, intellectuals based their teachings only upon the parts of Bible that mentions women.

Fordyce advises women that shamefacedness is the "most pleasing effect on female manners, […] an ornament equally necessary and wise" (*Sermon III* 43-44). While explaining shamefacedness, Fordyce urges his "sisters" to be obedient to the Word of God because they have received their bodies and souls from the Almighty and they will have to restore it (*Sermon III* 47). Furthermore, he touches upon the "bashful beauty," as does the apostle Paul. While talking about female beauty, Fordyce excuses men for their desires seeing that men are made with the appreciation of female appearance. For that reason, women should be aware of male desires and should not tempt them with their beauty and claims that in reality "[t]he retiring graces have been always the most attractive" (Fordyce *Sermon III* 49). Women should take more care of their virtues than their appearance. However, it seems that Fordyce here contradicts himself because, while women should nurture their modesty and virtue on the one hand, on the other hand they should appear as elegant and attractive as possible:

> […] none but the most contracted, or the most prejudiced, will deny that women may avail themselves of every decent attraction, that can lead to a state for which they are manifestly formed; and that, should they by any neglect of their persons render themselves less amiable than God has made them, they would so far disappoint the design of their creation (Fordyce *Sermon I* 2).

Even so, Fordyce urges women to pursue various accomplishments in order to prove their worth through the cultivation of Christian principles and their virtues (*Sermon III* 50–52). A virtuous woman possesses certain qualities, i.e. accomplishments that will enable her a better future. Men seek women to marry only with accomplishments in areas such as household, intelligence, and wisdom or understanding. Men may be blinded by some women, but in the end, they will notice what women have to offer and what they represent. They will choose women who are domestic, elegant, and wise. Women should possess wisdom in order to understand men and to be able to lead intelligent conversation with them (usually within a home). However, women should not scare men off with their intelligence. They should know how to approach certain ideas and how to participate in the public and intellectual circles of their class.

Fordyce hints at the dominant eighteenth-century ideology about women who were identified within the private, domestic sphere. Thus, the identification of women is connected with a feeling and sensibility rather than the reason. The place for women is within a home and they should look happiness within it. If, and when women find themselves outside in the public sphere, they should follow some ground rules which require of them to be aware of certain rules in society as well as to be aware of self-presentation to the company. Depending on how they present themselves to the public, they will either reveal their weaknesses or their strengths and thus gain certain position in the society. It is of utmost importance that women gain the appropriate accomplishments in their young lives so that they could marry better. They are not able to change their society and they should find clear guidelines on how to lead a successful life within the society of the eighteenth century.

In the conclusion, Fordyce acknowledges that he may have been too severe upon women, but that it was needed. They live in a patriarchal society where he wishes not to deceive them or lie to them, so the truth may sound harsh.

> THE preacher can readily suppose, that many things advanced on the subject of Women, in the course of these Sermons, will be deemed by the generality of his own sex too soothing, while by the majority of yours many will be judged too severe; such is the force of prejudice on both sides […]

> If the preacher has endeavoured, upon the principles of candour, to account for some passions in the sex that seem at first sight less innocent, or less excusable; it was under the sanction and impression of the great evangelical law […] (Fordyce *Conclusion* 150-151).

He admits that they live in a society with double standards and that it is hard to live by its rules, but that it is necessary. Therefore, by writing the sermons, he tries to help and to teach young women to prepare for their adulthood. He urges them to follow the social rules by applying his words in their everyday lives. He finishes the conclusion with a strong "Amen" which gives no room for arguments.

2.2.2. John Gregory's conduct book A Father's Legacy to his Daughters

John Gregory is a Scottish physician, medical writer, and moralist who lived and worked at the same time period as well as his fellow moralist and clergyman James Fordyce. He was a professor of medicine at Edinburgh University where he greatly contributed to the medical field. As a moralist and a father, he decided to leave his daughters instructions of good conduct and behavior. He wrote *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* in the epistolary form and privately for his daughters, however, it was published in 1774 by his son James and the book enjoyed a great success in the public sphere. Even though the book was written for a private use and was aimed to Gregory's daughters only, it can still be perceived as a general counsel to all young women. The book is divided into chapters with purposeful topics where Gregory advises his daughters on religion, conduct, behavior, amusements, friendship, love, and marriage.

Doctor Gregory starts his letters by addressing his daughters and explaining to them the reason behind his written advice, which is a possibility of leaving them sooner rather than later. His daughters were left, early on, without a mother, so he takes on this opportunity to give them the advice with "the genuine sentiments of a man who has no interest in flattering or deceiving" young women (Gregory 5). The affectionate father confesses in the introductory letter that he has an honorable opinion of opposite gender; he does not see them as "domestic drudges, or the slaves of our pleasures," but rather Gregory presents a different picture of female gender in the late eighteenth century (Gregory 6). Unlike many male writers and thinkers of that period, he considers women to be "companions and equals [to male gender]; as designed to soften our hearts and polish our manners" (Gregory 6). Yet, he presents the differences in their society and conduct even though both genders should follow the same rules.

When talking about religion, which is "equally binding on both sexes" (Gregory 11), he advises his daughters differently than he would advise his sons. He teaches women to find happiness and consolation in religion; to embrace only what the Scripture says and live by it. He says that they should not pretend to be religious but rather be simple in their religious living. They should "[n]ever perplex [themselves] about [religious things they] do not understand" (Gregory 16–17). The reason behind such teaching is men who know human nature and they can recognize who is indifferent about religion. "[M]en consider [female] religion as one of their principal securities for that female virtue in which they are most interested" (Gregory 25). Even though Gregory says in the introduction how he will explain the system of conduct through the eyes of men, women are still perceived as sexualized objects in relation to men in society.

The next important advice Gregory gives, is regarding the appropriate female conduct and behavior. Naturally, he writes to women how to behave with the result of finding a husband in the end. He argues that modesty is one of the chief beauties in a female character (31). Men appreciate female innocence that is shown through the blushing together with the modesty of their minds.

Women should be cautious when showing their good sense because people will think they find themselves superior over the rest of the company and by doing so, they would suffer the consequences. On the one hand, women should not participate in any "male" domain; instead, they should be restricted to the domestic domain. On the other hand, Gregory explains that it is not prohibited to have any learning, i.e. good sense, but that it should be kept a secret because men "generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts, and a cultivated understanding" (36–37). However, there are some men who may appreciate good sense in a woman and when a man discovers it himself and discovers that a woman kept it as a secret, he will "probably give credit for a great deal more than [a woman] possess[es]" (37). Furthermore, the writer advises his daughters against being too independent in society and to be cautious with wit and humor. Wit is in women the most dangerous quality and, even though humor is a different quality than wit, one must be cautious when indulging in it. Humor will certainly make "company much solicited" but it is "often a great enemy to delicacy" (Gregory 36). The girls are recommended to be fine women which have proper point of view. To have the qualities of a fine woman, they require "great judgment, and an intimate knowledge of the human heart […] The power of a fine woman over the hearts of men […] is even beyond what she conceives […] [I]f [a woman] is determined to dispel the charm, it certainly is in her power:

she may soon reduce the angel to a very ordinary girl" (Gregory 47–48). Gregory recommends in his letter about conduct and behavior his daughters to be elegant. He writes that elegance is partly a personal quality and a quality of the mind, and that "it is the perfection of taste in life and manners;—every virtue and every excellence, in their most graceful and amiable forms" (50). Women may work upon achieving these goals and it is possible for them to learn those skills. However, without the mutual respect within a company, and between a man and a woman, it can be ruined by many factors which were already mentioned, such as vanity, deceit, wit, etc.

Gregory touches upon the various forms of amusement for women. He claims that only certain sorts of amusement are appropriate for them. Amusement has to be subjected to a building of a woman's character and appearance. Life offers a variety of amusements and it is natural that women like to indulge in it as well, however, they have to choose the sorts of amusements that are done with elegance. Otherwise, they would not be conductive to their moral growth. Therefore, Gregory suggests that women should choose amusements that contain "elegant accomplishments, as dress, dancing, music, and drawing" seeing that they would improve and enlarge their knowledge (56). Regarding their appearance, Dr. Gregory encourages his daughters to do exercises that give vigor to female complexion and constitution, such as walking and horse-back riding. In addition, they should even spend some time at home in order to fill up in an agreeable way. He even discusses female clothing and urges women to dress properly and reasonably, to dress elegantly but simply. Dress is "an important article in female life" as it is an indicator of a female character, but it must be chosen with delicate mind (Gregory 63). Men value elegant simplicity which proves that women have taste and are delicate in such matters. Due to social standing of women, they are encouraged to develop their qualities which make them respectable in men's (and society's) eyes.

The last letter discusses maybe the most important topic in a young woman's life. Gregory there talks of friendship, love and marriage, which is the ultimate goal in the society. Firstly, he gives some vital pieces of advice of how to choose friends. Friends hold an important place in a life of a person; they can greatly influence a person's way of thinking and its mannerisms. He urges his daughters to take people as friends who "possess taste and genius" (74) and to put their confidence in those people who have shown affection towards them. According to doctor Gregory, the best friend should be found among brothers and sisters because of "[t]he ties of blood" (80). Their secrets should be safe within a family, otherwise their life may become a source for gossiping and a person subjected to general mockery or

ridicule in a society. Even though a relationship between friends is different than between a man and a woman, respect is necessary in a friendship, as well as in love. Respect is vital in friendship for the duty friends have to each other and if, when the time comes, they can fulfill the duty in the matters of love by procuring every piece of information about a man in the question.

As a caring father, Gregory feels obliged to explain the matters of love to his daughters. He claims that "a woman in this country has very little probability of marrying for love" (90) and says that the love is the consequence of a male attachment to a woman. Therefore, it is a man who falls in love with a woman. Women mainly marry out of gratitude and esteem, which later grows into an attachment. He is convinced that no one would marry out of love if it were not for the said attachment. There are some examples in society where a woman falls in love with a man. In that occurrence, women should never profess love. As Gregory says,

> [i]f you love him, let me advise you never to discover to him the full extent of your love; no, not although you marry him. That sufficiently shows your preference, which is all he is intitled to know. If he has delicacy, he will ask for no stronger proof of your affection, for your sake; if he has sense, he will not ask it for his own. This is an unpleasant truth, but it is my duty to let you know it. Violent love cannot subsist, at least cannot be expressed, for any time together, on both sides; otherwise the certain consequence, however concealed, is satiety and disgust. Nature in this case has laid the reserve on you. (97 - 98)

Social acceptability and social aim were represented through status, and women achieved status only through marriage. Familiar with the social requirements and what happens with women who do not marry, Gregory advises his daughters to marry but marry in order to attain happiness. He knows the "unprotected situation of an old maid, the chagrin and peevishness which are apt to infect their tempers, and the great difficulty of making a transition with dignity and cheerfulness, from the period of youth […] into the calm, silent, unnoticed retreat of declining years" (115 - 116). He wishes to have the assurance that his daughters will be taken care of, however he advises them better to choose well than to live in an unhappy marriage where they cannot respect their husbands. Furthermore, he confesses that he would rather see his daughters not married than to be married for the good of the society. Still, he wishes them happiness in life and if they find love, they should marry. Therefore, before entering a courtship or getting married, women should know their own minds. In the matters of business, they should seek a piece of advice of people who know more about business; and in the matters of taste, they should rely upon their own hearts.

At the end of the letter, Gregory admits that they live in a society where his opinions may be in a contradiction to the general practice. Regardless of the public opinion, he expresses the father's love and attention by helping his daughters on some of the most important developments in their future life. He finishes the letter with warm words and affection which only a loving and caring father could offer.

2.3. Teachings of conduct literature

Women were economically dependent, second-class citizens whose lives revolved around their home and family. They could not progress in the society where they grew up. They could be educated, but the education they received was limited and was prescribed especially for females. The objective of a woman's education was to attract a husband. During that time of the period, there were women who were fighting for a better education and improved rights for women.

2.3.1. Education

In Jane Austen's time, there was no centrally organized educational system. There were many local charities and churches that run day schools and, in the city, boarding schools which offered education. However, education included far more than schools at the time. Deborah Simonton says that education differed from one village to another, from one parish to another parish; it was a local issue (34). Therefore, education became a matter of individual choice. There were different ideas of what education should include and what was appropriate and needed for boys and what for girls to learn.

Education in Jane Austen's time was understood as "a process of socialization and acculturation based on moral self-discipline and designed to fit the individual for a range of related roles in life, according to sex and rank" (Kelly 252). Education was different for men and women and many critics and writers disagreed what was the appropriate form of education. Simonton claims that the education up to 1850s was gender blind (33). Therefore, education became a field of ideological struggle where the middle class and the gentry were implicated (Kelly 252). Many critics claim that the education was prescribed for social usefulness within a family and class. Surely, at the time there were, as Simonton professes, two beliefs of the Enlightenment to the education. On the one hand, there was one belief that the children were born innocent and good, and the society made children "corrupt." On the other hand, another

belief regards the reformulation of gender (35). Based on that belief, mothers took an important role of educating their children. Education is the basis of any society, which means that women had an important role in reproducing the economic, social, cultural and political order (Simonton 35, Kelly 254).

Kelly argues that education was important for moral self-control and social usefulness within a family and class. Everything was subordinated to the personal as well as national change and success. Women needed an appropriate education because they had an essential role to maintain the complex economic and social order. Seeing that the "dominant order was based on agrarian landed property" and that the property was a family concern, "women had few property rights in or outside marriage" (Kelly 253-254). In order to fulfill certain requirements regarding property rights, women had to be educated to successfully transmission property "from one generation of men to the next in three related ways - biological reproduction, capital investment and social culture" (Kelly 254). First, generational transfer of property depended on women to bear a male heir. Women were educated that it was their responsibility not to produce an illegitimate heir and therefore, ruin the inheritance of the property. Secondly, some women brought capital, intellectual and cultural investments into their marriages that were accumulated through education (Kelly 256). Thirdly, through education women were supposed to learn how to appropriately restrain their various desires.

The early, or first education children were offered, began at home with their mothers. Mothers were "ultimately charged with the morality of society through the education of their children" (Simonton 35). Many families sent their sons to gain a professional education, but daughters were usually left at home. Women were excluded from broad intellectual education men received. Female education offered other elements, namely, basic schooling, household management, and religious instructions. The goal of education for girls was to teach them good morals and behavior so that in the future they could, as mothers, teach their own children and in that way, reform society. As already mentioned, there were some schools, i.e. day schools offered by parishes. Such schools were "advised to teach religion and domestic arts to provide skills for domestic service and for the natural female position of wife, mother, and homemaker, emphasizing industry, frugality, diligence, and good management" (Simonton 37). However, many parents of the middle class decided upon home education for their daughters. In such way girls could focus on the house and home and they had their mother's protection. Girls were taught practical skills such as literacy and numeracy at home. Some parents sent their daughters to boarding schools or to day schools, but their first education was received at home (Swords

n.p.). Elite and middle-class girls received a typical curriculum either in institutions or at home. Their lessons of household management included supervision in domestic needlecraft skills, "food preparation, the regular but epic activity of washing-day and care of the sick, the young and the aged" (Kelly 256). Such education was necessary because the parents found it useful for it would prepare girls to become the mistresses of a family and thus, run the house. However, there were some girls who were brought up by nurses and governesses and they were not taught how to control their tempers. They were, as Swords says, much more "lose" because of their position in society. They were not taught how to use their reason and their minds but rather "accomplishments necessary to attract a suitable husband" (n.p.).

2.3.2. Accomplishments

Accomplishments have an important role in female education. Namely, female education was almost nothing else but learned accomplishments. The kind of education girls were offered was the one that would carry out the role of a wife. Young women were taught everything society thought it was needed in order to be the perfect young ladies and ideal women for their future husbands. As McElligott argues, women were supposed to learn certain things: habits and characteristics that would help them with their performance at home, in domesticity (81). Women were created for specific duties. However, they were not formed to be intelligent and it was believed at the time that they did not have to be intellectually educated. "Women, […], through no fault of their own, were not endowed with the brain-power required to perform comprehensive reasoning, or so many in society believed. If a woman displayed competence in areas outside the feminine sphere, she could be regarded as an aberration or even someone who was unnatural in the grander scheme of God's plan" (McElligott 81). Therefore, the only skills women needed to take form their education was "detrimental to the success of finding a domestic partner" (McElligott 82).

Swords questions what qualities women needed to attain in order to be perfect young ladies. Based on the writings of the period, everything women needed to find a husband was to show off their accomplishments. Furthermore, Swords claims that "[m]uch was written on all sides of the question; from conduct books setting forth the accomplishments and graces the perfect young lady must possess in order to capture a future husband […]" (n.p.). Young women had limited courses that offered them necessary knowledge in various forms of those accomplishments. They were taught to be artful in order to please men; parts of their lives were devoted to "perfecting the accomplishments and personal appearance" (Brooke 11). However,

once they got married, their accomplishments gained during their education tended to be neglected (Nandana 2).

Gaining desirable accomplishments was a part of education offered to young women and those accomplishments included several elements which would show off a young woman's body to possible suitors, taste and polite work (Kelly 257). They included: "drawing, dancing, piano playing, penmanship, grammar, spelling, elementary arithmetic, sometimes French" (Swords n.p.). Kelly argues that each accomplishment had its purpose, namely to demonstrate family interests of marriageable women. In addition, the number of lady's accomplishments also reflected the financial situation of her family. Some men sought a wife who would be their asset in the society. Certain accomplishments were more "alluring" to men than the others. They were looking for the ideal woman who would represent them well in said society. Certainly, as James Fordyce advised in his *Sermons,* women were not supposed to be intellectual threat to their husbands, but they should be able to follow a conversation and if needed, be able to steer the conversation from any sort of unpleasantries. Thus, every accomplishment had its purpose.

Dancing, singing, and playing music showed off a woman's body. Young ladies were expected to be knowledgeable in music. Playing and singing were considered seductive because young ladies could attract their potential suitors by displaying their posture and voice. However, there are only few of the instruments that were considered appropriate how to play at the time. If any instrument would be a reason for a possible mishap or young women did not look good while playing, then that instrument would not be appropriate for them. Instruments, such as the flute or even violin were not showing young ladies' bodies in an attractive manner. Rather, young women would get red in their face while trying to play flutes or they would need to raise their hands in order to play violins. Thus, women had to choose an instrument that would be the best in showing off their bodies, such as piano or harp. Playing an instrument does not only show how attractive a young woman is. It also is a sign of the social status. Not everybody could afford to learn how to play. David Selwyn argues that "[p]laying is not only an accomplishment but necessary to enable dancing to take place, and thus a means to promote the happiness and well-being of the community" (138).

Dancing was the most popular recreation among any group in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. "From the exclusive court balls, of which the grandest was the annual King's Birthday Ball, and the subscription balls held each week during the season at Almack's, to dances held in provincial assembly rooms or arranged privately in the ballrooms

of country inns, people never tired of turning out after dinner to dance […]" (Selwyn 145). Balls were the places especially of interest to young ladies where they could socialize with possible suitors. They interacted with young men and were able to talk to them without being chaperoned. According to Allison Thompson, "[y]oung people were expected to have on hand a repertoire of light conversation, with which to pass the time during the dance while they stood inactive" (n.p.). Some women spent more time with men, especially if they were graceful while dancing. Girls who knew how to dance were more desirable then girls who were not as good at dancing. It meant that the girls with poor dancing skills would not dance as often.

Drawing, painting, and decorative needlework showed off taste and "polite" work. Needlework was a practical subject for young women. They could always apply their needle skills at some point in their lives. According to Susan E. Jones, needlework is "the kind of work that young girls learn almost from the time they can talk, and it prepares them for their duties as grown women […] Genteel women's skills are elaborately structured as leisure activities. Women of the gentry or aristocracy learn sewing as ornamentation and as a social skill, useful in moments of emotion or ennui" (n.p.). Needlework can be done in a solitary endeavor, but usually women would bring their baskets either during social calls or while socializing in their homes. Everyone wears garments and clothing is a consumable material. It means that clothing would require mending, making or even remaking, of some pieces. Needlework skills were "a sign that a young woman was prepared to take up her 'work' in society" (Jones n.p.).

The skill of letter-writing and the knowledge of any modern language showed off a woman's quality of being sociable. Writing here is referred to creating a letter rather than writing a book. Young women were schooled to pen a proper letter obeying the spelling and grammar rules, as well as their handwriting. Women learned how to express the appropriate tone and emotion through the words. Eloquently written letters, i.e. chosen words and the meaning of phrases used showed the levels of one's education. Writing skills depended on class, occupation, and gender. Furthermore, letter was used as a means of exchanging news as well as sharing everyday happenings in one's life. Letters served as a prolonged conversation among parties. According to Selwyn, "[t]he author of an instruction manual of 1813 also recommended that people should be addressed on paper as naturally as if they were being spoken to" (17). However, writers of the letters had to bear in mind that the letter they are writing is not for the eyes of the recipient only. Letters were circulated amongst family and friends (Selwyn 21).

In addition to all those accomplishments, the knowledge of "books of the day" was useful and desirable in the society (Kelly 257). Women were not encouraged to read heavy subjects, but serious books that would enable them to hold interesting conversation. As Alan Richardson says, "[m]ost writers on the question, whether their pronouncements took direct or fictional form, could agree that certain kinds of books (say, religious ones) would grace any 'middling' - or upper-class woman's chamber and help to form and discipline her mind" (398). Beneficial reading material for women would be travel writings, poetry, and moral philosophy (Fordyce *Sermon VII*). Women were supposed to read critically to be able to socialize and show off their accomplishments to the suitors.

Accomplishments enabled women to demonstrate their cultural and social distinctions. This enabled women to present themselves as potential social assets to men who were looking for a wife. They did not represent any threat to their potential husbands because they did not display their intellect. Rather, women showed that they were able to follow conversation when in society and when necessary, they could steer unpleasant conversation toward other subjects.

3. Images of women according to social standards

3.1. Images of ideal woman

3.1.1. Fanny Price: an ideal woman

Mansfield Park readers first meet Fanny Price as a child living in a poor family. She is the second of ten children. Fanny is then sent to live with her uncle and aunt, Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram, to relieve her parents of the burden of raising at least one more child in a big family. Fanny's second aunt, Mrs. Norris, lives with Lady Bertram's family. When Fanny arrives, she knows neither of her aunts. The relationship between Fanny's mother (Frances) and her mother's sisters was broken due to her mother's choice of husband, namely Mr. Price:

> [Mrs. Price] put an end to all intercourse between [herself and her sisters] for a considerable period […] however, Mrs. Price could no longer afford to cherish pride or resentment, or to lose one connection that might possibly assist her. A large and still increasing family, a husband disabled for active service, but not the less equal to company and good liquor, and a very small income to supply their wants, made her eager to regain the friends she had so carelessly sacrificed. (Austen MP 2–3)

Frances Price reaches out for reconciliation for the sake of her family. Consequently, Mrs. Norris and Sir Thomas decide to take Mrs. Price's eldest daughter, Fanny, into their family to give her a better life, education, and a different future than her mother's. Fanny is sent to Mansfield Park at the age of 10.

Fanny arrives at Mansfield Park safely and is welcomed by her aunt, Mrs. Norris. Upon her arrival, she is described as a child "small of her age, with no glow of complexion, nor any other striking beauty; exceedingly timid and shy, and shrinking from notice; but her air, though awkward, was not vulgar, her voice was sweet, and when she spoke, her countenance was pretty" (Austen MP 10). Even as a child, Fanny presents good qualities of a lady in the making. Even though she comes from lower class, and hardly exudes confidence, she is well-mannered and polite. Nonetheless, Mrs. Norris and Sir Thomas both ensure that she knows her place within the Bertram family. Fanny has to know that there are some distinctions between herself and the Bertram offspring, but still Sir Thomas wishes that his children will not think lowly or ill of her. The Bertram children and Fanny Price are not equals (Austen MP 9). Thus, the relationship between the boys and Fanny is that of siblings. This will ensure that there is no risk of an inappropriate relationship. Furthermore, Fanny is to "remember that she is not a *Miss Bertram*" and does not enjoy all of the rights that the Bertram girls have (Austen MP 9).

Miss Price is inferior to her cousins and she is constantly reminded of her position as she grows up. She is especially reminded of her place by her Aunt Norris: "She is used as a drudge by her aunts, she is compared unfavorably with the Bertram girls and is subordinated to them, and she is excluded from the pleasures and privileges of family membership" (Paris 24). Fanny is afraid of everybody and she has been made to feel inadequate since she arrived at Mansfield Park. Maria and Julia are not trying to build any kind of relationship with her, "they could not but hold her cheap" (Austen MP 9). Furthermore, even though Fanny "could read, work, and write," her cousins found her "ignorant of many things with which they had been long familiar, they thought her prodigiously stupid, and for the first two or three weeks were continually bringing some fresh report of it into the drawing-room" (Austen MP 16). Fanny's elder cousins "mortified her by reflection on her size" (Austen MP 12). On the one hand, Fanny feels as if she is a stranger in her new family, and, on the other hand, even though the house is big and had plenty of rooms, she could find no consolation within it: "The grandeur of the house astonished, but could not console her" (Austen MP 12). The only person who Fanny could confide in and who considers her equal to the Bertram sisters is their younger brother Edmund. Fanny grows into a virtuous, quiet, and proper young lady thanks to his help. As Paris says, Edmund is the only family member who watches after her, "provides for her amusement, and stands up for her rights. He gives her moral support, advice, and encouragement" (25). Upon Fanny's arrival at Mansfield Park, she is presented as an uneducated girl but one who was able to make an intelligent understanding of the world (Evans 20). With Edmund's guidance, she reads various books, learns and, at the same time, challenges him in moral questions.

After a few years of living with the Bertrams, Fanny is supposed to go and live with her aunt Mrs. Norris, whose husband has died and who now lives alone. Edmund tells Fanny that she would be much better with their aunt because "*here*, there are too many, whom you can hide behind; but with *her* you will be forced to speak for yourself" (Austen MP 24; emphasis added). Fanny is still shy and she does not advocate for herself—it is difficult to do so when living in her cousins' proximity. For this very reason, Edmund thinks that Fanny's move to live with her Aunt Norris is a good thing. However, as Paris observes, Aunt Norris is Fanny's "primary enemy" and constantly belittles and acts in a haughty manner towards Fanny (24). Mrs. Norris does not think much of Fanny because she comes from a lower social position. Her parents are people of no influence or consequence, unlike Sir Bertram. Therefore, Fanny "does not deserve" to be treated with the same respect as the Bertram girls nor she would learn

much from her aunt: “Mrs. Norris had no affection for Fanny, and no wish of procuring her pleasure at any time” (Austen MP 78). Fanny’s character is unlike Mrs. Norris’, which is one of the reasons why she pays the price of being shunned by her aunt.

Various events in the book prove that Fanny accepts her social position as an inferior character within the family. Miss Price is constantly reminded to show more gratitude to the Bertrams and Mrs. Norris because she is not deserving of fine belongings. No matter how gifted she may be, Fanny should always be more appreciative than she feels because she is unworthy of any gift. For instance, Fanny tries to show appreciation for everything that the Bertrams provide for her, as can be seen in her conversation with Lady Bertram after she finds that she is to go and live with her Aunt Norris: “‘I hope I am not ungrateful, aunt’ said Fanny, modestly. ‘No, my dear; I hope not. I have always found you a very good girl’” (Austen MP 23). However, if Fanny displays any kind of resistance, then she is perceived as an ungrateful girl. For example, when Fanny denies acting in an inappropriate play, Mrs. Norris instantly attacks her:

> ‘What a piece of work here is about nothing,—I am quite ashamed of you, Fanny, to make such a difficulty of obliging your cousins in a trifle of this sort,—So kind as they are to you!—Take the part with a good grace, and let us hear no more of the matter, I entreat.’ […] ‘I am not going to urge her,’—replied Mrs. Norris sharply, ‘but I shall think her a very obstinate, ungrateful girl, if she does not do what her aunt and cousins wish her—very ungrateful indeed, considering who and what she is.’ (Austen MP 146)

As a consequence of her family’s constant criticism and disapproval, Fanny learns how to conform her behavior to the expectations of others (Paris 37). Furthermore, “Fanny had no share in the festivities of the season,” (Austen MP 33) so when a ball is held in her honor, she feels unworthy and out of place, especially when she must open the ball by dancing first: “She could hardly believe it. To be placed above so many elegant young women” (Austen MP 273). She could not enjoy the ball because she was much too frightened (Austen MP 274) because she is unused to being treated as one of the Bertram girls. As Paris says, Fanny is a frightened, anxious, and defensive girl who is not aware of her thoughts and desires on many occasions due to not being treated equally by the family (38).

When Fanny turns 18, her life starts to change. Her circle of friends and family expands thanks to the arrival of the Crawfords. Thus far, Fanny has always been in the company of her aunts and cousins, and she does not usually engage in social events. However, this changes once she meets Mary and Henry Crawford, who come to visit their sister, Mrs. Grant—the wife of a new clergyman. Upon Mary’s initial meeting with the Bertrams and Fanny, she admits that she does not understand whether Miss Price is out or not (Austen MP 47). Namely, Fanny did

go with the Bertrams to dine at the parsonage but said very little, which confuses Miss Crawford. On the one hand, based on the social standards and Fanny's behavior, she should not be out. As Mary explains, "[a] girl not out, has always the same sort of dress; a close bonnet for instance, looks very demure, and never says a word. You may smile—but it is so I assure you—and except that it is sometimes carried a little too far, it is all very proper. Girls should be quiet and modest" (Austen MP 47). However, seeing that Fanny dined at the parsonage and participated in the outing, she should be out were her behavior not contradicting and confusing. Her quiet and docile behavior is a display of a girl who is "*not* out" (Austen MP 50).

Unlike her cousins, Fanny is not a very conversational person. To avoid criticism, she has learned that her opinion does not matter in the family. When she is not helping Lady Bertram, she would rather hide in her room where she finds peace and where she finds an escape with her thoughts. She has learned that she is not criticized or yelled at if she keeps herself at a distance when not needed. Fanny is so defensive and aware of others and their reactions to her that she avoids expressing her thoughts and desires (Paris 38). Naturally, when in company with the Crawfords, Fanny keeps her thoughts to herself and avoids participating in conversation. In this way, not purposefully, she reveals herself to be a modest young lady, which is one of the characteristics of a proper lady. As Dr. Gregory writes in his letter, "one of the chief beauties in a female character, is that modest reserve, that retiring delicacy, which avoids the public eye, and is disconcerted even at the gaze od admiration" (31).

With time, Fanny learns how to engage with the Crawfords. Seeing Mary Crawford become closer to Edmund, she finds herself conversing with her more often than she would usually. Naturally, she also loses Edmund to Mary and suffers for it. There are a few occasions when Fanny feels ill, such as when she gets fatigued while cutting the roses in the sun or she goes to do some errands for Mrs. Norris. However, Fanny is not allowed to ride her horse because Miss Crawford's "enjoyment of ridding was such, that she did not know how to leave off" (Austen MP 65). In one scene, Fanny goes out just to avoid Mrs. Norris' constant critique and she sees everybody enjoying themselves within their own small groups. Even though she is out, but not a part of any group, Fanny is "afraid of appearing rude and impatient," especially when re-encountering Edmund and Miss Crawford (Austen MP 67). Through this whole ordeal, Fanny is constantly compared and pictured as a timid, discomforted, and trembling person, unlike Mary Crawford. Her lack of physical abilities present Fanny as a weak creature. However, Fanny's external strength, or rather lack of physical strength, is contrasted with her internal strength. Miss Crawford exudes in physical tenacity, unlike Fanny who is guided by

her goodness of heart and her moral views. What Maria Crawford misses is what Fanny excels in, and vice versa.

As a child, Fanny learns to conform to every situation that she finds herself in. She fears Sir Thomas, but at the same time she appreciates the stability that he offers. She is not usually the primary receiver of attention from her uncle but, as Paris says, the only time she gets recognized is when she accepts and lives by the "rules" and world institutionalized by Sir Bertram: "She gets her reward when everyone sees how good and right she has been all along" (38). She strives to be well-mannered and obedient to the rules of her uncle, as well as the social rules.

Miss Price is not indulged in the activities her cousins are, so her development is kept separated from the rest of the family. Early hardship and discipline are a base of Fanny's growth. With the books and stories provided by her uncle (e.g., Sir Thomas's accounts of the West Indies) and Edmund, she is educated in various aspects of life and not only in the superficial and immediate pleasures that life offers. As Marie Sprayberry says, Fanny enjoys reading and is "described twice as a reader" (n.p.). She develops a moral compass that is based on her observations of and interactions with the family. Fanny's education is found in her environment. Thus, when faced with questionable dilemmas, she does not yield to peer pressure. For example, she stays true to herself and her beliefs when pressured to become a part of a theatrical performance. Fanny does not condemn plays or theatrical performances; however, her objection is the play in question:

> The first use she made of her solitude was to take up the volume which had been left on the table, and begin to acquaint herself with the play of which she had heard so much. Her curiosity was all awake, and she ran through it with an eagerness which was suspended only by intervals of astonishment, that it could be chosen in the present instance—that it could be proposed and accepted in a private Theatre! Agatha and Amelia appeared to her in their different ways so totally improper for home representation—the situation of one, and the language of the other, so unfit to be expressed by any woman of modesty. (Austen MP 136–137)

Upon reading the play, Fanny knows that she is not going to be a part of it. She hopes that her cousins would prevail and choose another, more appropriate play. Nevertheless, even Edmund who knows that the play would be disagreeable to his father, still takes a part in it. Paris observes how "it is the play which gives Fanny the opportunity to prove her worth. In the absence of Sir Thomas, everyone, even Edmund, goes astray. Only Fanny is beyond reproach"

(25). Fanny is the only person in the Bertram household who maintains her resolve against the play until the very end.

The pinnacle of Fanny's exercise of will is when she refuses Henry Crawford's proposal. Lady Bertram, who never offers advice, teaches Fanny of her duty as a woman in this situation: "I could do very well without you, if you were married to a man of such good estate as Mr. Crawford. And you must be aware, Fanny, that it is every young woman's duty to accept such a very unexceptionable offer as this" (Austen MP 329). Fanny is shocked by her aunt's advice because "this was almost the only rule of conduct […] which Fanny had ever received from her aunt in the course of eight years and a half.—It silenced her" (Austen MP 329). Lady Bertram cannot understand Fanny's reasoning for rejecting such a good opportunity for a stable life when she herself had decided to marry for "all the comforts and consequences of a handsome house and large income" (Austen, MP 1). Unlike her aunt, Fanny rejects Mr. Crawford and her own future financial stability for the sake of her principles. She "cannot approve his character. [She does not think] well of him from the time of the play" (Austen MP 346). Fanny observes people's hearts and seeks to be with somebody who adheres to moral standards. She is not interested in a marriage purely for financial security and a place that she could call home. Fanny is a person who respects moral values and social rules. Therefore, she cannot marry Mr. Crawford. However, as Paris observes, "the conquest of Crawford is a testimony, above all, to Fanny's merit. Despite his own corruption, Henry appreciates (and wishes to appropriate) her virtues, even when he does not know them by their proper name" (26).

Fanny Price develops into a desirable young woman, despite the problems that she encounters with her family and friends. Henry Crawford recognizes Fanny for who she really is before any other person in her family—she is a charming young lady:

> [Her] beauty of face and figure, Fanny's graces of manners and goodness of heart were the exhaustless theme. The gentleness, modesty, and sweetness of her character were warmly expatiated on, that sweetness which makes so essential a part of every woman's worth in the judgment of man […] Her temper he had good reason to depend on and to praise […] Her affections were evidently strong. To see her with her brother! What could more delightfully prove that the warmth of her heart was equal to its gentleness? […] [H]er manners were the mirror of her own modest and elegant mind. (Austen MP 291)

Fanny is finally described and recognized as a perfect woman. She possesses all of the qualities that Fordyce discusses. She is a virtuous woman who possesses domestic and elegant accomplishments. Fanny is genuine in her feelings towards her cousins. As Sprayberry says,

she "often feels more 'affectionate sorrow' for her relations than they deserve" (n.p.). Miss Price holds up to moral standards and is obedient to her elders. However, there is one instance where she disobeys Sir Bertram. After refusing Mr. Craword's proposal, Fanny is sent back home to Portsmouth to experience her new reality if she does not accept the proposal. Fanny experiences happiness when thinking of being with her family again. But, her daydreaming of being back in a loving home is met with reality. Her father does not acknowledge her and her mother is busy by taking care of the other children. She soon starts thinking of her uncle's house where "there would have been a consideration of times and seasons, a regulation of subject, a propriety, an attention towards every body which there was not here" (Austen MP 380). This should be Fanny's punishment. The realization that she is not nor should be a part of this world. This experience should change her mind regarding Mr. Crawford, but Fanny stays true to herself and to her moral standards.

After the Bertram family encounters some major difficulties, Sir Bertram sends for Fanny at Portsmouth to come back home. Sir Thomas recognizes her qualities only after the mishaps of his own children: "He might have made her childhood happier; but it had been an error of judgment only which had given him the appearance of harshness, and deprived him of her early love […]" (Austen MP 471). According to Sprayberry, Fanny Price possess all off the qualities that Fordyce wrote about in his Sermons—she is proficient in all of the intellectual, domestic, and elegant accomplishments: "she is modestly appareled, pious, bashfully reserved, meek, soft, and delicate" (n.p.). Fanny is indeed the daughter that Sir Thomas wanted (Austen MP 470).

3.1.2. Jane Bennet: "a good girl"

As the oldest daughter in the family, Jane Bennet heads up the group of Bennet sisters. At the beginning of the novel, she is 22 years old and is described as the most beautiful young lady in the local Meryton neighbourhood.

She is described as Elizabeth's confidant and her closest friend. Dabundo claims that Jane follows an "inherited cultural model and established paths," which makes her more of a passive character compared to her sister Elizabeth (42, 45). She is a kind and soft-spoken young woman who is genuinely concerned for others. The two most prominent characteristics of Jane throughout the novel are her physical appearance and kindness. Every character in the novel that meets Jane either describes her as a beautiful woman or talks about her good nature.

Jane Austen introduces her readers to Jane Bennet in the third chapter of the novel when she dances with Mr. Bingley at the first ball. Wherever Jane finds herself, she attracts admirers. Mr. Darcy comments on her looks and says that she is "the only handsome girl in the room," whereas Mr. Bingley confirms that and goes even further, saying she is "the most beautiful creature [he] ever beheld" (Austen PP 11). Being so admired by everybody, and given how good she looks, Mrs. Bennet feels confident that Jane's beauty will attract her a husband with a good connection or a favourable match (Austen PP 12). Even Elizabeth agrees with the public opinion regarding Jane. Namely, Lizzy's older sister was "about five times as pretty as every other woman in the room" (Austen PP 13). However, commenting on Jane's beauty, Elizabeth reveals some of her sister's character as well.

Miss Bennet is an embodiment of goodness and tenderness. People generally like her wherever she goes. She "never see[s] a fault in anybody. All the world are good and agreeable in [her] eyes" (Austen PP 14). Jane is good-natured and sees only good in people. If someone's character is suspicious and there is nothing good to be found, she always gives that person the benefit of the doubt. Jane's goodness makes her amiable to everyone, and that is the reason why she is not proud nor critical of other people (Paris 111). Unlike Elizabeth, Jane always has a positive opinion about everyone even when there is no reason to have one. As her sister's confidant, she gives a positive interpretation of various situations Elizabeth encounters. For example, in "the Darcy-Wickham affair, she tries hard to construct a version of the situation in which no one is to blame" (Paris 111).

Furthermore, Jane's character is revealed by her attitude toward others. Elizabeth continues with the observance of her sister and concludes that such goodness in Jane's character belongs only to her: "With *your* good sense, to be so honestly blind to the follies and nonsense of others! Affectation of candour is common enough—one meets it everywhere. But to be candid without ostentation 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" (Austen PP 14). Descriptions of Jane's character throughout the novel do not change. She is still seen as an angel. Her only flaw was that she—that is, her family—was of no money. Her father is a gentleman with no sons. Therefore, he has no heir. His property is entailed, and his daughters cannot inherit the goods. Jane, being in such a position, must secure her future that, according to her mother, greatly lays in her beauty.

As demonstrated in conduct books, Jane Bennet's persona includes all characteristics of an ideal woman. She is not judgmental nor proud like her sister Elizabeth. She is not wild,

stout, and vain. Her personality is contrasted with Elizabeth's. Namely, Jane is portrayed as a sweeter, shyer, compliant, and generous person: "You are a good girl […] You are […] so complying […]; so easy […]; and so generous […]" (Austen PP 268). Her conversations are much simpler than Elizabeth's. She does not use wit nor humour. She respects all the social norms of appropriate conduct. On one hand, Jane's conduct is so appropriate that people who do not know her might think she is equally friendly with everyone she meets. On the other hand, her goodness and proper behaviour could present a problem regarding Mr. Bingley, as is seen in the conversation between Charlotte Lucas and Elizabeth: "In nine cases out of ten, a woman had better show *more* affection than she feels. Bingley likes your sister, undoubtedly; but he may never do more than like her, if she does not help him on" (Austen PP 19). That is why Waldron says that "Jane is a Dr. Gregory girl with this difference; though she can *appear* to have no thoughts of marrying Bingley, she cannot be expected to prevent herself from *feeling*, a distinction which the conduct-books rarely make. Anybody who knows Jane well knows that she is falling in love" (44).

According to conduct books, Jane Bennet's only shortcomings are her falling in love with Bingley and her not coming out of a family with money. Considering all the characteristics of an ideal woman presented in conduct books, Jane Bennet would be a perfect picture of an ideal woman were it not for the economic circumstances of her family.

3.2. Women with flaws

3.2.1. Elizabeth Bennet: a perfect Mrs. Darcy

Elizabeth Bennet enters the scene as a young woman who is certain of herself and of her place in society. She is the second oldest daughter in the family.

Elizabeth is a young woman full of contradictions. No one can say whether she is an ideal woman or not. Austen introduces in two different manners through her parents' views. Specifically, her parents' opinions do not agree with each other about their second oldest daughter. On the one hand, she is her father's favorite: "I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy. […] Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters" (Austen PP 6). On the other hand, Mrs. Bennet claims that Elizabeth is her least favorite child: "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" (Austen PP 6). Who is to be believed? Mr. Bennet or Mrs. Bennet? Mr. Bennet knows what men want in women, or at least, after many years of marriage to Mrs.

Bennet, he knows what he, as a man, wishes of his companion. Unlike Elizabeth's father, her mother is aware of the strict social requirements of an ideal woman. However, both Elizabeth's parents are subjective when talking about her and cannot be held "responsible" for the claim that Elizabeth is, or is not, an ideal woman. What Mr. Bennet loves about Elizabeth is what Mrs. Bennet likes the least, seeing what her husband sees as her daughter's qualities, as flaws. The best way to look at the accuracy about whether Elizabeth represents or does not represent the picture of an ideal woman is to see how her behavior and manners conform to the social standards based on various conduct books and manuscripts of the period.

As the main concern of conduct literature is oriented towards male desires, women are the ones who are expected to try to achieve all that society demands from them. However, Elizabeth does not abide by social rules and demands. As Dabundo argues, Elizabeth Bennet is an "independent, strong-willed heroine" (39). She tries to cope with society and its rules, but she cannot go against her own beliefs and moral standards. Elizabeth is very critical of social rules and is proud of recognizing the faults of polite society. In the first half of the novel, Elizabeth is overcome with her pride, and she judges people according to her own standards, which she acquired through reading and observing people around her. She uses humor and wit when someone insults or mocks her, just as Mr. Darcy did when they first met at the country ball (Dabundo 48). For example, Mr. Darcy describes her saying:

> She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt *me;* and I am in no humour 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. (Austen PP 11)

Austen then continues:

> Mr Bingley followed his advice. Mr Darcy walked off; and Elizabeth remained with no very cordial feelings towards him. She told the story, however, with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous. (Austen PP 11-12)

Throughout the novel, Elizabeth engages the reader with wit and humor. This example shows Elizabeth's "imperfection" because she does not follow the rules of the conduct books. She freely uses wit even though, according to Gregory, "wit is the most dangerous talent […] Wit is so flattering to vanity […] Humor is a different quality […] It is often a great enemy to delicacy, and a still greater one to dignity of character" (35-36). Elizabeth is an outspoken person who is not afraid to use her knowledge in a practical way. Specifically, she puts other people in their place not directly but through the use of wit and humor, qualities conduct books frowned upon. She is rather quick to react to other people's thoughts without taking any time

to think over the picture she portrays of herself. However, as the book progresses, Elizabeth's character changes.

In the first part of the book, when the Bennet sisters meet their new neighbors and their friends, Dabundo explains that Elizabeth:

> is fun-loving but not very deep as a person. At her first encounter with Darcy, she is easily hurt by his initial flippant dismissal of her—and all the other young women at the local assembly—censuring them as unworthy of his attention […] To save face, she is able to turn the insult into humor and use it against Darcy in mockery within her circle (48).

Austen's heroine here does not "measure up" to Fordyce's teachings. She is an individual who does not want to "play by the rules" and get married just for the economic and social privileges. Lizzy does not want to get married to anybody for the sake of being "successful" and "provided for" in the world around her. She is well aware of the importance of getting married and of propriety when out in the society; however, she does wants to get married for affection. According to Paris, she "must find a man who is at least her equal in intelligence and sensitivity, who can give her an appropriate social and economic position, and who does not object to making a disadvantageous alliance […] [S]he sees marriage primarily as a means to personal happiness" (98). Her progressive thinking makes Elizabeth rather a radical character who displays independence of spirit and willfulness of temper.

Austen represents Elizabeth as a young woman who is not afraid to draw conclusions based on her interactions with other people. Moreover, if a person does not behave how Elizabeth thinks is appropriate, she easily judges that person. Elizabeth's opinion of other people is cleverly disguised through her use of wit and humor. She is a sharp person who is not afraid to say what she thinks, but still, she does not offer her opinion directly to the people in concern. Even though Elizabeth is a smart person, she does not use her intelligence in the way Fordyce proposes. Based on Fordyce's teaching, Elizabeth is seen as a flawed character because she exhibits characteristics that are not suitable nor proper in society.

Regardless of difference in Fordyce's teachings on how to appropriately use one's intelligence, Elizabeth's intelligence is manifested through her actions and words. Specifically, Elizabeth has a talent for observation upon which she draws conclusions about people in her proximity. Susan Morgan agrees and claims that "[Elizabeth] understands herself as an observer, an enlightened and discerning witness to all that is ridiculous and entertaining in others. And she frequently places herself in the presumably disinterested position of someone watching yet apart" (61). Elizabeth is influenced by and learns how to "watch" people from

her father. Mr. Bennet's reason for "people watching" is found in a rather "cynical credo" (Morgan 61). He believes that the reason he and his family live is "but to make sport for our neighbors, and laugh at them in our turn" (Austen PP 280). Growing up under her father's influence, Elizabeth has learned how to navigate social responsibilities in a different manner from what is expected from young ladies. Mrs. Bennet does not like that character trait in Elizabeth because it surely opposes everything a young woman is supposed to be.

Not only is Elizabeth an adept observer, but also, she is able to distinguish foolish situations from wise ones. Being a young, unmarried woman out in society, she knows what type of answer she is expected to offer in any kind of situation based on her knowledge of social rules and observations. No matter how much Elizabeth does not agree with the rules applied in her society, they are her guiding points at times. However, she displays her own willfulness and, in some situations, foregoes the standard rules of propriety. She has learned how to deal with socially awkward situations by laughing. Certainly, it is not acceptable by the society for women to openly tease or ridicule. Women should show good sense and be cautious with wit and humor in company (see 2.2.). Nevertheless, Elizabeth admits laughing at "[f]ollies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies" (Austen PP 47). She laughs in absurd and uncomfortable situations, such as the very first time when she meets Mr. Darcy and he refuses to dance with her. Her pride was hurt, but she decides to laugh his refusal off. Morgan claims that Elizabeth's laughter, as well as "her impertinence, and her uncommitted heart" is a "weapon against what she sees as stupidity and ugliness" (57). While Elizabeth laughs at the failings of many characters, such as Mr. Collins, the Bingley sisters, and even her own family, she does not see the failings of others, such as Mr. Wickham and even herself at times (Morgan 61).

The aforementioned character trait points to Elizabeth's weakness. Specifically, she does not take life seriously (Morgan 61), which is mirrored in her behavior towards other people. Even if she does not have the full story of other character's life events, Lizzy's imagination flourishes and she draws conclusions about other people's characters based on pieces of information she hears and her short encounters with them. She will, though, come to learn that "people and events are more complex and hidden than she can know" (Morgan 65). She will undergo a process of transformation that will teach her to look more deeply at people and events that drive some of their decisions.

The strength of Elizabeth's character is seen in her self-confidence, determination, integrity, and bravery. She is not a person who is easily influenced by people surrounding her

(besides her father, and her aunt Mrs. Gardiner at times as well). She wishes to, as Waldron explains, "subject current shibboleths to intelligent examination instead of accepting them blindly" (41). Due to Elizabeth's questioning of social norms and other people's opinion and behavior, she does not cede control over her opinion, and she strongly presents her views and ideas on various topics.

There are few people she is passionate about and would not hesitate to offer them her help in any way. Specifically, when her sister Jane becomes ill, Elizabeth does not wait for a letter from Netherfield nor from Jane asking to come and help her. She immediately decides to go and take care of her ill sister. Her action is rather presumptuous, and society in general frowns upon such behavior. Nevertheless, Elizabeth does not relent for society nor for the sake of Mr. Bingley, his family or Mr. Darcy. Once she arrives at Netherfield, she surprises everyone with her act. Lizzy does not heed Miss. Bingley and Mrs. Hurst's opinion of her appearance: "[Her] appearance created a great deal of surprise […] Elizabeth was convinced that they held her in contempt for it" (Austen PP 28). Her confidence and determination are presented not only in this scene, but also in many others. Her dealings with Mr. Darcy present Elizabeth as an outspoken person. She is not afraid to freely voice her opinion. For example, Elizabeth is not afraid of telling Mr. Darcy that she would not dance with him or that she would "[t]ease him—laugh at him" (Austen PP 46). There are many conversations between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth in which she informs him of her views, which usually indicates that she discloses more of her standing point then she should. When Mr. Darcy proposes to her the first time, Elizabeth does not hold back her opinion and judgment of him. She does not react as a young lady should, nor does she accept his proposal, in spite of the fact that her father's property is entailed, and she does not have an ensured future life.

The relationship between Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Elizabeth is another example where the main protagonist demonstrates her confidence and bravery. She is not afraid of the lady's influence nor of her position in society and what kind of consequences she may reap afterwards: "Elizabeth's courage did not fail her" (Austen PP 127). Almost as soon as Elizabeth meets Lady de Bourgh, she is questioned by her ladyship about personal matters. Lizzy, being an opinionated person, does not hesitate and satisfies Lady de Bourgh's curiosity by providing her with the necessary information. However, when Elizabeth voices her opinion on the subject of having all her sisters out in society, Lady de Bourgh is appalled:

> "Upon my word," said her ladyship, "you give your opinion very decidedly for so young a person. Pray, what is your age?"

> "With three younger sisters grown up," replied Elizabeth, smiling, "your ladyship can hardly expect me to own it."
>
> Lady Catherine seemed quite astonished at not receiving a direct answer; and Elizabeth suspected herself to be the first creature who had ever dared to trifle with so much dignified impertinence. (Austen PP 130)

By refusing to be subdued by Lady Catherine, Elizabeth rebels against the social principles. Waldron writes that Elizabeth is not a silent character; she is "frequently pert […] openly challenging to accepted authority, and contemptuous of current decorums" (41). She stands for herself and does not yield to the lady's questions. Lizzy decides to which questions she wishes to answer, and while doing so, she expresses her opinion of the subject as well. By giving her opinion on the matter in question, Elizabeth also acknowledges her own weaknesses. Specifically, Elizabeth plays and sings a little, she does not draw, nor has she (or any of the Bennet girls) had a governess. Lizzy is presented as a young woman with no appropriate education and no acquired accomplishments, which is unthinkable of a young women in her position.

It is important for parents to provide appropriate education for their children because it is vital for moral understanding and social usefulness within a family and society. Therefore, Lady Catherine was very surprised once she heard that the Bennets "never had any governess" (Austen PP 129). By the standards of the society, Elizabeth and her sisters were "unschooled." As daughters of a gentleman, they were expected to have a governess. However, due to their parents' neglect, the girls were left to be taught by themselves. The Bennet girls were resourceful children. As Elizabeth says, "such of us as wished to learn never wanted the means. We were always encouraged to read, and had all the masters that were necessary. Those who chose to be idle, certainly might" (Austen PP 130). Society saw their lack of the appropriate form of education as a weakness.

Another weakness in Elizabeth's life is having almost no accomplishments. Lizzy's revelation of not being able to play or sing very well, nor being able to draw, presents her as an unaccomplished young woman. There are a few instances where other people describe what an accomplished woman should look like, and Elizabeth Bennet doesn't fit any of those descriptions. When Mr. Bingley says that all young women are very accomplished, Mr. Darcy and Miss. Bingley disagree and are quite critical. Hearing Mr. Darcy's description of an accomplished lady, Elizabeth criticizes him. Were it just for Mr. Bingley's description of an accomplished woman who paints "tables, cover screens, and net purses," Lizzy might yet be accomplished (Austen PP 32). However, to Mr. Darcy, Miss. Bingley, and even Lady Catherine

de Bourgh, Elizabeth is none of these. Hearing all of the accomplishments that Mr. Darcy expects young women to possess, Lizzy criticizes him and says that it is impossible to find such a woman: "*I* never saw such a woman. *I* never saw such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance, as you describe united" (Austen PP 33). According to social standards and rules, Elizabeth, having no proper education and no governess, was not able to acquire accomplishments that would enable her to find a prosperous husband.

Physical appearance of women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries should not have played an important role in the society based on various teachings of conduct literature. However, physical appearance was just one the variables by which women were judged. Even though the authors of these texts emphasized the importance of behavior, they still contradicted themselves and commented on girls' appearance and what was appropriate or not when dressing up for men.

The narration does not offer much information about Elizabeth's physical appearance; however, in a few instances, other characters offer some things of Lizzy's description. Those descriptions are rather subjective because the characters are seeing Elizabeth through their ambitions and social requirements. Her mother says that she "is not half so handsome as" her sister Jane, which would indicate that Elizabeth is not very beautiful. Mr. Bingley, on the contrary, describes her as a "very pretty" at one of the balls. However, some portrayals of her appearance, according to the characters describing her, show her as quite plain. Unlike Mr. Bingley's favorable description, Caroline Bingley's description is not flattering at all; she only sees fault in Elizabeth's image:

> I must confess that I never could see any beauty in her. Her face is too thin; her complexion has no brilliancy; and her features are not at all handsome. Her nose wants character—there is nothing marked in its lines. Her teeth are tolerable, but not out of common way; and as for her eyes, which have sometimes been called so fine, I never could perceive anything extraordinary in them. They have a sharp, shrewish look, which I do not like at all; and in her air altogether there is a self-sufficiency without fashion, which is intolerable. (Austen PP 207)

One can see, though, the reason for Caroline Bingley's prejudiced view, in male company. Specifically, her prospective husband, Mr. Darcy, has commented on Elizabeth's appearance favorably. Her description is the critique and her effort to dissuade Mr. Darcy from pursuing Elizabeth.

Initially, Mr. Darcy has a rather "negative" view of Elizabeth's appearance. He says that she is "not handsome enough to tempt [*him*]" (Austen PP 11). However, later on he acknowledges that he "had at first scarcely allowed [Elizabeth] to be pretty […] But no sooner

had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes […] he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing" (Austen PP 20). Mr. Darcy's view of Elizabeth changes the longer he knows her: Elizabeth's physical attraction lays in her character. As Elaine Bander argues, Mr. Darcy is attracted "not to [Elizabeth's] mere physical appearance as a sexual object but to the qualities expressed by that appearance, especially her animation. Darcy thus shows himself capable of revising his first impressions of Elizabeth and of seeing beneath surface attractions to inner character" (29-30). Mr. Darcy is attracted to Elizabeth because of her physical showings/animation of what she feels. However, the showings of, in this case, Lizzy's emotions are not acceptable by the society. Young women and girls were taught to control themselves within public and not show their "real" emotions. They were supposed to present themselves in a way that was pleasing to men. Elizabeth's interaction with Mr. Darcy was anything but appropriate, according to social standards at the time. Nevertheless, Elizabeth's independence of mind, and her willfulness and self-conceit are exactly what attracted Mr. Darcy to her.

In chapter ten, when Elizabeth is staying at Netherfield to take care of her sick sister Jane, in one scene she shows her willfulness and her mind to Mr. Darcy, which only furthermore attracts him to her.

> After playing some Italian songs, Miss Bingley varied the charm by a lovely Scotch air; and soon afterwards Mr Darcy, drawing near Elizabeth, said to her—"Do you not feel a great inclination, Miss Bennet, to seize such an opportunity of dancing a reel?"
>
> She smiled, but made no answer. He repeated the question, with some surprise at her silence.
>
> "Oh!" said she, "I heard you before, but I could not immediately determine what to say in reply. You wanted me, I know, to say 'Yes,' that you might have the pleasure of despising my taste; but I always delight in overthrowing those kind of schemes, and cheating a person of their premediated contempt. I have, therefore, made up my mind to tell you, that I do not want to dance a reel at all—and now despise me if you dare."
>
> "Indeed I do not dare."
>
> Elizabeth, having rather expected to affront him, was amazed at his gallantry; but there was a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner which made it difficult for her to affront anybody; and Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her. He really believed, that were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger. (Austen PP 42-43)

This scene shows not only Mr. Darcy's attraction to Elizabeth, but her personality, namely her wittiness and intelligence, which is shown in her quick responses. Her attraction is found in her

behavior. She presents everything that other young women do/are not. She is wild, feisty, and passionate. Elizabeth fights for her ideas and does not run from challenges nor hesitate to hold back her answer when it is expected of her to do so.

Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth because of her imperfections. He loves her impertinence. At first, he is not attracted to her physically, but once he gets to know her-once he is able to look into the windows of her soul, into her eyes (which display her emotions), he falls in love with her.

3.2.2. Charlotte Lucas: a realist

Charlotte Lucas plays no main role in *Pride and Prejudice*. However, her involvement in the story of her best friend and neighbour Elizabeth Bennet portrays to readers a realistic position of women in society at that time. Charlotte Lucas's character represents the general mindset of women at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries.

Lizzy's best friend is introduced as "a sensible, intelligent young woman, about twenty-seven" (Austen PP 16). At 27 and not being married, Charlotte is heading toward becoming an old maid. Not having a family and a husband is represented as a burden to herself and her parents. Charlotte's life revolves around marriage. As Waldron says, "[a] dialogue about marriage has already begun" with the first sentence of the novel (43). As the main issue of the novel revolves around the subject of marriage, Charlotte's character is focused on finding a solution of that "problem" in her life. Thus, thinking of a marriage as a deal, which would enable her future security, Miss Lucas has a different view of marriage than Elizabeth. Unlike Lizzy, Charlotte thinks:

> [H]appiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. If the dispositions of the parties are ever so well known to each other or ever so similar beforehand, it does not advance their felicity in the least. They always continue to grow sufficiently unlike afterwards to have their share of vexation; and it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you pass your life. (Austen PP 20)

Miss Lucas is not in a favourable position in which she can choose her husband. She is not as young as other ladies looking for a husband. Her family is not one with money. Certainly, her father has a title of knighthood, but it is of no help to her. On that account, Charlotte is portrayed as a practical person. She "must forsake [her] patrilineal [home for that of her husband] with all of [her future and fortune] likely lying in balance" (Dabundo 41). She is forced to be realistic in her expectations and to be "very perceptive and calculating" to secure her economic situation

(Dabundo 42). After Elizabeth refuses Mr. Collins's proposal, Charlotte schemes and ensures Mr. Collins's addresses toward herself (Austen PP 97).

Charlotte Lucas is a character who sees real problems. She has no unrealistic expectations as other characters might. As Waldron questions, "[the marriage] debate centres upon Charlotte Lucas, whose voice and actions expose a fundamental contradiction in received doctrine which is revealed through that shocked protestations of Elizabeth – how is a girl to retain what Gregory and others call her 'delicacy' and get herself decently off her family's hands?" (43). How can a girl interest a man if she is not beautiful nor rich? There is no mentioning of Charlotte being accomplished in various domains that the writers of conduct books mentioned. Everything there is to know about Charlotte is that she is a "well-educated young woman of small fortune" and not "having ever been handsome" (Austen PP 98-99), which is why she is not married at 27. However, the only constant trait in Charlotte's character is her being realistic, her brisk common-sense, and her being hard-headed (Waldron 44). Being aware of the situation in which she finds herself, Charlotte advances "a detailed battle-plan which is infinitely subtler and, moreover, more cynical" (Waldron, 44). Miss Lucas takes her life into her hands and deals with it in the best way she knows how. She knows she is in a need for a secure financial life, and for that reason, "Charlotte's view must at one level sound safe and sensible" (Waldron 45). Charlotte's sensibleness and thoughtfulness urges her to marry Mr. Collins.

Elizabeth is shocked to hear that her best friend has accepted Mr. Collins's proposal. Even after the explanation behind her affirmative answer to Mr. Collins, Lizzy still cannot accept the new situation between Charlotte and Mr. Collins. It seems that Elizabeth felt and thought more of a marriage between her cousin and her best friend. However, Miss Lucas never thought "highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object" (Austen PP 98), an object that she achieved in the end. Having a different opinion of marriage, Elizabeth "will have none of it; she insists on a combination of romance and rationality" (Waldron 44), and not just rationality like Charlotte. Regardless of Miss Lucas's decision, Jane still thinks of her as a "prudent, steady character" (Austen PP 107).

Charlotte's prudent and steady character is seen even after she gets married. She deals with her matrimony the same way she dealt with various situations when she was a single woman. Namely, she deals with her new-found life as realistically as before. When Elizabeth visits her, she comes to the same decision. "[I]n the solitude of her chamber, [Elizabeth] had to mediate upon Charlotte's degree of contentment, to understand her address in guiding, and

composure in bearing with, her husband, and to acknowledge that it was all done very well" (Austen PP 124).

Charlotte's situation is much more common for the period. The position where she is found in the book is mirrored from reality. Therefore, her character is presented through her attitude toward marriage. She is a sensitive, intelligent, realistic young woman who has been forced by social difficulties to act upon and secure her socioeconomic future.

3.2.3. Emma Woodhouse: "faultless in spite of her all faults"

On the very first page, readers of *Emma* meet the same called character—Emma Woodhouse. She is a young woman of twenty-one who grew up in a household with her father and an older sister Isabella. When her sister marries John Knightley, she leaves the family house for a new home in London. Thus, Emma is left as a mistress of the house with their affectionate father and a governess named Lady Taylor.

Young Miss Woodhouse is loved by everyone in the neighborhood. The first paragraph provides readers with relevant information about Emma. She is described as "handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition" (Austen *Emma* 5). The first sentence establishes Emma as a privileged woman whose financial future is secure. She is independent of other people, and she can live her life as she wishes. Therefore, Emma is not required to get married unless she were to fall in love: "I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. Were I to fall in love, indeed, it would be a different thing! […] And, without love, I am sure I should be a fool to change such a situation as mine. Fortune I do not want; employment I do not want; consequence I do not want: I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's house, as I am of Hartfield […]" (Austen *Emma* 66–67). Furthermore, Mr Woodhouse encourages his daughter never to marry. As Paris says, he "dislikes marriage, fears life, and opposes change" (67). Emma is satisfied with her situation as the mistress of Hartfield and with taking care of her father. She has no imperative objective in her life other than to attend to her father and help people in need. Fordyce would surely deem her behaviour proper based on his advice in the *Sermon XII* where he talks of filial duty (93) and quotes the passage from the Bible where it says to obey and honour one's parents.[1] Emma

[1] Ephesians 6:1–3. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honour your father and mother,' which is the first commandment accompanied by a promise, namely, 'that it will go well with you and that you will live a long time on the earth.'"

is a loving daughter who puts her father's comfort above her needs. "[She] made it necessary to be cheerful. His spirits required support" (Austen *Emma* 7). Thus, Emma takes on a role different from that of other young ladies in taking on the role of a caregiver. Her sense of duty, not only toward her father but also toward her sister, nephews, and the poor is quite strong (Paris 80). "[She] was very compassionate; and the distresses of the poor were as sure of relief from her personal attention and kindness, her counsel and her patience, as from her purse. She understood their ways […]" (Austen *Emma* 68). She is good with the poor. Being raised as a privileged young woman and knowing others' social standing, Emma understands the unfortunate position of the poor. Her position and education enable her to know of writings in conduct manuscripts and to act accordingly; however, there are some instances where Emma acts rashly towards those whom she is supposed to help.

Emma is not fond of Mrs and Miss Bates, an elderly woman and a spinster. She finds them "tiresome women" (Austen *Emma* 116), especially because Miss Bates constantly talks about her niece Jane as "a great talker upon little matters" (Austen *Emma* 17), and she keeps repeating herself. One of Miss Bates' flaws is her good-natured character. Miss Bates possesses qualities that Emma herself does not. She loves and upholds Emma, but it is not mutual. Emma actually "displays an aversion toward Miss Bates throughout and mocks or disparages her many times behind her back" (Paris 85). The way Emma speaks to Miss Bates on Box Hill is an example of an indecent behaviour where she publicly ridicules the unfortunate Miss Bates (Austen *Emma* 280). Here Emma defies her elder and thus ignores the rules of propriety. Her words "give pain unnecessarily to any creature" (Fordyce *Sermon XIV* 140). Mr Knightley has to reprimand Emma for her behaviour in order to realise her mistake:

> 'How could you be so unfeeling to Miss Bates? How could you be so insolent in your wit to a woman of her character, age, and situation? […] Were she your equal in situation—but, Emma, consider how far this is from being the case. She is poor; she has sunk from the comforts she was born to; and, if she live to old age, must probably sink more. Her situation should secure your compassion. It was badly done, indeed!' (Austen *Emma* 283–284)

It seems as though Emma has forgotten Miss Bates' position and ridicules her by using her wit. Emma's behaviour does not correspond to Fordyce and Gregory's teachings about moral standards. She uses her superiority in an improper way. She is rude and unfeeling toward Miss Bates. Thanks to her social standing, Emma does not need to think of the future, nor is there any need for her to marry. She alone will always have a privileged position in society, unlike Miss Bates.

Another example of Emma's improper ways can be observed in her various relationships with men outside her family. A local farmer's family is indirectly subjected to Emma's meddling. Namely, Miss Woodhouse takes an interest in a young woman named Harriet Smith. "*She* would notice [Harriet]; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and manners. It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, and powers" (Austen *Emma* 19). Emma wants to improve Harriet and her situation because it would enable Harriet to marry into a higher social position. As Paris says, "her superior marriage will all redound to the glory of her maker" (79). When a local farmer, Mr Robert Martin, proposes to Harriet, Emma is appalled. Miss Woodhouse thinks of the Martins as Harriet's unworthy acquaintances (Austen *Emma* 19). She supports Harriet in her refusal of poor Mr Martin on account of his social position. He is "very unfit to be the intimates of a girl who wanted only a little more knowledge and elegance" (Austen *Emma* 19). The Martins are inferior to Miss Woodhouse and are therefore not good enough for Harriet, a girl under her wing. Emma encourages Harriet to look for her happiness with the local vicar Mr Elton instead. Unfortunately, Mr Elton professes his love towards Miss Woodhouse and not Miss Smith. His proposal is surprising to Emma and she finds it unbelievable that he had "the arrogance to raise his eyes to her" (Austen *Emma* 104). Just as the case was with Mr Martin, Miss Woodhouse is appalled by Mr Elton's proposal due to his inferiority. Paris argues that Elton's proposal to Emma "is such a blow, not only because it insults her dignity, but also because it deprives her of glory, challenges her sense of mastery, and calls into question the superiority of her 'Understanding.' His scorn of Harriet, in whom she has now invested her pride, is an offense to herself" (79). Here, Emma is offended by the thought of being proposed to by someone who is not her equal; it portrays Emma as a prideful woman. As such, her behaviour does not comply with the moral standards of Fordyce's and Gregory's writings. Miss Woodhouse may have acted in a superior way towards both Mr Martin and Mr Elton, but when Frank Churchill comes to visit his father, Mr Weston, Emma finds him to be her equal. Thus, her behaviour towards Mr Churchill changes. However, her behaviour towards Frank, even though it is different and equal, is still seen as improper. Emma openly accepts Mr Churchill's attention, "Mr Frank Churchill and Miss Woodhouse flirted together excessively" (Austen *Emma* 278). They both engage in socially inappropriate conduct numerous times due to their overt attention to each other but with no promise of matrimony. Gregory warns women against such friendships whereby the women are usually ruined by the

men (84–85), while Fordyce advises them not to indulge too far in the friendship (*Sermon V* 87). Still, Emma does not heed the warnings.

Despite all of Emma's misconduct, she is still presented as an ideal woman by almost all characters besides Mr Knightley. According to Mr Weston, Emma is living perfection, and he explains it by asking: "'What two letters of the alphabet are there, that express perfection?' […] 'Ah! You will never guess. You, (to Emma), I am certain, will never guess.—I will tell you. —M and A. —Em—ma. —Do you understand?'" (Austen *Emma* 280). Mr Weston is not the only person who thinks highly of young Emma. Almost every character in the book has a high opinion of her. She is "the cleverest of the family" (Austen *Emma* 29), beautiful, "with a complexion! Oh! What a bloom of full health, and such a pretty height and size; such a firm and upright figure […] she is an excellent creature" (Austen *Emma* 31). Based on this description, Emma presents ideal beauty in her neighbourhood. Furthermore, she adheres to manners of conduct about which both Gregory and Fordyce write. They encourage young women to be observant of their complexion and constitution (see 2.2.2.). Being a beautiful young woman who is full of health, Emma could be vain, yet she is not. Even Mr Knightley, who is rather more critical of her than other characters, praises her and says: "I do not think her personally vain. Considering how very handsome she is, she appears to be little occupied with it" (Austen *Emma* 31). Emma does not comment on her complexion nor her appearance. She puts emphasis on her other skills rather than flaunting her beauty.

Miss Woodhouse is a lady with accomplished skills. She is a clever young woman who inherited her mother's talents (Austen *Emma* 29). Sadly, Emma lost her mother and could not be educated by her, so her father employed a governess. Miss Taylor, the governess, should have taught Emma proper education for a lady; however Emma's strong character presented a difficulty for her governess. Like Miss Taylor, now Mrs Weston explains to Mr Knightley that Emma "will never submit to any thing requiring industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding […] You could never persuade her to read half so much as you wished" (Austen *Emma* 29). Despite refusing to read books that do not hold her attention, Emma still submits to subjects in which she is interested. She had the opportunity to learn how to play piano and how to draw. Both of these accomplishments are also signs of social status (see 2.3.2.). Regardless of her social status, Emma is a skilful artist and a proficient piano player who finds others think of her accomplishment more highly than deserved.

> She played and sang;—and drew in almost every style; but steadiness had always been wanting; and in nothing had she approached the degree of

> excellence which she would have been glad to command, and ought not to have failed of. She was not much deceived as to her own skill either as an artist or a musician, but she was not unwilling to have others deceived, or sorry to know her reputation for accomplishment often higher than it deserved. (Austen *Emma* 35)

This presents Emma as an accomplished young woman who is aware of her own abilities and talent. She does not pretend to be more talented, nor she is displaying her artful proficiency. Moreover, she is aware of her "inferiority of her own playing and singing" (Austen *Emma* 174). As a result, Emma sits down and practises playing piano in order to better herself. Miss Woodhouse is willing to improve herself in areas in which she does not excel. Her accomplishments and willingness to improve are qualities which Fordyce and Gregory support in their writings.

Emma is a character who, at first, adheres to the description of the ideal woman. She is, as Tóth says, different from other characters "because of her physical attractiveness, outstanding intelligence, artistic capabilities, financial situation, social status and most of all, her power position" (83). However, Emma has faults to which she herself admits. She is not as perfect as it seems. Emma is a well-meaning person who hurts other people's feelings and does not think of the consequences that her meddling in other people's lives has. As a young woman of a higher position, she has not learned how to manage her power and capabilities. Nevertheless, through various events, she learns that she was not right in her treatment of others. She seems "to have been doomed to blindness" (Austen *Emma* 321), but the past lessons have taught her humility and circumspection (Austen *Emma* 360). As Paris says, "Emma is an unusual figure which was most commonly induced and most strongly approved by the society of her time" (91). In the end, as Mr Knightley concludes, Emma is "faultless in spite of all her faults" (Austen *Emma* 327).

3.2.4. Jane Fairfax: Mr. Churchill's perfection

Miss Jane Fairfax is a young lady of the same age as Emma Woodhouse. She is the only child of Lieutenant Fairfax and Jane Bates. Jane was a baby when her parents died, leaving her in the care of her grandmother and aunt, Mrs and Miss Bates, and yet, due to the social position of Mrs and Miss Bates, Colonel Campbell takes care of "the whole charge of her education. It was accepted; and from that period Jane had belonged to Colonel Campbell's family, and had lived with them entirely, only visiting her grandmother from time to time"

(Austen *Emma* 123). Colonel Campbell thus gives Jane future security by providing her with an education that should qualify her for work as a governess.

Jane is a very elegant, tall, and graceful lady. "Her eyes, a deep grey, with dark eye-lashes and eye-brows, had never been denied their praise; but the skin, which she had been used to cavil at, as wanting colour, had a clearness and delicacy which really needed no fuller bloom. It was a style of beauty, of which elegance was the reigning character" (Austen *Emma* 126). Like the main character Emma, Jane is an equally beautiful young lady. She is not prideful about her beauty, nor does she flaunt her elegance. Her elegant style and beauty follow along the lines of what both Gregory and Fordyce write about (see 2.2). Besides being beautiful, Jane is delightful company to the Campbells and her elders; Miss Campbell in particular is attached to Jane. Moreover, Jane is well-informed person who "had received every advantage of discipline and culture" in the Campbell household (Austen *Emma* 123).

Miss Fairfax is an accomplished young lady. It is no wonder that she is superior in her playing and singing skills (Austen *Emma* 162, 172, 175). She was trained to excel in those skills because her economic independence is restricted. Jane should be able to provide for herself by teaching other young ladies those accomplishments in the future. Due to her education, by which she can provide for herself, Jane is not as dependant economically. However, as much as Jane would be able to provide for herself in the future, her position in society is unfortunate. As Swords argues, "[an] unmarried woman could become a governess, but this was a position beneath the social rank and status of middle and upper class young women and was thus regarded as humiliating" (n.p.). Furthermore, Miss Fairfax does not want to become a governess, as can be seen in the example where she declines Mrs Elton's help and postpones finding a position (Austen *Emma* 227). Mrs Elton insists on helping Jane, but Jane politely explains she does not need to interfere with such a task. She is very grateful and respectful when communicating with Mrs Elton even though Mrs Elton is condescending towards her.

People in Highbury know about Jane's beauty, elegance, and accomplishments even before she visits her grandmother and her aunt, Miss Bates. She writes letters in which she relates events that have happened in her life. Miss Bates talks about Jane's achievements and her life, so the neighbours already love Jane. She is pleasant company, very polite, and a well-mannered young lady; however, Jane is not exempt from flaws. Her character flaws become noticeable the more time she spends with her relatives; namely, people have observed and commented on Jane's reserve. On the one hand, Jane could be seen as a woman who adheres

to Gregory's advice where she does not have to utter a word and still be a part of conversation (33). On the other hand, Gregory advises women to be more open than reserved because "[an] open temper, if restrained but by tolerable prudence, will make you, on the whole, much happier" (75). Her secret relationship with Mr Churchill does not allow her to form meaningful friendships with any of the Highbury residents. They even comment how "her account of every thing leaves so much to be guessed, she is so very reserved, so very unwilling to give the least information about any body" (Austen *Emma* 151). While some might see this as a positive characteristic, Mr Knightley, for example, sees being reserved as a flaw. He admits that she is "a very charming young woman—but not even Jane Fairfax is perfect. She has a fault. She has not the open temper which a man would wish for in a wife" (Austen *Emma* 217). Certainly, Miss Fairfax is not perfect due to her reserved and secretive attitude which stems from an agreement with Mr Churchill that no one knows about.

The relationship between Miss Fairfax and Mr Churchill is strange and mysterious. They met at Weymouth before, and now everyone is interested in Jane's opinion of Frank. However, she is very wary of giving more information than necessary. Her secret engagement to Mr Churchill is improper and that is why Miss Fairfax cannot relay her opinion openly. Furthermore, they did not know each other for a long period of time before they made the agreement. By entering into a secret engagement, Jane risks her own reputation. It is something that moralists of the period advise against (see 2.2). Women should be careful when dealing with men, especially in secrecy.

> Thousands of women of the best hearts and finest parts have been ruined by men who approach them under the specious name of friendship. But supposing a man to have the most undoubted honour, yet his friendship to a woman is so near a-kin to love, that if she be very agreeable in her person, she will probably very soon find a lover, where she only wished to meet a friend.—Let me here, however, warn you against that weakness so common among vain women, the imagination that every man who takes particular notice of you is a lover. Nothing can expose you more to ridicule, than the taking up a man on the suspicion of being your lover, who perhaps never once thought of you in that view […] (Gregory 85–86)

Miss Fairfax does not know Mr Churchill very well, and she might be misguided in her belief that he is really going to marry her. His behaviour in Highbury is anything but promising to fulfil their agreement to marry. Still, Mr Churchill acknowledges their engagement in the end, and they marry. Once the engagement is public, Emma questions whether Jane "thinks herself wrong, then, for having consented to a private engagement" (Austen *Emma* 316) but does not blame her because Jane loves Frank excessively. Nevertheless, she argues that "[one]

natural consequence of the evil she had involved herself in, she said, was that of making her *unreasonable*. The consciousness of having done amiss, had exposed her to a thousand inquietudes, and made her captious and irritable to a degree" (Austen *Emma* 317). Jane might have acted differently were it not for the secret engagement. She does not adhere to all advice that Fordyce and Gregory offer. Still, despite all the mistakes Miss Fairfax has made, she is a perfect wife for Mr Churchill (Austen *Emma* 324).

3.2.5. Harriet Smith: "the luckiest creature in the world"

Harriet Smith is a young girl of unknown origin. She knows nothing of her parents and whence she comes; someone had left her at Mrs Goddard's boarding school as a child. Growing up in the boarding school, Harriet is taught only essential skills for her future life, which means she has no accomplishments as far as the reader knows. As an example, in the scene at the Cole's, only Miss Fairfax and Emma play piano, which is an indication that Harriet does not know how to play it. Furthermore, one can conclude that Harriet cannot draw or paint. She spends most of her time with Emma, and she has plenty of opportunities to paint with Emma together; however, there is no account of that. There is no given information regarding her accomplishments. As Mr Knightley says, "[she] is not a sensible girl, nor a girl of any information. She has been taught nothing useful, and is too young and too simple to have acquired any thing herself. At her age she can have no experience, and with her little wit, is not very likely ever to have any that can avail her" (Austen *Emma* 48). This means that Harriet is too young to know her own mind and present her understanding of certain matters. Fordyce advises women "not to lose sight of wisdom […], to enrich and adorn your understanding […as to] qualify you to shine in conversation" (*Sermon VII* 136). Emma helps Harriet by providing her with some reading materials, but it is not helpful to Harriet in understanding the messages behind the readings. Miss Smith appears to be a silly young girl, so when Mr Elton writes charades, Harriet does not understand their meaning (Austen *Emma* 56–59). With Emma's help and guidance, however, Harriet perceives the meaning of the charades.

Miss Smith is a simple girl with pretty features. She may not be a clever girl, but she is a beautiful, good-natured young woman with a "sweetness of temper and manner, [who has] a very humble opinion of herself, and a great readiness to be pleased with other people" (Austen *Emma* 49–50). As can be seen in multiple scenes, Harriet wants to please people. As such, she wants to act as Emma thinks is the most appropriate in her answer to the marriage proposal by

Mr Martin (Austen, *Emma* 40–43). She is easily tractable and dependable on the opinion of others, which is something that Gregory writes against. He says that young women should "in the matters of taste, that depend on your own feelings, consult no one friend whatever, but consult your own hearts" (130). On many occasions, Harriet does the contrary, she consults Emma and not her heart. Moreover, she does not adhere to Gregory's advice to spend time with adults who have more mature life knowledge than her young friend.

Miss Smith is inferior to Miss Woodhouse, and, as such, Harriet is a person with "the compliant disposition which Emma likes in other people" (Paris 79). Her disposition makes Miss Smith a perfect candidate who will act as Emma suggests. Instead of accepting Mr Martin's proposal, with Emma's encouragement, Harriet thinks of Mr Elton as a suitor. She has no feelings toward Mr Elton; she is rather infatuated by him, his elegance, and his compliments.

> 'Whatever you say is always right,' [to Emma] cried Harriet, 'and therefore I suppose, and believe, and hope it must be so; but otherwise I could not have imagined it. It is so much beyond any thing I deserve. Mr Elton, who might marry any body! There cannot be two opinions about *him*. He is so very superior. Only think of those sweet verses—"To Miss —." Dear me, how clever! —Could it really be meant for me?' (Austen *Emma* 58–59)

Her love for Mr Eliot is established upon her admiration and gratitude. Unbeknownst to Emma or Harriet, Mr Elton's response at the request of writing charades is not out of love towards Harriet but towards Miss Woodhouse. Gregory warns women that their feeling of being in love is not real love. He claims that "[what] is commonly called love among you is rather gratitude, and a partiality to the man who prefers you to the rest of your sex" (89–90). This is exactly how Harriet behaves. She claims to be in love with those men who show interest in her, such as Mr Elton who goes to London to have her picture framed and who writes charades (Austen *Emma* 36–39, 56–59). Later on, Harriet believes that she and Mr Knightley are in love. Her love for him begins at a ball when he asks her to dance and saves her from disgrace (Austen *Emma* 247). Miss Smith does not admit her being in love with Mr Knightley to Emma for quite some time (Austen *Emma* 307–308). Therefore, she has learned to keep matters of the heart to herself. In the end, Harriet portrays some of the characteristics about which the moralists wrote, which she had disregarded earlier. Moreover, Mr Knightley concludes that Harriet "has some first-rate qualities […] An unpretending, single-minded, artless girl—infinitely to be preferred by any man of sense and taste […]" (Austen *Emma* 249).

At the beginning, Harriet Smith is a poor young girl with no home and no family. She is a simple girl with no traces of pride or vanity. Under Emma's influence, she disregards her wish to be with Mr Martin, which makes her submissive to her friend in other parts of her life as well. Harriet seems to be lost due to her lack of experience, wisdom, and judgement. She acts as others suggest she should in responding to some events. Nonetheless, something that never changes is her sweetness of temper and manner. She remains a humble girl who does not pretend to be someone else. Ultimately, after Emma fails to find a husband fit for her young friend, Miss Smith decides to follow the wishes of her own heart and marries Mr Martin. In spite of the friendship between Emma and Harriet and the help of those in higher social positions, Harriet's marriage to Mr Martin reveals how social and political correctness are still of importance in Highbury (Trepanier 71). Furthermore, Harriet's parentage becomes known, which allows her to legally be part of society. In different circumstances Harriet's "stain of illegitimacy, unbleached by nobility or wealth, would have been a stain indeed" (Austen *Emma* 365). In the end, despite Harriet's simpleness and single-mindedness, she is a girl with good manners and a sweet temper whose situation and future insecurity change for the better and make her the luckiest girl in the world.

3.3. Counter-images of ideal woman

3.3.1. Caroline Bingley and Lady de Bourgh: self-righteous ladies

Miss Caroline Bingley is introduced at the very beginning of the novel unlike Lady de Bourgh, who is met in the second part of the book. Both characters believe they are above everyone in their surroundings. They believe they are a part of a dignified world and that they are superior to everyone. They are a part of the high social class, but one of them is born in the higher class, whereas the other "earned" her part through her family business of trade.

The character of Caroline Bingley represents a young aristocratic woman of the 18th century. Her character is revealed through relationships with other people. She is obsessed with rank, and thus she looks down at others unless they are of a higher social rank. The Bingley family is a respectable family whose fortune was acquired by trade (Austen PP 14), which makes them a part of a higher class. However, Bingley sisters are not portrayed as upstanding people. "They were in fact very fine ladies; not deficient in good humour when they were pleased, nor in the power of being agreeable when they chose it, but proud and conceited [… They] were in the habit […] of associating with people of rank, and were therefore in every

respect entitled to think well of themselves, and meanly of others" (Austen PP 14). Caroline Bingley possesses a very high opinion of herself, and when she encountered people of inferior position, she would not associate with them if possible. However, her brother leases Netherfield Park, and she is forced to associate with the neighbours and people in its vicinity.

It is revealed that Caroline Bingley is financially set and has attended finishing school. By attending the school, she has acquired the accomplishments worthy of young ladies of rank. Being an accomplished lady and coming from a higher social class, Miss Bingley can be thought of as an ideal woman at first. She is the one Mr. Darcy should be marrying, seeing that she fulfils all the requirements of conduct books. As a typical aristocratic woman, Miss Bingley tries to impress Mr. Darcy and prompts him to make an offer to her. Caroline Bingley's ploy in impressing Mr. Darcy is apparent to everyone in her environment. She is Mr. Darcy's perpetual supporter. As Dabundo argues, Caroline Bingley, "who is certainly not a figure to admire in the novel, […] tries to read exactly as he is doing […]" (44). She even tries to impress him by being "the only" accomplished lady in his vicinity. Namely, she describes her accomplishments disguised as the accomplishments of who she thinks is a woman worth marrying into aristocracy. She says that 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 PP 33). On that account, Caroline thinks of herself as a glamorous, wealthy, well-mannered, educated, and proper lady worthy of being the next Mrs. Darcy. Her ploy in enticing Mr. Darcy is not successful, however. The more she tries to impress him by naming Elizabeth's faults and failure at accomplishments, the more she drives him away from herself toward her "nemesis." Miss. Bingley thinks that she is in advantage due to her pedigree and social rank.

Mr. Bingley's sister is described as a typical young lady whose reason for being married is her future security and a position in society. Caroline Bingley has received a proper education that has equipped her with wanted accomplishments. However, in this case, education and accomplishments alone are not enough for Miss Bingley to become Mrs. Darcy.

Another character who thinks of the importance of social hierarchy is Lady de Bourgh. Even though Caroline Bingley is still not as established in the social hierarchy nor does she share the same rank as Lady de Bourgh, they both share the values of wealth, rank, and a wish for an equally ranking marriage. On one hand, Miss Bingley was not successful in securing a marriage even though she was socially an accomplished young lady with a proper education.

On the other hand, Lady de Bourgh, an aristocrat, was successful in uniting her wealth, social position, and a suitable marriage.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh is a character who a reader learns about through other characters in the novel. The first time Lady de Bourgh is mentioned is in Mr. Collins's (unwanted) report of his living situation to the Bennets. Before Elizabeth hears of her ladyship from Mr. Collins again, Mr. Wickham describes Lady de Bourgh to Elizabeth as well:

> "I believe her to be [an arrogant, conceited woman] in a great degree […] I have not seen her for many years, but I very well remember that I never liked her and that her manners were dictatorial and insolent. She has the reputation of being remarkably sensible and clever; but I rather believe she derives part of her abilities from her rank and fortune, part from her authoritative manner, and the rest from the pride […]" (Austen PP 68)

The reports readers get from these two characters are contradictory. Mr. Collins praises her while Mr. Wickham describes her in a rather bad light. Lady Catherine is a widow who, thanks to her social rank, can act as she wishes because there is no one above her in her household. Nevertheless, being a woman of a higher social rank or not, she does not respect socially acceptable rules of proper behaviour. There are several instances of improper behaviour displayed by Lady Catherine. She should know how to conduct herself in public as Fordyce advises. She should respect her partners in conversation—however, when talking to Elizabeth, she does not hold her in regard. Moreover, Lady de Bourgh's improper deportment among other people made even Mr. Darcy look "a little ashamed of his aunt's ill breading" (Austen PP 136).

Lady Catherine is represented as a "tall, large woman with strongly-marked features, which might once have been handsome. Her air was not conciliating, nor was her manner of receiving them such as to make her visitors forget their inferior rank. She was not rendered formidable by silence; but whatever she said was spoken in so authoritative a tone, as marked her self-importance" (Austen PP 127). Lady de Bourgh's description does not correspond with the manuals on proper behaviour. For instance, Fordyce, in one of his *Sermons*, uses a verse from the Bible when discussing conversation and virtue within company. Namely, he bases his thesis on the Colossians 4:6[2] and adds that "women, as well as other human beings, commonly take control themselves, and to act nobly" (*Sermon V* 81). Despite various conduct books, Lady

[2] "Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."

Catherine still deports herself as she sees to it. She is a proud woman who is motivated by her own interests.

Catherine de Bourgh asks Elizabeth many personal questions, and based on the answers, she critiques her parents and herself for "non-existent" piano skills, among other things. It does not matter that Lady Catherine herself is unable to play any instruments. She believes herself to be an excellent and probably the best musical critic. Another example of Lady de Bourgh's misbehaviour is her visit to the Bennet family—specifically, to Elizabeth. Darcy's aunt, once again, enquires about Elizabeth's personal life directly. Paris explains that "[the] second violation of decorum is Lady Catherine's attempt to coerce Elizabeth into promising that she will never marry her nephew" (110).

Although Lady de Bourgh is a woman of a high social rank, she still misbehaves. She does not follow all the rules but chooses the ones that she finds most convenient for her and "dictates" others about the proper ways of living one's life. Due to other people being beneath her social rank, she never encounters a person who would challenge her until Elizabeth. Generally, she is seen as a person who displays self-indulgence in her social behaviour and thus violates social rules of conduct (Paris 106).

3.3.2. Mrs. Bennet and Lydia Bennet: troublemakers of the Bennet family

Mrs. Bennet is a mother of five daughters, and her main assignment, according to conduct books, was to provide her daughters with corresponding education and accomplishments. Once a mother has implemented various accomplishments, her next assignment would be to find husbands for her daughters. However, Mrs. Bennet is introduced in the book as a woman, a mother, whose "business of her life was to get her daughters married" (Austen PP 7). There is nothing directly mentioned about her educating her daughters nor providing them with a governess. The only piece of information about the education is provided by Elizabeth when talking to Lady de Bourgh. Furthermore, there are no reports about Mrs. Bennet's accomplishments acquired as a young woman nor anything about her education. The reader knows only about her being beautiful in her youth. Mr. Bennet did not look beyond her physical appearance; he did not observe her character.

Mrs. Bennet is characterized as an ignorant and silly person. Description of Mrs. Bennet is a continuance of Mr. Bennet's characterization. Unlike Mr. Bennet, who "was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice […] *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" (Austen PP 7). This kind of description implies that Mrs. Bennet as a character is rather shallow. Her only preoccupation was to have her daughters marry well. When there was a prosperous possibility of getting any of her daughters married, she would always be delighted, especially with a person in question. However, once the situation does not develop how she imagined, her interest in that person appears to wane. Mrs. Bennet tries to "help" her daughters in securing husbands, but her way of attracting men and her behaviour when out in society is perceived as vulgar and not proper (Waldron PP 50). Her endless schemes bring her daughters to shame in more than one occurrence, but she is not aware of it. She has a mission that she wants to complete regardless of what has to be done. Mrs. Bennet acts without restraint and expresses her opinion regardless of whether it is appropriate or not. She transmits this trait of voicing her opinion freely to her youngest daughter Lydia.

Lydia Bennet is described as "a stout, well-grown girl of fifteen, with a fine complexion and good-humoured countenance" (Austen PP 37). She is Mrs. Bennet's favourite and shares the same ideas of life and men. Unlike the older sisters, who educated themselves by reading, Lydia, who was Mrs. Bennet's "twin," was careless, ignorant, and vain. "She had high animal spirits, and a sort of natural self-consequence, which the attention of the officers […] had increased into assurance" (Austen PP 38). Lydia is a spoiled daughter who portrays the least amount of decorum. She voices the thoughts of and is supported by her mother in her less-than-commendable behaviour. She thinks of herself as the best in the family and wants to present that by finding a husband before any of her sisters. Lydia even says to Jane and Elizabeth, "how ashamed I should be of not being married before three-and-twenty […] How I should like to be married before any of you" (Austen PP 171). Her life goal is to get married and have an accomplished life before any of her sisters do. Being young and naïve, she does not see any threat to her family by wishing that and behaving "[v]ain, ignorant, idle and absolutely uncontrolled" (Austen PP 179).

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet present a perfect example of parents who do not "control" their children; they do not help Lydia (nor any other children) in growing up to respectable young women as Fordyce argues (see 2.2.1). Moreover, Lydia is encouraged in her pursuits and exuberating behaviour by her mother, which is recognized, among others, by Mr. Darcy himself where he comments on both Mrs. Bennet and Lydia's behaviour: "The situation of your mother's family, though objectionable, was nothing in comparison of that total want of

propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by herself, by your three younger sisters […]" (Austen PP 154). Neither Lydia nor Mrs. Bennet respect the norms of social conduct. By behaving improperly and with disrespect to others, they jeopardize possible marriage options of other family members.

Lydia and Mrs. Bennet have nothing to recommend them. They have not achieved any accomplishments that young women do. They oppose the social norms, namely the teachings of conduct books. Mrs. Bennet and Lydia are vain, loud, negligent of others, and they exceed their income (pin money). Their youth and beauty play a major role in their lives seeing that they succeeded to get married. Men might be "captivated by youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humour which youth and beauty generally give" (Austen PP 183). Unlike Mrs. Bennet's marriage beginning, Lydia's virtue is ruined, and her marriage must be "purchased." Her youth and beauty are not enough for Wickham to marry her. However, no matter how Lydia's marriage started, she "retained all the claims to reputation which her marriage had given her" (Austen PP 298).

Mrs. Bennet's exuberance cannot be tamed until her daughters are married. Once her wishes are fulfilled, she will be able to quiet down. However, her youngest daughter, who inherited Mrs. Bennet's traits, might continue behaving in the same improper way she has learned from her mother even in her marriage life.

3.3.3. Mary Crawford: a charming manipulator

Miss Mary Crawford is introduced after the Bertram family and their close neighbors are described in the book. Mary Crawford does not live in the county of Northamptonshire and has been brought up in London by her naval uncle and aunt, who always "doated on the girl" (Austen MP 38). After her aunt dies, Mary comes to live with her half-sister Mrs. Grant and her husband. Mary and her brother Henry Crawford are newcomers at the parsonage near Mansfield.

Mary Crawford represents a young aristocratic woman of her period. Her character is revealed mostly through her interactions with Edmund and Fanny Price. From the very beginning, Miss Crawford is represented as Fanny's opposite: "Miss Crawford was very unlike her. She had none of Fanny's delicacy of taste, of mind, of feeling; she saw nature, inanimate nature, with little observation; her attention was all for men and women, her talents for the light and lively" (Austen MP 80). Her lively character and her attention to people can be compared

to the city. As Poovey says, Miss Crawford practices "London habits: [she maintains] that anything can be got with money and that morality is simply a matter of convenience or inclination, nor of principle" (213). She is a young woman with means who was brought up in London where she had access to different forms of entertainment and a different kind of society, unlike Fanny.

Mary Crawford is a young woman who is described as "remarkably pretty […] [She had] lively dark eye, clear brown complexion, and general prettiness […] she was most allowably a sweet pretty girl" (Austen MP 40, 42). As an extremely beautiful young lady, Edmund is attracted to Mary from the first time that they meet. The more that he gets to know Mary and her accomplishments, the more he becomes smitten with her. At first, Mary seems as if she were an ideal woman. She is educated, attractive, communicative, lively, and she plays an instrument. However, Mary's upbringing, conduct, and her way of thinking soon become more evident, revealing her flaws. As Colleen Sheenan argues, both Mary and her brother are "rich, clever, and charming, they know how to captivate their audience and 'take in' the unsuspecting" (n.p.). They represent the attraction of the modern age to young unsuspecting people of Mansfield, who are more gullible than people in the city. The Bertrams are drawn to the Crawfords because of their charms and openness.

Mary's upbringing formed her way of thinking. Her conception of marriage is the same as her society's—marrying for money is an obligation, it is a woman's duty. Her role models agreed in nothing (Austen MP 38), which shows that their marriage was built on social norms and requirements. Therefore, her thoughts on marriage are different than those of of Edmund and Fanny[3]. She is rather cynical about marriage and finds it difficult to understand that there might be other reason for a marriage besides future and financial stability. Commenting on the aspects of marriage, Mary says to her aunt that "there is not one in a hundred of either sex, who is not taken in when they marry. Look where I will, I see that it *is* so; and I feel that it *must* be so, when I consider that it is, of all transactions, the one in which people expect most from others, and are least honest themselves" (Austen MP 44). However, Mrs. Grant rebukes both Mary and her brother Henry and their notions of marriage, saying that they visited "a bad school for matrimony" and that all they need to do regarding matrimony is employ their imagination. Mrs. Grant assures Mary that she will be cured by such notions of marriage here in Mansfield.

[3] Their perception of marriage might have been the same as Mary's had they based their opinion on the marriage of Sir and Lady Bertram. However, their opinion of marriage was acquired through reading and studying God's Word.

Miss Crawford possesses a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, and she does not need to marry for money. Her wish is to be married, but she wants to marry well (Austen MP 40). She "would have every body marry if they can do it properly; [she does] not like to have people throw themselves away; but every body should marry as soon as they can do it to advantage" (Austen MP 41). Knowing her opinion of marriage, Mary's initial interest is Tom Bertram, the oldest son and the heir of Sir Bertram. Once Miss Crawford becomes more familiar with both brothers, she wishes that Edmund were the older brother and not Tom. Mary is attracted to Edmund but wishes for him to be hungrier for business and future life. She does not like his docile way of living. Mary tries to change his opinion by discussing and dominating the wills, not only of Edmund but of others as well (Sheehan n.p.). Mary Crawford often bends Miss Price's will. For example, when talking about the weather, Mary claims that she knows the best when it is going to rain or not, and that is when she sees a black cloud. She is not interested in and she diminishes Fanny's opinion, making her own statement final. Furthermore, she tries to persuade Fanny to change her opinion regarding Henry. Mary is certain that Fanny would eventually marry her brother. Despite Mary's manipulative letters to Miss Price, Fanny does not marry Mr. Crawford. As Sheehan claims, both of the Crawford siblings' "modes of manipulation and deceit, however, are more subtly veiled […] Embodying the new morality, the Crawfords are bent on perverting the traditional moral fabric of society" (n.p.).

Miss Crawford is governed by good feelings, which can be seen in her interactions with Fanny. She defends her and gives her voice in some circumstances. When Mary notices wrongdoing regarding Fanny, she helps Fanny to collect her spirits. For example, when Fanny is criticized by her aunt Mrs. Norris, Miss Crawford places herself next to Fanny:

> 'Never mind, my dear Miss Price—this is a cross evening, —everybody is cross and teasing–but do not let us mind them;' and with pointed attention continued to talk to her and endeavor to raise her spirits, in spite of being out of spirits herself.—By a look at her brother she prevented any farther entreaty from the theatrical board, and the really good feelings by which she was almost purely governed. (Austen MP 146–147)

However, she often rebels against these feelings. She gives her opinion freely on matters that should not be public (Austen MP 62). Here, she does not follow Fordyce's advice on conduct while being outside in the public sphere (see 2.2.1.). Furthermore, Mary admonishes a clergyman's service without knowing of Edmund's aspirations to become a member of the clergy. Even after she learns of his calling, she tries to influence his thoughts to be more proactive regarding his future. At the end of the novel, Miss Crawford makes a distasteful comment regarding the dying Tom Bertram: "Poor young man!—If he is to die, there will be

two poor young men less in the world; and with a fearless face and bold voice would I say to any one, that wealth and consequence could fall into no hands more deserving of them" (Austen MP 431–432). Mary's shocking comment in this passage reveals her dubious morality. As Shenhan says, "whether or not Mary had any serious intention to execute such a plan, she does, as is her wont, speak evil in a playful manner […] she justifies such thoughts about evil means by an appeal to good ends" (n.p.). A good, pious young woman would never nor should ever claim such statements. In addition, Miss Crawford writes a letter to Fanny where she attempts to explain and excuse her brother's adultery. She only tries to make amends with Fanny because her brother and Maria were exposed. Mary here presents her real characteristics by revealing her good motives while trying to help her brother's cause.

Mary Crawford employs her wit on many occasions in the novel. For example, Dr. Gregory (see 2.2.2.) cautions women with the use of wit and humor. However, Miss Mary heeds his advice. She tries to be witty and funny, but she ends up being inappropriate. For example, when Edmund asks Mary about the British Navy, she answers in a witty way: "Certainly, my home at my uncle's brought me acquainted with a circle od admirals. Of *Rears*, and *Vices*, I saw enough. Now, do not be suspecting me of a pun, I entreat" (Austen MP 59). Edmund does not laugh at her comment but is rather feeling "grave" (Austen MP 59). The longer he spends time with Mary, and when they find themselves in serious situations, the more Edmund realizes the faults of Mary's character—she is not the person that he thought she was. Her charm cannot be helpful in serious matters, for example when her brother and Maria Bertram escape. Edmund's eyes are open, and his countenance of talking to Miss Crawford perfectly surprises him how differently he has understood her before.

> The evil lies yet deeper; in her total ignorance, unsuspiciousness of there being such feelings, in a perversion of mind which made it natural to her to treat the subject as she did. She was speaking only, as she had been used to hear others speak, as she imagined every body else would speak. […] Her's are faults of principle, Fanny, of blunted delicacy and a corrupted, vitiated mind […]
>
> I had not supposed it possible, coming in such a state of mind into that house, as I had done, that any thing could occur to make me suffer more, but that she had been inflicting deeper wounds in almost every sentence. That, though I had, in the course of our acquaintance, been often sensible of some difference in our opinions, on points too, of some moment, it had not entered my imagination to conceive the difference could be such as she had now proved it. That the manner in which she treated the dreadful crime committed by her brother and my sister […] giving it every reproach but the right, considering its ill consequences only as they were to be braved or overborne by a defiance of decency and impudence in wrong; and, last of all and above all, recommending to us a compliance, a compromise, an acquiescence, in the continuance of the sin, on the chance of a

> marriage […]—all this together most grievously convinced me that I had never understood her before. (Austen MP 454–456)

Mary experiences thee possibility of marrying for love while at Mansfield. However, her upbringing and her role models had a much bigger impact on her life. She heeds no rules in the face of adversity. She is driven by the satisfaction of her wishes more than the social rules and appropriate manners. Miss Crawford's "constant activity, assault on nature and religion, deception, inconstancy, and vain desire for domination are justified by necessity only if one forgets the soul" (Sheehan n.p.).

3.3.4. Maria Bertram: a seduced seductress

Maria and Julia Bertram are born into a society where marriage is thought of both as a duty and a necessity of status and financial security. They both grow up in a privileged house. Their mother, Lady Bertram, is supposed to offer her girls their first education. However, the Lady Bertram is "thinking more of her pug than her children" (Austen MP 18) and she does not find it necessary to take care of the girls. They have a governess who is equipped to teach them the social rules and who can provide a necessary education worthy of young ladies. Their governess, Miss Lee, educates them in language, music, drawing and everything else but disposition. Maria and Julia are not "deficient in the less-common acquirements of self-knowledge, generosity, and humility" (Austen MP 17). They grow up in a privileged manner and with a sense of matrimony as a duty.

Maria Bertram is the third child of Sir Thomas and Lady Maria Bertram. She is their eldest daughter. In the novel, Maria is described as a beautiful young 17-year-old who exercises her memories, practices duets, and who is tall and womanly (Austen MP 18). She is Mrs. Norris's favorite and is indulged in everything that she desires. Unlike Fanny, who educated herself by reading, Maria, who "had been instructed theoretically in their religion" (Austen MP 461), never practiced it in her daily life. She is a spoiled niece who openly does what she wants—if she wants to marry, then she will marry. Thus, when Maria becomes 21, she decides that she will marry. Austen says that "Maria Bertram was beginning to think of matrimony a duty; and as a marriage with Mr. Rushworth would give her the enjoyment of a larger income than her father's, as well as ensure her the house in town, which was now a prime object, it became, by the same rule of moral obligation, her evident duty to marry Mr. Rushworth if she could" (Austen MP 36). Maria is supported by her aunt and becomes engaged to Mr. Rushworth, even though her father is not present at home. Her goal to be married is achieved.

When Maria meets Mr. Crawford, she is attracted to him and engages in competition for his affections with her sister Julia: "The Miss Bertrams' admiration of Mr. Crawford was more rapturous than any thing […]" (Austen MP 45). Maria decides to obey her attraction to Mr. Henry Crawford and does not think of any consequences her actions may evoke. She fails to follow the social and moral rules. Even though she is an engaged woman, Maria still pursues a relationship with Mr. Crawford because she has both "Rushworth-feelings, and Crawford-feelings" (Austen MP 81). Behind her feelings for Rushworth is Maria's wish to secure financial security and independence, whereas her feelings for Crawford are invoked by her sexual desire (Trepanier 64). Not having her father at home, Maria feels that she does not have to be restrained in her behavior. She was "relieved by it from all restraint; and without aiming at one gratification that would probably have been forbidden by Sir Thomas, they [Julia and Maria] felt themselves immediately at their own disposal, and to have every indulgence within their reach" (Austen MP 30). Having the freedom that is usually taken by her father, Maria can behave however she wishes and nobody could stop her in her pursuit of Mr. Crawford. She already has financial security thanks to Mr. Rushworth, and now she can pursue her desire to be with Henry Crawford.

Throughout the novel, Maria fails to behave within social rules of a propriate conduct. Even before she marries Mr. Rushworth, she goes unchaperoned with Mr. Crawford to a park. He "seduces" her into going to park without waiting for Mr. Rushworth. She is willing to be alone with Henry and ceases any moral decorum:

> 'And for the world you would not get without they key and without Mr. Rushworth's authority and protection, or I think you might with little difficulty pass round the edge of the gate, here, with my assistance; I think it might be done, if you really wished to be more at large, and could allow yourself to think it not prohibited.'
>
> 'Prohibited! Nonsense! I certainly can get out that way, and I will. Mr. Rushworth will be here in a moment you know—we shall not be out of sight.'
>
> 'Or if we are, Miss Price will be so good as to tell him, that he will find us near that knoll, the grove of oak on the knoll.' (Austen MP 99)

Here, Maria flirts with Mr. Crawford. She knows that she should not go anywhere alone with him but she makes excuses that they will not be out of sight so that she can indulge in her affections. Maria constantly jeopardizes her marriage to Mr. Rushworth and runs the risk of ruining the social and moral image of her family. Maria acts opposite to what Fordyce had advised (see 2.2.1.), such as when he cautioned women to be aware of male desires. However, Maria is aware of Henry's desire and yet, she still tempts him with her liveliness and high

spirits. In the end, Maria's affair with Mr. Crawford brings a terrible consequence for her misbehavior—her reputation is lost and is impossible to recover (Fordyce *Sermon II* 23-24).

Mrs. Norris and Maria Bertram have nothing to recommend them. They may have shown their propriety to others on the outside (i.e. externally) but it was just a mask that they used for society. They both oppose the social norms of proper conduct: "Maria had destroyed her own character" by escaping and living with Henry Crawford. (Austen MP 463). Mrs. Norris cannot help Maria to recover and become a part of a functioning society. As Trepanier says, Maria's "education, focusing on accomplishments rather than self-knowledge […] is responsible for her unhappy fate" (64). Ultimately, Mrs. Norris and Maria fail to find happiness. Mrs. Norris devoted herself to her "unfortunate Maria, and in an establishment being formed for them in another country—remote and private, where, shut up together with little society, on one side no affection, on the other, no judgment, it may be reasonably supposed that their tempers became their mutual punishment" (Austen MP 463).

3.3.5. Mrs. Norris: a wannabe superior

Mrs. Norris is Lady Maria Bertram's and Mrs. Frances Price's sister, and has never had her own children. After her sister Maria married Sir Bertram, Mrs. Norris thinks that she will marry "with almost equal advantage. But there certainly are not so many men of large fortune in the world, as there are pretty women to deserve them. Miss Ward, at the end of half a dozen years, found herself obliged of her brother-in-law, with scarcely any private fortune […]" (Austen MP 2). However, Mrs. Norris eventually marries for her future security on a much narrower income than she has expected. Thus, she "fancied a very strict line of economy necessary" (Austen MP 6). Despite her misfortunes, she has always had a "spirit of activity" (Austen MP 2). Mrs. Norris usually assumes other roles that are not given to her. On the one hand, Mrs. Norris takes on a role of a mother due to the more of a passive stance of Lady Bertram regarding her family and the household. Mrs. Norris overtakes her role and takes care of her nephews and nieces. Her assignment is, therefore, to provide her nieces with appropriate education and accomplishments, and later in life to find husbands for them. On the other hand, the reason why Mrs. Norris takes over the Bertram household is because, one might say, she feels lost in society (Poovey 216). She is married but has no children. Her role of a mother is unfulfilled and the appropriate profession that the society prescribes is non-existent in her life. Poovey claims that Mrs. Norris is "a typical victim of the discrepancy between romantic

expectations and social possibilities. Her irritating officiousness focuses this discrepancy, for it is really a woman's imaginative energy misdirected by her dependence and social uselessness" (216). Not having any children, Mrs. Norris is not needed in her own home, aside from running the household, which is not that big a responsibility. She is deprived of an appropriate profession (Poovey 216). Therefore, Mrs. Norris starts to help her sister Lady Bertram. With time, her influence over the Bertram family becomes stronger and it all derives from her desire to be needed.

Mrs. Norris is characterized as a superficial and seemingly generous character. The description of Mrs. Norris is a continuance of the story of how she was married to Reverend Norris. Austen describes Mrs. Norris as follows:

> As far as walking, talking, and contriving reached, she was thoroughly benevolent, and nobody knew better how to dictate liberality to others: but her love of money was equal to her love of directing, and she knew quite as well how to save her own as to spend that money of her friends […] Under […] infatuating principle, counteracted by no real affection for her sister [Mrs. Price], it was impossible for her to aim at more than the credit of projecting and arranging so expensive a charity; though perhaps she might so little know herself, as to walk home to the Parsonage after this conversation, in the happy belief of being the most liberal-minded sister and aunt in the world. (Austen MP 6–9)

This kind of description implies that Mrs. Norris is a generous and caring character who also knows how to manage money and household, which indicates that she likes to be a figure of authority, she is very influential person. As Fordyce claims, female influence is important for families and society as a unity (see 2.2.1.). In this case, Mrs. Norris's influence over Sir Bertram is important for two families, namely for the Bertrams and the Prices.

Mrs. Norris helps Sir Bertram with his family. She is always there, gives advice to her brother-in-law, and influences his actions. This is the reason why Mrs. Norris feels superior to the young Fanny when she arrives at Mansfield. Sir Bertram "indirectly enhances Mrs. Norris's value" (Poovey 216). As soon as Fanny comes to Mansfield, Mrs. Norris educates her of her position within the family. She continues to show her superiority over Fanny throughout the novel. For example, she mocks Fanny when her other nieces come and say what has happened in their class. Fanny, and Julia and Maria Bertram are educated at home. Their lessons are provided by a governess, Miss Lee, which means that holding lessons is not within Mrs. Norris's responsibilities. However, when going out in society, Maria and Julia are accompanied by their aunt. Mrs. Norris represents a mother-like figure to the Bertram girls. She is the one who always provides the girls with answers according to her values and standards. Her display

of Christian beliefs serves only to show her superiority over Fanny. However, once her nieces fall into disgrace, it is clear that Mrs. Norris's Christian beliefs are just a display. Mrs. Norris's downfall starts with ill conduct by Maria and Julia (Paris 27): "Maria was her first favourite, the dearest off all; the match had been her own contriving, as she had been wont with such pride of heart to feel and say, and this conclusion of it almost overpowered her. She was an altered creature, quieted, stupefied, indifferent to every thing that passed" (Austen MP 446). Mrs. Norris's personal values and teachings are not enough for Maria to become a proper young lady. She does not parent Maria, but rather fulfills her wishes even though they are not in accordance with Christian principles. Thus, Maria engages in an unforgivable act in the society. Maria's downfall is due to Mrs. Norris's guidance, which means that she has failed as a mother-like figure.

In the end, Mrs. Norris loses her superior position within the family. Her ill-mannered behavior leads her to exclusion. Her wrong decisions and her overindulgence of the Bertram sisters are among of the reasons of Maria's downfall. Sir Bertram soon afterwards finds Mrs. Norris to be "an hourly evil" (Austen MP 464). Unfortunately,

> [He] became [too late] aware how unfavourable to the character of any young people, must be the totally opposite treatment which Maria and Julia had been always experiencing at home, where the excessive indulgence and flattery of their aunt had been continually contrasted with his own severity. He saw how ill he had judged, in expecting to counteract what was wrong in Mrs. Norris […] and sending them for all their indulgences to a person who had been able to attach them only by the blindness of her affection, and the excess of her praise. (Austen MP 461)

The role that Mrs. Norris adopted from her sister is poorly managed. She is led by her desires and self-interest and not by social and Christian principles. Therefore, she has failed in creating an appropriate environment for young girls to grow up in and become the proper ladies that society expects them to be. She has failed in her role as an authority and mother-like figure.

3.3.6. Mrs. Augusta Elton: a "fine" lady

Miss Augusta Hawkins is a young woman who lost her parents. She inherited a fortune, thereby making her quite appealing to men. Readers meet Miss Hawkins later in the book after she marries Mr Elton. It is not a marriage based on love, rather it is a marriage of interest. Namely, Mr Elton marries Miss Hawkins after he is rejected by Miss Woodhouse, a young woman who belongs to upper-class society and is well-off financially. Mr Elton himself is in a

good social position, being a vicar in Highbury. His intention to marry rich is thus fulfilled in Miss Hawkins who has different reasons for the marriage. She is in a position where she is financially secure but has no worthy social position. Therefore, her marriage to Mr Elton helps her to become a part of higher society.

Mrs Augusta Elton acts as a woman of higher social position who looks down on other people. Her behaviour is superior to everyone she meets. Augusta exudes confidence because she believes she is an accomplished woman with manners developed by her education. She claims that her ability to play piano and that she understands music are some of her main accomplishments that will help her in her new life. Nevertheless, as a married woman, Augusta is in no need of showcasing her musical abilities (Austen *Emma* 209). Mrs Elton is described as "a vain woman, extremely well satisfied with herself, and thinking much of her own importance; that she meant to shine and be very superior, but with manners which had been formed in a bad school, pert and familiar; that all her notions were drawn from one set of people, and one style of living; that if not foolish she was ignorant" (Austen *Emma* 205). It is said that Mrs Elton attended a school at which she did not acquire the requisite manners and accomplishments. Fordyce writes against such schools. He says that there "they learn chiefly to dress, to dance, to speak bad French, to prattle much nonsense" (*Sermon I* 13) such as Mrs Elton demonstrates with her behaviour. One of the examples of her ill behaviour can be seen in her addressing Mr Knightley for the first time. Mrs Elton speaks of him as though she were his close friend, even though they have never met. Emma is infuriated by her behaviour. She declares that Mrs Elton is a "little upstart, vulgar being, with her Mr E., and her *caro sposo*, and her resources, and all her airs of pert pretention and under-bred finery" (Austen *Emma* 210). Her behaviour is rather vulgar and vain, something that both Fordyce and Gregory write against (see 2.2).

Mrs Elton believes she is Emma's equal in society: "If *we* [Emma and Augusta] set the example, many will follow it as far as they can" (Austen *Emma* 213). Furthermore, as a married woman, Mrs Elton has precedence over Emma. Thus, Mrs Elton gives Emma unsolicited advice (Austen *Emma* 207). Mrs Elton does not succeed in her attempt to become Emma's patron, so she decides to take Miss Jane Fairfax under her leadership. As she believes, Jane is "a very sad girl, and [does] not know how to take care of [herself]. [...] I must positively exert [my] authority" (Austen *Emma* 222). Augusta, a self-important and ignorant woman, exercises her ill will and in many situations, ridicules the people of Highbury. "[*She*] would soon shew them how every thing ought to be arranged" (Austen *Emma* 219). Mrs Elton's behaviour

toward her neighbours is overbearing. As Paris argues, Augusta "seek[s] praise, wish[es] to control others, and need[s] to be recognised as first in importance" (75). The descriptions of Mrs Elton's acts and mannerisms do not correspond with the manuals on proper behaviour.

Even though Augusta Elton is a newcomer to Highbury, she tries to portray herself as a fine lady. She wants to obtain a higher social position by displaying what she believes are her accomplishments, rank, and fortune. However, by thinking that she is exhibiting her best manners, Mrs Elton actually breaks the rules of conduct and is disrespectful towards people in her surroundings.

4. Conclusion

"Respect for right conduct is felt by every body" (Austen *Emma* 113).

One's behaviour is an important feature of every person. It tells others how people reply to certain events; it exposes people's manners and even their values. Oftentimes people are assessed according to their own conduct. Thus, conduct and behaviour have always had an important role in people's lives in the past and present, and they will have an important role in the future as well.

The main objective of the thesis is to provide an image of women in the late 18th and early 19th centuries based on the writings about conduct in Austen's period. This thesis opens with a general overview of the conduct literature, which is discussed in the second chapter, namely the theoretical part. In order to understand the conduct rules of the period, works such as *Sermons to Young Women* by Fordyce and *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* by Gregory are carefully explored. Austen shows that she is aware of the image women have and should have (based on moralists' writings) in society. Therefore, various representations of images of women are given in Austen's novels. As such, the role of moralists' writings is somewhat challenged in the "real" lives of characters. The presence of conduct rules introduces an unreachable state of the ideal in many women's lives.

Exploring various images of women according to social standards, i.e. the conduct rules, is the main focus of the third chapter. There are a few distinctive images of women pointed out. Firstly, Fanny Price and Jane Bennet are represented as the ideal women who follow the rules of conduct writings. Namely, Fanny possesses all the qualities about which Fordyce writes; she is proficient in intellectual, domestic, and elegant accomplishments (Sprayberry n.p.). Jane Bennet, the second representative, is a woman whose characteristics match the description of the ideal woman. Her only flaw is her economic circumstance, which in reality is not her fault per se, but that of her parents. Both Fanny and Jane are the only characters who fit Fordyce's and Gregory's descriptions of ideal women.

It is near impossible to possess all the accomplishments about which the moralists' write. Certainly, one can strive to have all the manners and characteristics of the ideal woman; however, when dealing with others, oftentimes people do not adhere to the rules and violate the rules of appropriate conduct. Thus, the second subchapter of the third chapter belongs to women who behave according to the rules of propriety but with a few exceptional traits and situations. The main characters of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, Elizabeth Bennet and Emma

Woodhouse, are strong characters who portray determination, integrity, and bravery. Both characters are strong-willed women who openly express their opinions even though there are times where they should have kept them to themselves. They are not immune to false conclusions and improper behaviour; however, when confronted with their wrongdoings, they apologise. They both admit their faults, and both heroines are "faultless in spite of [their] faults" (Austen *Emma* 327). Furthermore, Jane Fairfax and Harriet Smith, the two "orphans" in the novel *Emma*, are uncertain about their futures and are ruled by that insecurity. While Miss Fairfax is educated and is described as an accomplished lady, Miss Smith is taught only essential skills for her future life. The former is closed off to society for fear of risking her reputation, while the latter is heavily influenced by her friend Emma. Nevertheless, they both possess characteristics of women who try to follow the social rules; they are ladies with good manners and sweet tempers. Unlike any of the characters already mentioned, Charlotte Lucas is a steady character who represents the general mindset of women of the period. Namely, she is an educated young lady with a small fortune, who is not described as a beauty. She is a realistic, sensible, and thoughtful character, who makes decisions based on her own opinion and life situation. Out of necessity, Charlotte chooses to marry a person whom she does not love and thus insures her future. All these characters do not act on occasion in accordance with the general expectations of proper conduct. They do, however, portray unconventional women who, despite their flaws, respect social values.

Apart from the images of ideal women and women with flaws, there are also women who are represented in Austen's novels as counterimages of the ideal. Lydia Bennet is, for example, a character who symbolises the results of a lack of education. As a parent, Mrs Bennet has failed in educating Lydia about proper conduct and life values. Thus, both mother and daughter satisfy their wishes and goals while disregarding social rules of conduct. While Lydia and Mrs Bennet express anything but propriety, Lady de Bourgh and Miss Bingley, ladies of higher social rank, look down upon them. However, both Miss Bingley and Lady de Bourgh are no saints themselves. They act as self-righteous and superior women who believe they have an advantage over the rest of the society due to their pedigree and social rank. While displaying their accomplishments, their rank, and wealth, both ladies violate the rules of proper conduct. In a similar fashion to Miss Bingley, Mrs Elton portrays such behaviour. Being a young woman who inherited fortune, she believes herself to be an all-knowing lady; however, she is rather a vain woman whose manners were formed at a bad school. Thus, Mrs Elton demonstrates bad and improper mannerisms that she has learned there. Moreover, Miss Crawford and Miss Maria

Bertram are two other ladies of higher social rank who were provided with an appropriate education. However, Mary Crawford does not comply with the rules of conduct despite her accomplishments, knowledge, beauty, and wealth. She is like Lydia in this regard, driven by the satisfaction of her wishes more than by social rules and conduct. Morality and proper behaviour is for Mary only a matter of convenience. Unlike Miss Crawford, Maria Bertram is a spoiled rich girl whose whims are always fulfilled, especially by Mrs Norris. Despite her education, Maria does not grasp the importance of appropriate manners and self-knowledge for her own persona. Similar to Lydia, Maria is carefree in her conduct towards men. By playing a dangerous game with two men, Miss Bertram loses her reputation while going against every propriety. Maria's faithful aunt Mrs Norris, like Mrs Bennet, has failed her in teaching her the importance of proper conduct. Mrs Norris has taken the role of a superior person who displays her morals when she deems them necessary. Her poor manners and conduct are subject to her wish to be part of a higher social rank. These women strive to follow the rules of society and conduct, but in trying to be the ones who are proper, they lose their own sense of what is and what is not acceptable in the society in which they live. As such, they reflect the problems of the picture women represent in society.

The analysis of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park,* and *Emma* has shown the strong significance of conduct in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England. The novels offer multifaceted representations of conduct literature. The characters in Jane Austen's novels are all uniquely described, and each character has their own advantages and flaws. Most of the characters comply with some of the rules of the conduct books of the period. While there are some characters who are depicted as ideal, there are some nevertheless who do not follow the advice of the moralists, and thus they are seen as counterimages of the ideal.

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Abstract

The condition of women in the late 18th and early 19th centuries is determined through appropriate behaviour. A highly popular genre that discusses the themes of proper behaviour is known as conduct literature. There is a correlation between novels and the writings of conduct literature. How are women, then, depicted in the novels of the period? This thesis focuses on various models of women with ideal or counterideal qualities of proper conduct in selected works by Austen. In *Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park,* and *Emma*, female characters navigate within society while trying to follow the rules of conduct. The behaviour of characters is analysed using the theoretical concept of Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* and Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, two moralists' works of the period. By focusing on conduct rules, the novels reveal how close characters come to the notion of the ideal, i.e. a counterimage of the ideal woman.

Zusammenfassung

Die Lebensumstände der Frauen im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert wurden durch angemessenes Verhalten bestimmt. Ein sehr beliebtes Genre, das die Themen des richtigen Verhaltens diskutiert, ist als Verhaltensliteratur bekannt. Zwischen Romanen und den Schriften der Verhaltensliteratur besteht eine Korrelation, welche unter anderem zu der Frage führt, wie Frauen in den Romanen dieser Zeit dargestellt werden? Diese Arbeit konzentriert sich auf verschiedene Modelle von Frauen mit idealen oder kontraidealen Eigenschaften des richtigen Verhaltens in ausgewählten Werken von Austen. In *Stolz und Vorurteil, Mansfield Park* und *Emma* navigieren weibliche Charaktere innerhalb der Gesellschaft, während sie zeitgleich versuchen die auferlegten Verhaltensregeln zu befolgen. Das Verhalten von Charakteren wird anhand des theoretischen Konzepts von Fordyces *Predigten an junge Frauen* und Gregorys *Vermächtnis eines Vaters an seine Töchter*, zwei Werken der Moralisten dieser Zeit, analysiert. Indem sie sich auf Verhaltensregeln konzentrieren, zeigen die Romane wie nahe Charaktere dem Begriff des Ideals, d. h. einem Gegenbild der idealen Frau kommen.