

### **A Comparison between the Setting of Pride and Prejudice and Brother Man.**

The most important elements of a novel must include the setting. The setting indicates the time, place and the literary context of the novel. Therefore it can be said that the geographical and social background of the novel is significant as it dictates the structure of the novel and the narrative techniques used. It even affects how the characters are represented in the novel. The geographical and social background of a novel tends to be incorporated into its setting. There are many types of setting such as the geographical setting, the social setting and the political setting.

Pride and Prejudice is an 18<sup>th</sup> century novel that was set in England. At different times in the novel, there was a change in setting from the country to the town. The geographical and social setting of Pride and Prejudice is significant as it plays an important role in the narrative technique used. The novel is written with a linear plot and the language used reflects the language of 18<sup>th</sup> century England. Jane Austen incorporates humour, satire and irony to bring about authorial intrusion where she uses subtle hints to let the reader know her thoughts on the society of her time, and this can be linked to the social setting of the play. Austen's use of humour is evident in her character Mrs.Bennet, whose goal in life is to see her daughters married. Austen uses Mrs.Bennet to represent the many females in society who marry for the wrong reasons. The conversation between herself and Mr.Bennet is filled with dim-witted speeches on her side and sarcasm on Mr.Bennet's side. Also Mr.Collins' proposal to Elizabeth is also humorous, but beneath the humour Austen is hinting that this was the basis for many marriages in 18<sup>th</sup> century

England. Elizabeth tends to be Austen's "mouth piece" and her refusal reflects the writer's belief that one should not marry for superficial reasons.

The setting of the novel also influenced the method of introduction for each character. Austin's techniques reflected the 18<sup>th</sup> century English society. Her use of dialogue to introduce characters such as Bingley and Lady Catherine, her use of social events- namely Balls- to introduce Mr.Darcy and the Bingley sisters and the use of letters to introduce Mr.Collins all reflect the characteristics of Austen's society. The characterization of each character mirrored the geographical and social setting of the novel. Lady Catherine's behaviour clearly reflected the behaviour of the 18<sup>th</sup> century upper class while the Bennet's reflected the middle class.

The use of irony by Austen is a way in which she brings out her views about 18<sup>th</sup> century England.

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that men in possession of a good fortune is in need of a wife." Indeed this statement sets in motion the theme of marriage and the tone of irony.

The social background is also used to bring out themes such as marriage. In 18<sup>th</sup> century England, the aim of every young woman was to get married or live as an 'old maid' for the rest of her life. An example of this is Charlotte's marriage to Mr.Collins which was purely based on financial stability and her fear of becoming an old maid.

Brother Man is a 20<sup>th</sup> century novel by Roger Mais. The geographical and social background of this novel and Pride and Prejudice varies significantly. Brother Man is set in the enclave, in a different society which is governed by different ideologies and beliefs than that of 18<sup>th</sup> century England. Brother Man centres around survival and spirituality as

opposed to *Pride and Prejudice* which is centred around social events. The social background is brought out by vibrant descriptions and Mais' use of choric passages. In this social setting the role of women differed from the role in 18<sup>th</sup> century England. Some women cohabitated with men or sold their bodies to survive. For example, Minette in *Brother Man* was a prostitute that he rescued from the street. The representation of relationships was also different. In *Girlie and Papacita's* relationship, love was absent and the relationship was purely physical and violent. They fought regularly and even their intimate relationship was so violent that in describing it Mais used animal imagery.

Also in *Brother Man*, Mais used a lot of biblical allusion; in fact *Brother Man* was represented as Christ. The plot of *Brother Man* focused on the Rastafarian movement and the everyday life in society. *Brother Man* was a representation of good versus evil while *Pride and Prejudice* was about first impressions.

The social and geographical background differs greatly in both novels; however they serve their purpose in each novel and are significant. In *Pride and Prejudice* the social background brought out the theme of marriage and money while in *Brother Man*, the social background brought out the theme of good versus evil and the consciousness movement.