

## *Pride and Prejudice* Notes

### AP English

#### Jane Austen

- Born 1775 in Hampshire, England to Reverend George Austen and his wife Cassandra
- Educated at home
- Wrote her first novel at 14 Love and Friendship
- Other major novels include Sense and Sensibility, Emma, Persuasion, and Northanger Abbey
- Her father died in 1805 and she had to rely on her brothers for money and living
- Contracted Addison's Disease—tuberculosis of the liver—and died in her sister's arms in 1817

#### The Regency Period 1810-1820

- King George III was deemed incompetent to rule due to mental illness
- His son, George Augustus Frederick, became regent and took over rulership of the kingdom
- King George IV was crowned in 1820 after his father's death
- Also, during this period, England and France were at odds

#### Social Class

- During this period, the English middle-class gained prestige and social status due to expanding English colonialism
- Many newly wealthy members of the upper class tried to assimilate into the landed aristocracy, who were born with money and had wealthy lineage
- These newly wealthy members were referred to as landed gentry as they had money, but no hereditary titles. They purchased land, mansions, and goods.
- Less than 2% of the population was part of the upper class
- Meanwhile, because of the industrial revolution, many of the lower/working classes were starving because machines were replacing them. Also, living conditions became poorer as the population increased.

#### Women in the Regency

- Women depended on men for everything and had few legal rights—father, brother, uncle, husband, etc. (They were viewed as property)
- Most women were preoccupied with marriage because they had to maintain their lifestyle in case their father or closest male relative died--marriage was rarely for love

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- They also depended on dowries—goods or money traded for marriage rights—to find good matches.
- Entailment was an inheritance regulation that stipulated that the closest male relative inherited the property of the deceased man. A widow had no property rights and could be shucked into the street.
- There were very few exceptions to the rule—some aristocratic women maintained property rights

### Social Norms

- Families rarely kept secrets as the shame of one would disgrace the whole family
- People were judged based on propriety, decorum, and reputation
- Individual accomplishments mean nothing compared to family and the adherence to social norms
- Women must be moral or loose social standing and be outcast from their world

### Pride and Prejudice

- The primary theme is that these two elements influence our perceptions of one another, hence the title

### Elements of Literature Present

- Irony—Verbal, Situational, Dramatic
- Satire—The use of humor to criticize a person, idea or group (Family Guy)
- Free Indirect Discourse—the third-person perspective that centers on the vantage of a heroine
  - “Elizabeth soon saw that she was herself, closely watched by Miss Bingley, and that she could not speak a word, especially to Miss Darcy, without calling her attention.