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Abstract

This thesis has one major purpose: to examine how women's autonomy over their own lives has changed from Jane Austen's writing until Caitlin Moran's memoir in 2011. The thesis will show through literary analysis how expectations toward women have changed from the 1800s until today. The novels in focus in this thesis is *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen and the memoir *How To Be a Woman* by Caitlin Moran. The literary analysis will focus on how a woman's family and society controlled the way she lived her life contrary to how family and society control, or lack of control, in Caitlin Moran's life. Austen's protagonists will represent life in Austen's time, while Caitlin Moran will represent the modern woman.

To be able to conduct this investigation it is important to understand what society expects from women both in Austen's time and today. Chapter 2 will explain the feminist and patriarchal theories I will be using to explain this view on women. Furthermore, the theoretical orientation chapter will explain why marriage and money was so important for Austen's protagonists. The characters in focus are Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* and Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*. This thesis will also show how Elizabeth and Fanny show their independence by fighting against these expectations. In chapter 5 women's role in modern society will be explained alongside Caitlin Moran. This study will show how the three major feminist waves from the 1800s until today, paved the way for the independent modern woman.

This thesis will also show how freedom from family and economical independence are the main reasons for the modern woman to have autonomy over her life. The protagonists Elizabeth and Fanny are not able to have economic freedom. They will need to marry to achieve this. Their families are important in making this happen. To be able to make a good match they will need connections. They will also need a high social ranking to be able to secure a rich man. Caitlin Moran has access to education and is able to secure a job and an income. The aim of the discussion is to show, through literary analysis of the books, how social expectations, access to education and financial independence have changed over the decades.

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Table of content

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION	9
2.1 METHOD.....	12
2.2 LIMITATIONS	15
2.3 FEMINISM	17
2.4 PATRIARCHY	19
2.5 READING THE NOVEL AND READING JANE AUSTEN	21
2.6 MONEY AND MARRIAGE IN JANE AUSTEN’S NOVELS.....	25
2.7 THE 21 ST CENTURY WOMAN AND CAITLIN MORAN.....	27
3. PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.....	31
3.1 PRESENTATION OF <i>PRIDE AND PREJUDICE</i> BY JANE AUSTEN	31
3.2 ELIZABETH AND HER VIEWS ON LIFE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH HER FAMILY	33
3.3 CHARLOTTE, CAROLINE, JANE, AND THEIR VIEW ON MARRIAGE IN COMPARISON TO ELIZABETH.....	35
4. MANSFIELD PARK	38
4.1 PRESENTATION OF <i>MANSFIELD PARK</i> BY JANE AUSTEN.....	38
4.2 FANNY AND HER VIEWS ON LIFE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH HER FAMILY.....	40
4.3 FANNY PRICE, MARY BERTRAM AND MARY CRAWFORD.....	42
5. CAITLIN MORAN’S HOW TO BE A WOMAN.....	47
5.1 PRESENTATION OF <i>HOW TO BE A WOMAN</i> BY CAITLIN MORAN.....	47
5.2 THE MODERN WOMAN AND MARRIAGE.....	49
6. DISCUSSION.....	52
6.1 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A MODERN WOMAN?	52
6.2 HOW DOES ELIZABETH, FANNY AND CAITLIN SHOW THEIR INDEPENDENCE?	55
6.3 HOW HAS WOMEN’S AUTONOMY OVER THEIR OWN LIVES CHANGED FROM JANE AUSTEN DAYS UNTIL TODAY?.....	59
6. CONCLUSION	69
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	71
7.1 ARTICLES	71
7.2 BOOKS.....	72
7.3 INTERNET SOURCES	73

1. Introduction

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

-(Austen b 3)

The 20th century development paved the way for women to be more than they previously thought they could be. Ashley Tauchert wrote in her paper about expectations to women in the 19th century: “The man should be strong and active, while women should be weak and passive. (146). The argument was that women should behave in a certain feminine way to strengthen the feeling of masculinity in men.

The patriarchal society has been the norm of society for quite some time, a society constructed by men for men. If we go back to the 19th century, certain expectations to both men and women, have not changed totally throughout time. These expectations are perhaps not as prominent in the 21st century as they were in the 19th century, but many are still there. I therefore find it intriguing to investigate what the differences and similarities in expectations towards women in the 21st century and the 19th century are, particularly related to women’s autonomy and opportunities in life.

To be able to explore on this, I have chosen to do a literary analysis based on selected characters from works by Jane Austen, an English writer of classical novels of the 19th century, and works of Caitlin Moran, a modern English writer and journalist of the 21st century.

The title of this thesis is: *Female autonomy – a literary analysis of Jane Austen’s protagonists versus Caitlin Moran and the modern woman.*

By comparing women of the 19th century to the modern woman of today the aim of this thesis is to contribute to shed light on the women’s liberation journey since the early 1800s and show how women’s situation in the modern world has changed since then.

The initial inspiration for this thesis came from my own growing up reading the novels of Jane Austen. Austen’s strong female characters deeply inspired me. I felt empowered to become an independent and strong woman myself. Because my culture was already influenced by feminist ideas, my reading of Austen contributed to reinforce my understanding of those ideas.

Secondly, Jane Austen (1775-1817) was the English writer who first gave the novel its modern character through her treatment of ordinary people in everyday life as well as

depicting English middle-class life of early 19th century. Her novels have been defined the era's novel of manners (Southam), which gives valuable insight to social precepts of that time.

Among Austen's many interesting characters I have chosen to focus on the protagonists Elizabeth Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice* and Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* in my analysis. They are vividly portrayed by Austen and gives the reader insight in their views and thoughts about life as women in the society of that time.

As the second element in my analysis, I have chosen Caitlin Moran as a representative of the modern woman of the 21st century. Moran is a British writer and journalist. Her non-fiction memoir *How to Be a Woman* (2011) documents Moran's early life as a modern British teenager and young woman and includes her views on feminism. Some of Moran's experiences is recognizable to Western-European women of today.

Lastly, the analysis will be supported by theoretical material from significant writers of feminist literature, in particular Simone de Beauvoir and others.

Jane Austen was an English writer born in 1775, Hampshire, England. Austen started writing when she was a teenager, and she authored several novels. At a time when few women were writing, *Pride and Prejudice* received highly favourable reviews (BBC). All of her novels have female protagonists dealing with the challenges of being a woman in England's upper and middle class in the Regency Period. Women in this time were meant to dabble in the arts and entertain in the home. Furthermore, their life's whole purpose is to find a husband, and few careers were open to them. (Grace, 17). They have been objectified and seen as something pretty to look at. What is in their mind is not of note to the men in the society. Then as now, women have been victims of persistent patriarchal gender roles. This thesis will focus on the way Austen reveals the female mind with protagonists Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* and Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*. The thesis will furthermore investigate how these female characters find their own way despite the circumstances they had been placed in. Elizabeth and Fanny will also be compared to some of the other women in Austen's literary works.

The thesis will be using feminist theories from various times to lay the groundwork for the discussion later comparing Jane Austen's heroines to a modern woman. Literature reflecting the author's own experiences will be the embodiment of the 21st century woman. Particularly the views on growing up as a woman explained by Caitlin Moran in "*How to Be a Woman*" will be analysed in comparison to Austen's protagonists in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*.

Why would these female characters be compared? Fiction might not reflect reality, but it can be an inspiration for people living in the real world. People might find clarity of their own situation and use this to change their lives. The 21st century has a new wave of feminism and I find it intriguing to investigate how much women's situation and options have changed regarding courtship and marriage. Courtship and marriage were mainly controlled by the society or the family meaning, in theory, that Austen's heroines did not have much autonomy over their own lives. What are the possibilities the 21st century woman has compared to these persons?

As mentioned, this thesis will investigate in what capacity women had autonomy over their own lives in Austen's novels compared to women today. To be able to make this part of the thesis work, I will need to consult Caitlin Moran's memoir *How to be a Woman*. This book deals with thoughts, situations, and problems many women of today can relate to. For example, when it comes to growing up with certain expectations attached to the person or dealing with men who do not want what is best for her. Examples from this book can help clarify my points and arguments relating to the feminine and feminist issues discussed in the previous part. What expectations do the societies have for these three different women? Can the women do what they want without being shut out of their respective society?

I first discovered Caitlin Moran's book *How To Be a Woman* when I was writing my bachelor thesis. I related to Moran's story and her memoir was my awakening to feminism. Her writing was raw, honest, and sensational. Living in a world where women are given a certain role in the public space, in many ways this meant to be kind, perfect, and quiet, Moran was the opposite. She wrote about experiences all women can relate to but that they do not necessarily share with the world. This is why I find it interesting to compare her to Jane Austen's heroines. Austen's heroines do their best to conform to societal expectations. Jump ahead 200 years or so, and we find Caitlin Moran who are the complete opposite.

The kind of society these women live in will have an impact on how they behave and what kind of autonomy they have over their own life. That means looking into these "social rules" will be important to explain in the thesis. Women in Austen's novels have certain expectations from both their families and the society around them. Moran will be used to show how feminist waves have shaped the world for future women.

Chapter 2 will contain the theoretical orientation for this thesis. The method and limitations will be explained as well as clarification as to what feminist theory will be used to discuss the literature. This chapter will also give a definition of feminism and what the patriarchy is. It will also be relevant to explain how I will be reading Jane Austen's novels

and explain Caitlin Moran and the modern woman. Considering money and marriage is a big part of what women's autonomy contain, this will also be explained in this chapter.

Chapter 3 will be a presentation of *Pride and Prejudice*. This chapter will provide a presentation of the storyline and explain Elizabeth's views on life, her relationship with her family and lastly how she differs from Charlotte Lucas, Caroline Bingley, and some of Elizabeth's other siblings. This chapter will map out Elizabeth's situation in society and this will be compared to Fanny Price and Caitlin Moran in the discussion.

Chapter 4 will be the same as chapter three, but with focus on *Mansfield Park*. I will explain Fanny Price and her situation in life with the objective to compare this to Elizabeth Bennet and Caitlin Moran.

Chapter 5 will be about Caitlin Moran's book. Moran grew up in Wolverhampton, England. She started writing early in her life and published a children's novel "*The Chronicles of Narmo*" at the age of 16. She also became a columnist at The Times two years later. Writing has been a part of her life for a long time and she her novel "*How to be a Woman*" won the British Book Awards' Book of the year 2011. (Penguin). There will be a similar presentation of her memoir *How to Be a Woman*. Beauvoir will also be presented here with Moran. These two together will be the groundwork for comparing women's choice in marriage in Jane Austen's time, compared to women's choice in marriage in the 21st century. Or in other words, what how women's autonomy has changed from Austen's time until Moran's memoir in 2011.

Chapter 6 will be the discussion. This is where the circumstances in the different women's life will be compared and discussed. This chapter will show how women's autonomy have changed over the decades from Jane Austen until Caitlin Moran.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion. This will sum up my findings in the discussion.

2. Theoretical orientation

This thesis will investigate in the first part how the protagonist from *Pride and Prejudice* changes and what choices she makes to become who she is. In the second part Fanny Price from *Mansfield Park* will be presented. The third part will be a presentation of Caitlin Moran and her memoir. Lastly, the discussion will compare these women and how their autonomy over their own lives is different, and in turn show how feminist waves have changed women's autonomy over their own lives from Jane Austen to Caitlin Moran.

Elaine Showalter, (Lee), divides female literature into three waves:

1. The first wave was when women used male pseudonyms to publish their writing, 1840s until 1880.
2. The second wave came after this, and she named it "Feminist." This wave continues until women receive the right to vote in 1920.
3. The third and last wave of female writing came from 1920 continuing until present. The third wave includes a new stage of self-awareness that came about in 1960.

Jane Austen belongs in the first wave of feminism, where female writers were not accepted on a wide scale in society, while Moran belongs to the third wave feminism. Female writers are more common, and they write about female issues very openly.

Simone de Beauvoir was a French existentialist philosopher. Beauvoir published many works of fiction and nonfiction during her career and her work, *The second Sex*, is considered the pioneering work of modern feminism movement. (Biography.com Editors). Her work explains how women have gained some independence, but most importantly, economic independence. As Beauvoir explains:

I heard a charwoman declare, while scrubbing the stone floor of an hotel lobby: 'I've never asked anybody for anything; I succeeded all by myself.' She was proud of her self-sufficiency as a Rockefeller. It is not to be supposed, however, let the mere combination of the right to vote and a job constitutes a complete emancipation: working today is not liberty. The social structure has not been much modified by the changes in a woman's condition; this world, always belonging to men, still retains the form they have given it.

-(689)

Toril Moi is internationally known for her work within feminist literature theory. Most prominently she is known for her reading of Beauvoir. As she also wrote about how to read literature, her work will inform the way I am analysing contemporary literature. Moi will be the basis for my method in analysing literature, while the works of Simone de Beauvoir and Maria Grace will explain the social situations to Austen's protagonists and Caitlin Moran.

Secondary sources will also be used to help form my arguments. Lloyd W. Brown's article *Jane Austen and the feminist Tradition* will be helpful in explaining the impact of the patriarchy in women's lives.

Judith Kegan Gardiner authored an article called *On Female Identity and Writing by Women*. In her article she discusses what forms a woman's identity and what that identity is supposed to look like to society. She formulates arguments that will help this thesis show what the patriarchal society expects from women when it comes to their role in society. Gardiner also explains that girls use their mother as an example as to how they should behave, and form their identity based on that. Her article will be used in showing how one can read Jane Austen today.

Ashley Tauchert also touches upon this subject in her article *Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen: 'Rape' and 'Love' ad (Feminism) Social Realism and Romance* and will be part of forming the arguments regarding female identity and expectations. Considering her article draws upon Mary Wollstonecraft and her article *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, she will also be interesting to bring into this argument. Wollstonecraft was the first to advocate that women should be taught intellectual things like men, instead of sewing and dancing. Wollstonecraft will be immensely helpful to explain how women were viewed in the 19th century, but the main author to explain this will be Maria Grace.

Maria Grace authored the book *Courtship & Marriage in Jane Austen's world*. Her book will also be used to explain how courtship and marriage work in Jane Austen's novels. This will be relevant to show what kind of autonomy women had over their own lives at this time.

Terry Eagleton's paper *The English Novel: An introduction*, offers a little insight into Jane Austen's writing. It says something about why Austen portrayed the characters the way she did.

Hui-Chun Chang wrote *The impact of the Feminist Heroine: Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice*. This article offers a point of view on how some of the women in *Pride and Prejudice* view marriage. Chang will be interesting to consider while discussing this topic.

Felipa Melo Lopes wrote a paper called *Perpetuating the patriarchy: misogyny and (post-) feminist backlash*. Her article goes on to explain how women who are violating patriarchal norms are viewed as breaking social norms. Her work will be used to explain why society today are not successful in completely removing the patriarchy. She will be presented alongside Moran.

Christopher Stampone authored an article about the language of patriarchy, "*Obliged to yield*": *The Language of Patriarchy and the System of Mental Slavery in Mansfield Park*. His article explains how both the men and women, but especially women, are controlled by their parents and society through language. His analysis will be used to explain how Fanny becomes the woman she is because of the way she is being spoken to.

Ian Watt and his book *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, also offers an insight into Jane Austen's writing. Bennet & Royle will also be mentioned with this topic. In *This Thing Called Literature – Reading, Thinking and Writing*, they discuss what literature is and how it can influence real life.

To help understand the analysis made in the thesis it will be relevant to receive a summary of the works I will focus on in my thesis. Firstly, I will give a summary of, *Pride and Prejudice*, secondly, I will give a summary of *Mansfield Park* and lastly, a summary of *How To be a Woman* by Caitlin Moran.

Pride and Prejudice is the story of Elizabeth Bennet, and her families struggle to secure their future. Women could not inherit land and since all the Bennet children were girls, their home will go to their cousin Mr Collins when Mr Bennet dies. Mrs Bennet's goal in life is to marry off her daughters. In particular her eldest daughter should marry well in order to secure their future. As the second daughter Elizabeth does not have this pressure on her in the same way as her eldest sister Jane. This gives her some freedom over her own decisions. The novel focuses on Elizabeth's struggle to maintain her intellectual integrity while trying to secure a husband. Her main love interest turns out to be Mr Darcy. He comes off as proud and disrespectful to those who hold a lower social class than himself. As the story progress Mr Darcy changes his ways in order to impress Elizabeth whom he has fallen in love with. Elizabeth herself, needs to let go of her prejudice in order to finally see Mr Darcy for who he is and realize she is in love with him too. Their marriage in the end is happily accepted by Elizabeth's family. Their future is secured in her marriage and also in Jane's marriage to Mr Darcy's friend Mr Bingley. Darcy's family is not as happy about the marriage. His aunt Lady Catherine de Bourgh. She is displeased with Elizabeth's social class. The story ends with

Elizabeth receiving the happy ending she wanted, married to a man who appreciated and accepted her intellect.

Mansfield Park is the story of Fanny Price and her search for love. Fanny was living with her poor family but was sent away to live with her aunt Mrs Bertram and Sir Thomas when she was nine. She was given the opportunity to receive an education and opportunity to live a better life with the Bertram's than she would receive with her mother. Fanny struggles to find her place in the new house, but gradually grows into a fine young woman. The story revolves around how Fanny perceives the world around her and how she ends up rejecting a wealthy young man's, Mr Crawford, proposal. Fanny was a quiet and careful girl, and her rejection of Mr Crawford's proposal is a surprise to everyone. He could give her a future with financial security and a higher social class than she was. Fanny's refusal was surprising, but in the end, it uncovered her cousin Maria's unfaithfulness towards her husband. This resulted in Fanny's cousin Edmund realising he was in love with Fanny. From an early age Fanny had been fond of Edmund, and in the end, she fulfilled her dream of marrying for love.

Caitlin Moran's memoir *How To Be a Woman* is a telling of how she herself became a feminist and what experiences she had growing up which shaped her into the woman she is. Moran is openly telling her readers about her experiences as a woman in the 20th and 21st century. This includes struggles in the workplace, challenges women face when it comes to fashion and role models, and Moran also openly talk about her relationships. Moran is sharing her thoughts on becoming a woman in modern days. She realizes that women in theory are equal to men, but sexism in the workplace and in fashion is helping to control women in certain ways. Contrary to men, women cannot speak about anything they want in the workplace, and they are supposed to look a certain way to be accepted. The experiences Moran describes in her memoir, are experiences many women can relate to.

2.1 Method

This thesis is based on literary analysis. The thesis will try and look at real-life expectations to women and their autonomy over their own lives through literature. Literature can be seen as a window into real life. It talks about factual issues that people can relate to, make them think and make them reflect on their own situations. Literature can be a way to get clarity over one's own life and situation. This chapter will explain what goes into a literary analysis and how the written word can be used to shed light onto the issues presented in this

thesis. Various materials will be used to aid the analysis of the novels and memoir. This is to help understand the significance of the findings.

Caitlin Moran's memoir *How to Be a Woman* will clarify what it means to be a woman of the 21st century and how a woman's autonomy over her own life have changed compared to Austen's protagonists in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*.

Toril Moi's book *Revolution of the Ordinary* will help explaining how the literary analysis was conducted. As she also wrote about feminism, her work will inform the way I am analysing contemporary literature. Moi writes about what a woman is historically in her book *What Is a Woman?* This will help the investigation when it comes to the basis in which the 21st century woman can compare her life and views towards the life and views of Jane Austen's heroines.

Toril Moi is internationally known for her work within feminist literature theory. Most prominently she is known for her new reading of Simone Beauvoir. Moi has published several books and articles, and she is an honorary professor at the universities of Umeå, Trondheim and Stavanger. (Granaas). Considering her extensive work with feminist theories, her work together with others will be used to show the different experiences of women now and then and will have the perspective of the researcher's experiences and ways of thinking. Toril Moi's book will help explain how the literary analysis was conducted.

Moi talk about how language is important to explain reality. If there is not a correlation between language and how we perceive terms, we have problems understanding reality. Literature can be a way for us to reflect on our own lived and reflect on our role in society. This thesis will try to explain how society and women's situation has changed by looking at literature.

“To make an aesthetic judgement is to stake one's authority or nothing but one's own experience. While we hope others will see what we can see, we can't count on it, for we can't compel anyone to judge a view or a painting in the same way we do. This is hardly news: Kant stressed the essentially subjective nature of aesthetic judgement in 1790. If we are in a position of power in relation to them, we can compel others to *say* they agree with our judgement, but they can't be compelled truly to see what we see. At the heart of judgement, there is always an element of freedom.”

- (Moi, 223)

This thesis will be based on my own interpretations of literature. Moi says here that people read literature differently. The way people read any kind of literature will be coloured

by their own experiences. One person's interpretation of a work might not be the same as someone else's, but they can try and make people understand their interpretations and agree on them. Through this thesis I will try to show through literature how women's position in society has changed. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park* and *How to be a woman*, have all be instrumental in making me realise, and appreciate, how far women have come in liberating themselves and making their way into more aspects of society. Literature has been instrumental in making me reflect on my own situation as a woman in today's day and age. Why is literature interesting to use to show this evolution of society? Moi wrote: "We make our lives in language. If we care about language, then we have a good reason to care about literature too, not because it necessarily uplifts us and make us better, but because writers specialize in language." (226). Everyone is looking for their identity and place in the world, and sometimes written language is the route to find that. Writers has a way of putting things into perspective, which can lead to people finding their place. Therefore, using literature to explain the way women have made their way into more aspects of society might be interesting to more people than just me.

Differentiation between male and female writing might not be interesting for this thesis. The point is not to prove in any way that female writing is more important or better than men's writing, but it is to offer another perspective on how society works and changes. "If it is crucial for women to enter literature, it is not because they have to write about their gender, but rather because each individual woman writer can give voice to her experience, her particular vision of the world. Her singular perspective adds to our understanding of reality and is therefore valuable in itself." (Moi, 238).

This thesis is not trying to sound angry, adding another angry feminist voice into the void of women trying to blame men for their situation in life. This thesis is trying to explain the positive changes is women's life through literature and language. Amid all these angry voices in today's society of injustice and putting women into one box of "wife and mother," this thesis is trying to show that women have achieved so much. The voices of women can be seen in business, science and politics, and their voices are valid. This is much more than what women had in Jane Austen's time. Moi is proving the importance of several voices in literature to explain reality, or at least for readers to see reality as it is. Literature is a tool to this end. Therefore, this thesis is analysing literature to show how far women have come in realizing their full potential in society. Language and the world work together. Together they give meaning to the human condition.

“In *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot rebuts Captain Harville’s criticism of women’s fickleness in novels, poetry, songs, and proverbs on the grounds that they were written by men: “If you please, nor references to examples in books. Men have had every advantages of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.”

-(Black, 11)

Jeremy Black suggests Jane Austen had a different point of view in her writing. Considering most writers in Austen’s time was men, women’s point of view was not something that was considered in its entirety. Austen provided a look into the inner life of women. Toril Moi might be on to something, that language and the world work together to give meaning to the human condition, but in Austen’s time women did not possess a loud voice in explaining this. This is something to keep in mind during this thesis. Even though literature today might be a good window into the real world, this was not necessarily the case of the world in Jane Austen’s literature. Female voices were not that common and the window into society was much dictated by the male voice and the male point of view on women. Austen provides this to an extent to readers.

2.2 Limitations

When it comes to the limitations for this thesis, the writer of this thesis acknowledges herself as a limitation. Being an interested reader of Austen’s novels, the writer of this thesis realizes that there may be aspects clouding the judgement, making a neutral analysis hard, but not impossible. Various points of view will be depicted and hopefully thoroughly investigated even if it leads in a direction the writer does not like. To be able to give good and neutral answers to the questions presented in this thesis, I will have to rely on secondary sources, mentioned earlier, as a guide through the arguments being made.

When it comes to further limitations, I realizes I will be formed by the society in which I grew up. Views on women, opportunities I had will form the opinions on the topics discussed in this thesis. People, not just women, have formed their opinions on certain topics based on how they were raised and how they have been treated in society. When it comes to forming arguments from feminist theories, I would like to point out that: “[...] there is no pure feminist or female space from which we can speak. All ideas, including feminist ones, are in this sense ‘contaminated’ by patriarchal ideology.” (Belsey & Moore, 118). Most women have

grown up in a society ruled by patriarchal ideas. History, and social rules have been formed from a male point of view according to Lois Tyson (79). The same goes for feminist theories. They have been formed from a society ruled by the patriarchy. Toril Moi writes in her article *Feminist, female, feminine* that:

“The point is not the origins of an idea (no provenance is pure), but the use to which it is put and the effects it can produce. What matters is therefore not so much whether a particular theory was formulated by a man or a woman, but whether its effects can be characterised as sexist or feminist in a given situation.”

– (118-119)

When the thesis talks about women’s opportunities and the way they need to behave around others in society the patriarchy is important to keep in mind. The theories used in this thesis will help underline arguments made about the women in Jane Austen’s writing. I am trying to find out what kind of choices these women needed to make, and how the pressure from the outside society helped form these decisions in the women’s own lives. The theory used in this text must be seen with critical eyes in context to feminism. However, it considers that feminism started in the early 19th century, before Austen, and she must have read Mary Wollstonecraft’s famous *Vindication of the rights of Women*.

Here is a brief excerpts that outlines the gist of this treatise: “Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, *outward* obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, everything else is needless, for, at least, twenty years of their lives.” (Wollstonecraft, 496). So, no doubt, Austen was concerned that from an early age, women are taught to behave in specific ways to be pleasing for men. That is the goal: to procure a man to fulfil their lives. This has not changed much, a man and family are still the collective “main goal” of women, or so it seems in my experience, but the conditions in which this is achieved has changed. This is what this thesis will try to build upon and show through literature.

The patriarchy will be explained in further detail later in the thesis. Some of the theory used is supposed to be interpreted by this 21st century view to see if it fits the ideas women today have towards women in Jane Austen’s literature. Considering Moi’s insight into theory written by women, I must be aware of this use of theory by both men and women. Some limitations might be that some of the theory has not been used to point out the arguments

made in this thesis. The theory will be applied to the arguments made in this thesis. As made clear by this, this thesis will be seen from a feminist point of view. This might mean that being neutral can be difficult both for the writer and for whomever reads it. When entering the reading of this thesis one must understand that an exceedingly small part of it will be viewed from a man's point of view. All interpretations will be formed from a female point of view. Even though I will try to be as neutral as possible, both the critical material and theories will mostly be used to argue points from a feminist point of view. Considering Simone de Beauvoir was part of the second wave of feminism, the ideas sprung out from this wave will be what is focused on in this thesis.

2.3 Feminism

Feminism is a concept we use to criticise the oppression of women. It's a vision of justice, freedom and equality for women," says Moi. (Bergstrøm).

When authoring a thesis about social expectations to women, it is not unnatural to consult some feminist theorists in finding out the reasons behind a certain way of thinking. Feminist theory helps to understand why attitudes towards women the way they are, then and now. From the 1800s until today, there have been three major feminist waves. The 1800s feminist wave was not very visible in society in general, but more and more women managed to put their work out into the world, although it was usually under male pseudonyms. The second wave of feminism brought forth the vote and the last wave of feminism has continued from the 1900s until today and are more focused on "self-awareness". (Lee).

Lois Tyson writes about feminism and gender in her book. In the first part Tyson talk about how many people come with a negative attitude to feminism. People have decided feminism hold just this one view, while like in other theories feminism have many points of views. Many believe feminist views only believe that women should have jobs and wear bras and have arm hair, but it is rather about choosing and having the opportunity to either stay home or have a job. It is about women, and men, having the same opportunities to do what they want in life. Feminism is about equality between men and women.

Tyson believes that feminist theory has been oversimplified and has been given a negative view in the American culture today. (Tyson, 79). Many people have a negative and oversimplified view of what feminism is. To be able to fully understand and accept the premise of feminist theory one need to understand why there is a negative view towards this type of critical reading of texts. The way society portrays women who deviates from their

“role,” as feminism encourages, might be the reason behind this negative attitude towards feminism as a concept.

As an example of this negative attitude, Tyson mentions the use of *he* to include both men and women. People don't really understand why the use of *he* to include both sexes is a problem. Although this is often used the male experience as standard by which the experience of both sexes is evaluated. To explain it differently, “[...] the “inclusive *he*” claims to represent both men and women, in reality it is a part of a deeply rooted cultural attitude that ignores women's experiences and women's points of view.” (Tyson, 80). Before the growth of feminist writers in the 1960's, the white male point of view was dominant in literature and often seen as the universal point of view. Female writers and writers of colour did not represent these points of view and were therefore not seen as universal by these white men and therefore their writing was not part of the literary canon. This did not necessarily mean that women writers were not popular, many women enjoyed widespread fame for their writing, but history focuses on white male writers.

Even today, female writers represented in society and syllabi is often linked to feminism. Not only in literature have women been overlooked as a “standard point of view”. Women have since biblical times been seen as being made from a man. The man is the ideal and women were made from men to fit them perfectly. This theory is the basis of traditional gender roles. Men were made for doing some things and women were made to do other things.

This view is often rooted in the biological differences between men and women, according to feminist theory. For example, the word *hysteria*, which comes from the Greek word for womb (*hysteria*). Feminists usually do not deny biological differences between men and women, but they do not believe these differences should be used to undermine women and keep them out of certain aspects of society. (Tyson, 81-82). This is in a way proven by the fact that women have not been acknowledged by the medical community as being different and might have other needs than men when it comes to medical situations or that they are considered as less intelligent beings. Mary Wollstonecraft is regarded as the first real feminist in modern history. She advocated for women to be taught more intellectual skills and be seen as rational creatures instead of just flaunting their graces. (Tauchert, 147).

The three feminist waves tried to remove some of these views on women. After women got the vote, women gradually found their voice in society. Women have gradually earned more justice, freedom, and independence throughout the centuries, but the question is how much have they gained?

2.4 Patriarchy

To be able to fully investigate Elizabeth and Fanny's circumstances in the society, this thesis needs to look at their society as a patriarchal society. This is where men have certain ideas of how a woman should look and behave. When we talk about how women should act, it applies to public life and as a wife in the home. The patriarchy is almost like a set of rules for what each gender should strive to achieve in life. Lloyd W. Brown describes it like this: "but the underlying assumption about "ideal" womanhood is the same: womanhood means emotional fulfilment through (a) sexual "dependency" and (b) motherhood." (Brown, 323). The patriarchy is based on men's opinion of how women should be, what their role is. As one can see from Brown's writing, the patriarchy has given women two roles. One is related to their relationship with men, the other is connected to their role as mother. This only says something about the female body, not the intellectual potential of women.

Lois Tyson, who is a Professor Emerita of English at Grand Valley State University in the US, has authored a book called *Critical Theory Today*. Her book provides the sense of the Patriarchy. Her theory explains how the patriarchy works and how characters acquiesce under the patriarchal structure, and how others rebel against this structure. Tyson also talks about traditional gender roles in the chapter about feminism. Tyson mentions how she has been programmed to think a certain way and class herself a *recovering patriarchal woman*. By this Tyson means:

[...] a woman who has internalized the norms and values of *patriarchy*, which can be defined, in short, as any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles. *Traditional gender roles* cast men as rational, strong, protective and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive."

-(Tyson, 81)

These terms have been used to undermine women in society even today. Even though there have been laws passed that ensure women equality to men, employers can pay women less for doing the same job as man just by giving her a different job title. Of course, in Austen's time, women were offered few professions at all. This means patriarchy, by definition, is sexist. Women are not given the same rights as men even though laws demand it, even today. This kind of patriarchal society believe that women are inferior to men, and we see Austen's characters negotiate that.

The patriarchy is still alive and well, but in Jane Austen's time it was more prominent in for example men and women's education. Today both sexes have the opportunity and the right to an education in England. "Men and women must be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in. In every age there has been a stream of popular opinion that has carried all before it, and given a family character, as it were, to the century. It may then fairly be inferred, that, till society be differently constituted, much cannot be expected from education." (Wollstonecraft, 498). Considering this quote from Wollstonecraft, one can see why the patriarchy worked. Women were held in their "positions" because of their lack of education.

To be able to expand the intellectual life, beyond a certain point, one needs education. Patriarchy is the philosophy behind this kind of thinking. Men have an intellectual role, the role that is more important to social life, while women are meant to have a life based on their biology. This is the definition of the patriarchy. The social rules made by the patriarchy decides women's fate to a certain extent. Jane Austen conforms in her writing to these social rules and only her heroines break from this. At least to some extent. Austen stretches the rules for her heroines to some extent, but she does not give them a life as an intellectual human being, but she makes their life as wife and mother more tolerable because they end up with the man they love. This shows that Austen challenged the patriarchy, but she does it in a way that does not stray too far from social rules. The patriarchy shines through Austen's writing, even though she is trying to defy it.

"Many of the topics tackled by novels were inherently political in the broadest sense, notably, those that dealt with courtship and family life brought up issues of obedience, identity, and self-protection, the first of which were frequently patriarchal issues." (Black, 11). Jeremy Black introduces this in his book *England in the Age of Jane Austen*. Black is a lecturer and writer. Many of his books concern aspects of eighteenth century British, European, and American political, diplomatic, military history, press, cartography, warfare, culture and on the nature and uses of history itself. (Wordpress). Female writers like Jane Austen could add a female point of view to the issues that women in this time would face. Her heroines, would more often than not, overcome the burden of obedience expected of them from family and society.

Both Elizabeth and Fanny would at some point speak up about their expected obedience in matters of the heart. Both heroines would fight against the expectations of marrying some they should, not someone they wanted. The patriarchal society they lived in

would have expected both these women to obey the adults in their lives and marry these people out of duty, both refused to adhere to this. This is a common theme in Jane Austen's books. Strong women who in their own way, refuses to obey.

The patriarchal society can be defined: as any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles. Men are masculine and women are feminine. Tyson is under the impression that femininity is learned and not a part of a woman's biology. These will be some important starter-points in the analysis of women and expectations to them. The patriarchy is not only seen as negative for women. Men are supposed to be masculine. Meaning they should be physically strong, not show emotions or cry, and they should especially not show sympathy towards other men. That is considered unmanly. Feminism wants to eliminate gender roles in an effort to make life easier for everyone. Men should be allowed to cry or show emotions, and women should be allowed to be strong.

Gender roles is a social construction, a consequence of patriarchy. This means that no woman is born feminine, and no man is born masculine. These thoughts about how each gender should act is learned. Tyson thinks these ideas about gender should be removed. This way, men and women have more room to be who they want to be. (Tyson, 82-83). If we look at these gender roles there are only two roles for a woman to play. Either the one where she accepts her role as a weak and submissive woman, or she breaks with these stereotypes and are considered a "witch." This can be a challenge when writing strong female characters. The problem can be to make the readers like her, without compromising her independence.

2.5 Reading the novel and reading Jane Austen

In their book *This Thing Called Literature* Bennet and Royle look at in chapter 3 what it means to read a novel. Novels are usually not written to portray the real world, even though the stories they tell might seem like they are. Usually, a novel is a story of fiction, but it might be set in the real world, or what might be the real world. Bennet and Royle point to the distinction between 'realist' and 'realistic' do not mean 'real'. They are only versions or parts of the real world as the reader knows it. (Bennet & Royle, 39).

"Indeed, as the critic Pam Morris bluntly comments of realist novels: they 'never give us life or slice of life, nor do they reflect reality' (Morris, 4). This might seem paradoxical, given the name 'realism', but the point is that it is a *convention* of representation: realist fiction follows certain conventions in describing the world. After all, a novel is made of words, it is not a mirror." (Bennet & Royle, 40). What Bennet and Royle is saying here is that

novels have certain aspects and conventions of the real world, but that does not necessarily mean the novel is a real story, with real people and events. The novel is a world of its own, but the reader might find elements in the story that they recognize from their own life and the world around them.

Bennet and Royle also specify how important it is to be a mind-reader. There are many situations in life where being a mind-reader can help you. For example, when taking an exam, it will help you to know what kind of answer the examiner wants from you, or to know what your boss is expecting of you etc. Mind-reading is a way of survival for us humans. Reading a novel is one way to read someone else's mind. Novels allow us to know, or believe that we know, exactly what goes on in someone else's head. It is important to know how someone else's mind is portrayed when reading a novel. (Bennet & Royle, 45). Bennet and Royle also speak about Jane Austen and how she works with these issues of portraying the mind.

“She takes as her subject a certain class of people – the middle- and upper-middle classes living in southern England – and pays scrupulous attention to their manners and relationships, their opinions, prejudices and ways of speaking, their lifestyles and purchasing preferences, their habits, occupations and finances. And their love lives. *Especially* their love lives.”

– (Bennet & Royle, 45)

“The typical Jane Austen heroine is a middle-class but financially insecure, young, unmarried but eminently marriageable, and dependent on finding a husband for a resolution to her life.” (Bennet & Royle, 45). Reading minds is not important only to the reader of Austen's novels, but also to her heroines. It was most important for them to read the minds of their suitors. Given the social constraints these women lived in, it was important to be able to read the suitors mind to find out what kind of man he was. Austen's heroines need to be able to understand what is being said without there being anything said. This was almost like their professions, which was important to save their own future life.

What we can understand from this, is the importance of being a good mind-reader not only for the reader himself, but also for the characters in the book. The reader can learn from the heroines what it means to read someone else's mind and why it can be so important to know how to do this. To be able to predict what others might expect from you in various situations can be linked to social skills in the way that you can show people you understand what they mean without them having to tell you exactly what they mean. This is something that can be applied to many situations, some mentioned above, in your own life.

This kind of thinking about a novel can be important to know when this thesis is going to compare the way of life in Austen's novels to the life and point of view of a 21st century woman. Knowing how we read and understand novels can help the comparison of views and life between the Jane Austen heroines and the 21st century woman. When we know that novels are only partly real, it will be easier to analyse the important things that can be linked to real life. For example, what is mentioned earlier, that Austen portrays certain 'types' of people in her novels. They have different views on finances, their manner of speaking and relationships. This one can assume is drawn from real life and social conventions that were in order in the time Austen was writing. These aspects of what it meant to be a social woman then, can be compared to what it means to be a social woman now. To clarify the term 'social woman', it is someone who is given certain expectations to behaviour or conduct out in society. These are the sort of issues this thesis will focus on when comparing Austen's heroines to the 21st century woman.

Judith Kegan Gardiner writes in *On Female Identity and Writing by Women*, that it has been hard for women to find their own identity. Carolyn Heilbrun says women are "male-identified". (Gardiner, 347). Through literature and real life, women have found it hard to find their "self". Gardiner also says fictional women have a harder time to find themselves. In her text she says this about females finding the "self":

"In a recent anthology of feminist criticism, one scholar claims that "a feminist critique ... is helping women to recognize themselves"; a second says that fiction by women reveals "a fear of losing ... one's unique identity"; a third believes "feminist poets" equate "consciousness of oppression; consciousness of identity." Thus the quest for female identity seems to be a soap opera, endless and never advancing, that plays the matinées of women's souls. A central question of feminist literary criticism is, Who is there when a woman says, "I am"?"

– (Gardiner, 347-348).

What one can take from this is that women need to navigate through an endless web of theories, identity crises and self-discoveries to find who the "I am" is. It can be hard to figure out who to listen to or look up to in the search of finding oneself. Female writing can offer a look into the female mind, which you cannot find in male writing. Female writing differs from male writing. One can use female psychology to help navigate these writings. Finding out what identity is can help feminist theorists find an explanation to why female writing differs from men's writing. Considering a lot of theory is written by men, and a lot of theories

surrounding identity is written from the male point of view, we need to adapt this to fit the female human experience. Gardiner uses the work of psychoanalyst Heinz Lichtenstein, Norman Holland and Erik Erikson in order to establish what identity theory currently means to the literary community. (Gardiner, 349). Gardiner found that if she extended the psychoanalytic work of Nancy Chodorow to the work of these three men, she could see that the female experience varies from men's experience of identity.

In Ian Watt's work, *The Rise of the Novel*, from 1957, he describes Jane Austen's writing like this:

“Her analyses of her characters and their states of mind, and her ironical juxtapositions of motive and situation are as pointed as anything in Fielding, but they do not seem to come from an intrusive author but rather from some august and impersonal spirit of social and psychological understanding.”

-(1)

Austen's style of writing is often from a privileged point of view. Austen's protagonist is a representation of a group of people of a certain status in society. She bases her novels on marriage and the proper feminine role. Comparing traditional gender roles from her novels and women today can be relevant to understanding the evolution of these roles. (Watts, 1). Understanding Austen's style of writing and the focus of her novels is important to be able to this investigation.

For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, the story is told from Elizabeth Bennet's point of view. Yet the narrative point of view gives an objective point on the other characters. They are not exclusively from Elizabeth's point of view. This way the reader receives an objective point of view of the society and its people. Austen gives a social comment without relying on her characters view of society. (Watts, 1). Reading her novels gives an insight into her characters that a 21st century feminist might find intriguing to investigate. Women today have a lot more opportunities than women in Austen's novels have. Austen's novels can give an insight into how women were viewed and what expectations family and society had to them. Considering Austen's writing, these investigations can be done quite objectively.

When reading *Pride and Prejudice*, the reader might get the impression that all women think about is men and how to secure them. Their future life, and their family is depending on the man they find. For example, Jane Bennet feels the responsibility to find a rich husband to secure the future of herself and her family.

There is always one character in Austen's books, whose mental state is more completely than others. This character is often of a more privileged status. (Watt, 1). Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price are both privileged, but neither is very rich. They are both dependent, or to use a more suiting term, expected to finding a rich husband with a good status to secure a comfortable future. Neither of them thinks they can marry for love, even though they wish to. This need for securing their future based on status and opportunities for marriage will be interesting to compare to Moran. Is Moran's autonomy over her life just as dependent on securing a good marriage as it seems to be for Austen's protagonists?

2.6 Money and marriage in Jane Austen's novels

“Marriage, and more significantly, a marriage based in love was the aim of all of Austen's heroines, but why was it so important? Marriage for love is more or less a foregone conclusion today. In Austen's day though, it was not. More than that, it was a new and novel idea, slowly gaining popularity among the masses.” (Grace, 3). When looking at the time Jane Austen wrote in, marriage and money were often connected. Marriage was almost a transactional affair. The marriage was usually a benefit for both families. Today marriage is more often than not based on love between two people, not a benefit for their families. The process in which two people find each other today is a lot more simple and perhaps even more based on coincidences than acquaintances. There are many reasons for this, and this thesis will show this in the discussion chapter with Caitlin Moran's work, but here it will be explained why money and marriage was linked in Jane Austen's time and writing.

First of all, in Jane Austen's England, people did not have social programs in the same way people have today. Parents were more dependent on their children doing well to precure their future when they became too old to work. They needed to be taken care of by their children, both financially and physically. Not just parents, but unmarried women depended on their families or family in law to take care of them. A family therefore depended on at least one of the children to marry well. (Grace, 5). Women were especially dependent on this because they could not find a job as easily as a man. Men were to inherit land and money from their father, girls did not have this advantage.

This is very well shown in *Pride and Prejudice*. Especially Jane feels this responsibility to find a rich man. As Mrs. Bennet so eloquently put it: “It was, moreover, such a promising thing for her younger daughters, as Jane's marrying so greatly must throw them in the way of other rich men; and lastly, it was so pleasant at her time of life to be able to

consign her single daughters to the care of their sister, that she might not be obliged to go into company more than she liked.” (Austen b, 86). This shows two things: how important it was for a family that their daughters, in particular, married well and what a mother’s job was. To marry off her children.

Women were supposed to find a sensible match. What a sensible match was depended on the social standing a woman had. Some had the luxury of having rich men in their near circle. This made it easier to make a good match for herself and her family. It was also expected that rich men found a match among women who were considered accomplished and held a high social class. This is shown in both Jane and Elizabeth’s search for a man. Mr. Bingley is told to distance himself from Jane because his friends and family do not think she is in his social class. Mr. Darcy also tells Elizabeth that he likes her despite his own better judgement and that their relationship will not be accepted by his social circle and family. (Austen b, 161-163).

Maria Grace notes in her book, the three key qualities for a good match: connections, cash and compatibility. (Grace, 7). The heroines of Jane Austen’s writing do not have these in common with the men they love. These “three C’s” are the main qualities people looked for in a prospective mate in Jane Austen’s time. Women who married for love in Austen’s time usually had unfortunate fates. This is shown in *Mansfield Park*. Fanny’s mother married for love, and she could not even care for all her children well. (Grace, 8). Therefore, Fanny was sent to her aunt and uncle. Fanny’s mother was lucky enough to be able to send her daughter to her sister which had married a lot better than herself. Still, Fanny was not given a bright future and guaranteed to find a good rich man, but she was given a chance to have a good upbringing with a better education than what her mother could offer her.

All through her writing, Austen shows how society worked and what opportunities women had, but her heroines were given a chance to have both money and love because they refused to play by society’s rules. None of Austen’s heroines did have a chance at a marriage that provided both love and money, most importantly money, initially. This is how Austen was ahead of her time. She gave her heroines love and money even though this was almost unheard of during the Regency era.

Jeremy Black notes in his books the lack of social mobility in chapter two of his book *England in the Age of Jane Austen*. It was unusual for people to be able to move up from the class they were born into. Social mobility was not the norm in Regency Era England. This is a lot easier to do in today society. Class is not the same issue as it used to be. In Austen’s time there was also a difference between self-made money and inherited money. There was a

difference between those who had inherited land and money for generations, and those who had made their fortune in other ways. “Alongside the awareness of social difference between nobility and gentry, the absence of serious tension between them was not an important feature of landed society, and a crucial aspect of stability. This was very much part of the world depicted by Austen, although she was aware of tensions, real and possible.” (Black, 33).

Austen did not put a lot of emphasis on this issue in her writing. For example, the Gardiners in *Pride and Prejudice* was not notably seen as different as the other families in the neighbourhood. The same goes for the Bertram family. Sir Thomas Bertram had made his money abroad, but this was not emphasised by Austen in her writing. In her writing, Austen only focused on the difference in money and status, not as much who was what kind of rich. Still, Austen did make the possibility for social mobility more possible in her writing than what was normal in her time.

Both Elizabeth and Fanny moved up the social ladder in marrying the man they loved. Austen made two almost unthinkable scenarios possible for the happiness of her heroines. As mentioned, today social mobility is a lot easier to achieve, and usually not an issue people talk about. In Caitlin Moran’s book, *How To Be a Woman*, she does not mention either her or her husband as being from different classes. Her silence on the matter demonstrates how this is not a big part of the conversation when choosing a partner today. What was almost unthinkable in Jane Austen’s time, is a non-issue in today’s society.

2.7 The 21st century woman and Caitlin Moran

The 21st century western woman grew up in a society impacted by the backlash following the second feminist wave of the 1960s. Filipa Melo Lopes writes in her article *Perpetuating the patriarchy: misogyny and the (post-) feminist backlash*, about the challenges surrounding the patriarchy and patriarchal views in the 21st century. Previous chapters have been talking about the patriarchy and how it decides the dynamic between men and women. The patriarchy is a kind of hierarchical system deciding what separates women from men and their social standing. Misogyny on the other hand: “[...] is a property of social environments where women perceived as violating patriarchal norms are ‘kept down’ through hostile reactions coming from men, other women and social structures.” (Lopes, 1).

Lopes tries in her article to explain why feminists are failing to remove the patriarchy. Why are the relationship between men and women almost unchanged from before the feminist waves and after, and what is the backlash? Women in Jane Austen’s time had no chance to be

financially independent unless the inherited money. Women had to marry to support themselves and perhaps even their families. Women today have a better chance of getting an education and a higher paying job. They do not necessarily need a man to support them.

The problem comes, when doing this is not socially acceptable. Women are often, as seen in the quote above, judged for not conforming to gender roles, or for behaving in an un-patriarchal manner. Even though women have the opportunities does not necessarily mean they can. It depends how they were raised, their expectations to life and marriage. Even though it becomes increasingly common for women to get a better paying job, not becoming a housewife even though she is married or choosing to live her life on her own terms, does not mean that it is always accepted by other men or even women. There are some social constructions that are hard to live without. For example, our societies gender roles. According to Lopes, people are missing the vocabulary needed to rid themselves of the patriarchy.

“Today, gendered social meanings are still crucial to social judgements of acceptability regarding what clothes you should wear, how you should talk, sit and walk. Spheres of interaction like (hetero)sexual conduct continue to be deeply structured around gender.”

-(Lopes, 2530)

What this means in that the way people talk about men and women have a certain vocabulary. We still do not have a new vocabulary to replace this. When there is no clear common shared sense of what gender is, getting rid of the “old way” of talking about gender is difficult. As a society we need some shared thoughts and expectations to gender to function properly. This is the point Lopes is trying to make in her article.

When talking about the 21st century woman and who she is, we need to consider that the patriarchy is still standing strong in society. Even though several feminist-waves have swept through the western world since Austen’s time, some of the old expectations to men and women are almost unchanged. Women are still considered as the weaker sex, they are expected to be more maternal and nurturing, while men are still expected to be masculine and strong. This theory has been explained by Tyson in the chapter *Feminism*.

Tyson talks about how women who are breaking these expectations to their gender are looked at as “witches.” This might be the reason both men and women might morally try to keep women within their respective gender expectations. The patriarchy and their rules are not written down laws, they are socially understood rules on how people from a certain gender should behave. For 21st century people these rules become increasingly weakened, but

then the problem of how one should act and what is acceptable. For a society to function this needs to be clear. When these rules then start to fall apart, but society has no new ways of talking about men and women and their roles, then this becomes a real problem. This is something the 21st century woman struggles with. Finding an acceptable way to live the life she wants to live.

Considering both men and women impose moral attitudes towards women who break from these gender roles, they have a tough time accepting these wishes for themselves. “[...] women in contemporary Western societies, “in the face of certain prejudices and economic forces of oppression”, systematically choose occupations with lower wages and sustain the vicious cycle of powerlessness that oppresses them.” (Lopes, 2521). This illustrates the entirety of the problem for modern women. Even though women have the power to decide their own fate, in theory, they opt to choose occupations that are more in style of their gender and its expectations.

Caitlin Moran writes in her book about her upbringing and her introduction to feminism. One thing to consider is the sexualization of women. This is often correlated to the porn industry. What is considered “sexy,” or the way women should attract male attention have been decided by these industries. How the two genders interact with one another is a part of how the social rules decided it should be.

“Raunch culture is a heavily sexualized, hierarchical and heteronormative paradigm of gendered behavior, shaped by the norms of the sex entertainment industry. Examples of it are the mainstream popularity of ‘Lad Mags’, pornographic actors, vaginoplasty surgeries and ‘fitness pole dancing’ studios.”

-(Lopes, 2522)

Gender and feminism are often seen in respect to women being feminine and beautiful. In the new millennia, feminist have decided to take control over this kind of thinking of women, men, and power. Women decided to take part in these activities in the name of feminism. This might have been done in an attempt to take control over a situation where women have often been viewed as the weaker party in a power-struggle between the two genders. (Lopes, 2522). This movement has become known for trying to make women comfortable with their own sexuality, the same way men have been comfortable with theirs for quite some time. This is relevant for the thesis to show how women have many aspects of their existence to prove and change in order to create equality between the two genders.

Considering these activities are still founded upon patriarchal standards of appreciation (Lopez, 2525), it is hard to see how they help the feminist agenda and the 21st century woman take control of her own existence.

When considering what is written above about sexuality and beauty it does not seem like this can be linked to what opportunities women have in deciding the destiny of their life. This is somewhat true, but if women are only seen as objects to be admired and looked at, their opportunities to be something more goes away.

Moran brings this up when she talks about how feminists should try and look past looks and fight for what they want to be. This is a healthy way of thinking about things if you would like to be a woman of your own means, but it is hard to be able to do if the rest of the world will not accept you as anything but beautiful. In her book Moran show girls how this is possible. Realising how the world around women are trying to make them into something they are not, will help them become what they want. This is what Moran is telling women with her book *How to be a Woman*. The 21st century woman is by law equal to men, but social rules and lingering ideas of what a woman is supposed to be, is keeping women today from being completely equal to men.

3. *Pride and Prejudice*

3.1 Presentation of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice is a story about how a young woman decided her own fate, in a world where that should not be possible for someone in her financial and social position. Elizabeth Bennet is a witty and stubborn young woman who spends her life trying to navigate the expectations society and family has to her. Her family needs her to marry someone who might benefit them all, and society needs her to not stray from her social class when choosing a husband.

The story follows the family Bennet in their daily life and their quest to secure the sisters futures. Jane and Elizabeth Bennet are the two sisters whose future is most critical for the whole family. Since Mr and Mrs Bennet did not have any sons, their estate will go to Mr. Bennet's cousin, Mr. Collins. This effectively means that by the time Mr. Bennet dies, Mr. Collins can throw the remaining Bennet's out of their home. Jane or Elizabeth needs to marry rich to secure the future of the rest of the family. This is something both girl's struggle with. They so much would like to marry for love, or at least with a man they can tolerate. Jane falls in love with a wealthy man, Mr Bingley, and the future of the family seem to have a happy ending. That is until Mr. Bingley retreats from Jane on his friends and family's insistence. This leaves the family with little hope.

Elizabeth also puts the family in despair when she rejects Mr. Collins proposal. Mr. Collins ends up marrying Elizabeth's close friend Charlotte Lucas, leaving Mrs. Bennet in anger that one day they might live in her house. Elizabeth will make it up to her mother later when she falls in love with the wealthy Mr. Darcy and he in the end falls in love with her. Jane also has the joy of Mr. Bingley comes back to her and proposes. The story ends up having a happy ending despite this not being a typical ending for women in Jane Austen's time.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, it seems the only thing the women can think about is men and how to "secure them". This can be seen already in the first scene, when Mrs. Bennet pleads her husband to go call on the new neighbour, Mr Bingley. When Mr. Bennet asks why he should go and call on him, she answers that she of course intends that he should marry one of her daughters. (Austen b, 1). Her role as mother is to find her daughters a husband and marry them all off. The father's job is to provide for the family and do his duties to his wife. This is

clearly how Mr and Mrs Bennet is portrayed in the book. Mr Bennet provides, and Mrs Bennet is responsible for marrying away her daughters.

When Mr. Darcy succeeds in splitting up Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet, he says he did so because he thought she was indifferent to Mr. Bingley. He also blamed her family: “– 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, and occasionally even by your father”. (Austen b, 169). Their behaviour was not up to Mr. Darcey’s standards. For example, miss Mary Bennet, starts to play the piano and sing very poorly without being asked. (Austen b, 87). This could be seen as rude and improper and not in line with the decorum at the time. This is behaviour Mr. Darcy does not find acceptable when they are out in public. He writes about this in his letter to Elizabeth after their fight in Mr. Collins house.

Women in Jane Austen’s time learned skills like embroidery, piano, singing, reading, conversation, sewing, etc. These were skills they used to either fill their time or use to be conceived as accomplished in what was considered female arts as mentioned earlier in the thesis. Mary Wollstonecraft describes how women are supposed to be soft of temper, obedient and be pleasing to a man. (Wollstonecraft, 496). A woman who accomplished many of these things were seen as a good woman, or a potentially good wife. From what can be interpret from the novel, Jane and Elizabeth spend a lot of their time talking about or to men. Since they are the eldest, they have a heavier burden when it comes to finding a man. Their family’s future depends on them finding a rich man. Since they are only girls in the family, their father’s estate is promised to another male relative. Women can’t inherit property in this time. If the father dies, the daughters are expected to take care of each other, if they are not all married, and they must take care of their widowed mother. To be able to do this they will have a better chance of a comfortable life if they find a rich husband. They must also uphold a certain social class, perhaps even move up a class.

The first sentence in *Pride and Prejudice*, tells: “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.” (Austen b, 3). If this was to be flipped around, one can say that any single young girl must do what she can to find a good husband. Women were seen as passive and a good representation of her husband. She was expected to be a good figure when they were out in public. She should not make a scene or speak out of turn or behave in a way seen as vulgar in any way. There were routines as to how a man should court a woman and ask her father for her hand. These days, who someone marries is a personal choice. It would be an advantage if the family

liked a person's partner, but it is not necessary or their choice. Traditions were more important. These days people find their own way of doing things, how they get married, who they married to or if they married at all. People in different generations find and make their own traditions.

Women used to be put on a pedestal. They were expected to behave and conduct themselves in certain ways. If they did something to be pushed off the pedestal, the society would find it hard to forgive them their mistake and put them back onto the pedestal. (Tyson, 86). For example, when Lydia runs off with Mr. Wickham, she lives with him in London, without being married. This is very frowned upon in this time. A man and a woman should only live together after they are married. The fear of the rest of the family, and perhaps Elizabeth in particular, is that Mr. Wickham has no plan of actually getting married to Lydia. "Never, since reading Jane's second letter, had she entertained the hope of Wickham's meaning to marry her. No one but Jane, she thought, could flatter herself with such an expectation." (Austen b, 232). Not only would this elopement ruin Lydia's reputation and in extension the family's reputation, but they would also all be ruined if people found out about this. It could ruin Lydia's chances of ever getting married to another man, and her sister could risk not finding a man in the right social circles. To put it in other words, their chances of marrying well could be damaged.

Pride and Prejudice portrays the struggles women faced in this time. Austen depicts societies expectations toward women in a very realistic way. Her novel is showing how Elizabeth is managing to navigate these expectations well and in turn give her the ending she deserved. In the end Elizabeth marries the man she loves without compromising her intellect. This was not very common for the time. This will be explained in a bit more detail in the next chapter.

3.2 Elizabeth and her views on life and relationship with her family

Elizabeth Bennet is a strong willed and observant girl. She thinks herself sensible in the sense of judging people's characters. In order to understand the minds of Elizabeth Bennet and the other female characters, it is important to understand what female identity is. How do these women learn who they are? Are they a product of the social rules they are born into? If this is the case, are they a product of male or female identity? When looking at Elizabeth Bennet, one can see that she is torn between what is expected of her and what she wants for herself. She needs to find a husband to secure her future, but she truly wishes to marry for

love. Her family and society have expectations to how she must behave, talk, and present herself. For the most time she behaves as she should, but she also challenges these expectations on occasion. She also watches her family misbehave according to the decorum of her time.

Elizabeth does not always seem ready to always live up to her parent's expectations. Her break from the expectations towards her gives her some freedom to wait and see what happens later. This turned out well for her. Elizabeth finds room to be herself and be true to what she believes is her identity, even though it might not be what is expected of her. Her mother is not happy about her turning down Mr. Collins. Her father on the other hand is almost proud that she would not sacrifice her integrity for any man, especially not one as silly as Mr. Collins.

Elizabeth makes it clear when she turns down Mr Collins that she is not willing to enter the role of wife for just anyone. She is determined to find someone who can appreciate her intelligence as well as her femininity. This is something Mr Collins cannot do for her. Her appreciation for intellectual stimulation is something he cannot give to her. He expects a dutiful wife, something Elizabeth does not want to become. Well, at least not exclusively. She would do her duty as wife, as well as being intellectually challenged by her husband.

“Although Erikson believes that both sexes pass through the same stages on their way to maturity, he also believes in basic biological and psychological differences between the sexes. In his theory, the paradigmatic individual achieving a mature identity is male, whereas the female has a specialized role as childbearer. Her biological structure, her unique “inner space”, is congruent with this role, and she seeks to fill and to protect this inner space rather than forge into outward accomplishments. Therefore, a young woman spends adolescence looking for the man through whom she will fulfil herself, and the maturational stages of identity and intimacy are conflated for her.”

– (Gardiner, 350).

The role as wife and mother is a role Elizabeth and her contemporary women must adhere to. Showing men that this is something they can be good at is important in the pursuit to find a husband. Qualities like being feminine, graceful, kind, knowing their place and not challenging men on what is perceived to be “masculine” is something they must show when they are present among men. This might be crucial when trying to secure a husband. These expectations are something Elizabeth is very aware of, and she can navigate the social

situations with some grace. Still, she makes some resistance to this. Even though we in many instances see Elizabeth challenge these social rules, she rarely makes a scene out of it like some of her family does. Her protests are small and insignificant when she is in public. This is also noted by Mr. Darcy in his letter to her. He does not mention Elizabeth as someone who acts improper in public, instead he mentions her mother, sisters and occasionally her father to be the ones who publicly break decorum.

The situation of your mother's family, though not objectionable, was nothing in comparison of that total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by herself, by your three younger sisters, and occasionally by your father. – Pardon me. – It pains me to offend you. But amidst your concern for this representation of your nearest relations, and your displeasure at this representation of them, let me give you consolation to consider that, to have conducted yourselves so as to avoid any share of the like censure, is praise no less generally bestowed on you and your eldest sister, than it is honourable to the sense and disposition of both.

-(Austen b, 169-170)

Mr. Darcy is impressed by Jane and Elizabeth's ability to act proper despite their family acting out. Considering this, Elizabeth is doing a good job of hiding her disdain of social decorum and expectations towards her. She plays her role well and with elegance, something her family cannot boast. Her way of constraining herself and not screaming at the top of her lungs that this role of womanhood is not for her, is very admirable. She is able to uphold her dignity and still fight against social decorum. Elizabeth tries to live up to society's expectations to her, but she still finds a way to be herself while being liked and looked at as a sensible woman. She finds a way to follow society's rules, while still hanging on to her intellect and sensibility. The next chapter will show how Elizabeth differs from some of the other female characters in the novel.

3.3 Charlotte, Caroline, Jane, and their view on marriage in comparison to Elizabeth

Maria Grace writes about marriage and love in her book *Courtship and Marriage in Jane Austen's World*. She mentions the three C's find a sensible match: connections, cash and compatibility (7). Love is not mentioned. Marriage sounds more like a business deal than what one today would define as a marriage. When Elizabeth decides to turn down Mr Collins, she

is choosing to ignore these rules in looking for a marriage, perhaps besides compatibility. Mr Collins and Elizabeth are two very different people, and she cannot find it in herself to even like him. This chapter will show how Charlotte, Caroline and Jane views marriage and a desirable partner differently from Elizabeth.

Hui-Chun Chang writes in her article *The Impact of the Feminist Heroine: Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice*, about the different views on marriage and love between Elizabeth, Caroline and Charlotte. Caroline is well educated, but also very forthcoming when it comes to securing a man. She does what she thinks the man (Mr. Darcy) wants. For example, she pretends to like reading. (Chang, 78). “At length, quite exhausted by the attempt to be amused by her own book, which she had only chosen because it was the second volume of his, she gave a great yawn and said, ‘How pleasant it is to spend an evening this way! I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading!’”. (Austen b, 50). Elizabeth on the other hand, is honest and true about what she thinks in as polite a manner she can muster. Elizabeth is truly and intellectual opposite Caroline. This despite not having received education. Darcy prefers Elizabeth even though Caroline is a more traditional Regency England woman. (Chang, 82).

Considering Caroline’s behaviour, one can get the sense she thinks herself above Jane and her family. They are not as rich as her family and have not had the advantages to get her kind of education. When she finds out Jane and Elizabeth have an uncle in London’s Cheapside, she and her sister snickers together. “[...] ’I think I have heard you say, that their uncle is an attorney in Meryton.’ ‘Yes; and they have another, who lives somewhere near Cheapside.’ ‘That is capital,’ added her sister, and they both laughed heartily. [...]” (Austen b, 33). Her low thoughts of the Bennet family are also the reason why she, Mr. Darcy and (the others) try to talk Mr. Bingley out of marrying Jane. And they succeed until the very end. They explain they do not think she is good enough for him. In the end, love wins, and Jane becomes the new Mrs. Bingley.

Jane and Elizabeth differ in some of the same way as Elizabeth and Caroline. The way Jane differs from Caroline is the facts that she is a more agreeable woman. Jane thinks she needs to please everyone else and keep her emotions hidden. Caroline is a bit more forthcoming and crasser, compared to Jane. Her careful creature causes Jane to almost lose Mr. Bingley. She does what she thinks the society expects from a woman, but it is not enough to convince Mr. Bingley’s friends. (Chang, 80). They in turn convince him to believe that Jane does not have any feelings for him. Jane also feels a stronger responsibility to take care of her family. She feels the pressure to secure the future of her family considering Mr and Mrs. Bennet does not have a son. They only have daughters, and they cannot inherit

Longbourn House. This will go to Mr. Collins, Mr. Bennet's cousin. The rules of society pressure Jane into looking for a man with some fortune.

When she meets Mr. Bingley, he almost immediately becomes the recipient of her affections. "[...]' He is just what a young man ought to be,' said she 'sensible, good-humoured, lively; and I never saw such happy manners! – so much ease with such perfect good breeding. [...]" (Austen b, 14). Jane is clearly falling for Mr. Bingley, and one can almost feel her excitement to find both money and pleasing manners in a man she could fancy. He seems almost perfect in her description of him. She is very lucky if he also fancies her. This is not only noted by herself, but also others.

Charlotte and Elizabeth are very similar people. They are both intellectuals and share many opinions. Still, they differ in a major way. Charlotte is willing to sacrifice her mind and opinions to secure a husband. She is willing to keep her thoughts silent to secure marriage. (Chang, 81). This is also something she ends up doing in Elizabeth's mind. "She had always felt that Charlotte's opinion on matrimony was not exactly like her own, but she could not have supposed it possible that when called into action, she would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage." (Austen b, 108). Elizabeth is not willing to sacrifice her mind for marriage. She wants a man that confers to her world view and view on marriage.

Elizabeth is successful in changing Mr. Darcy to fit her own standards for a husband. This is one of the ways Elizabeth stands out compared to the other three women. She stands her ground and does not compromise anything to secure a financially stable future. The other three women are willing to make compromises to secure a husband. Money is an important factor when chasing down a future husband. Elizabeth wants to marry for love, just like Jane, but she will not sacrifice love to marry. This is something Jane thinks she must be willing to do to get a husband. In the end she finds both in Mr. Bingley and receive both love and marriage. Caroline on the other hand, sacrifices her mind when she marries Mr. Collins. (Chang, 81). Elizabeth loses some respect for her friend when she makes this move, but she also understands that Charlotte is not left with much choice if she ever wants to get married and not end up as an old spinster. When Elizabeth visits the happy couple, she realises that Charlotte seems content with her life even though she does not spend much time with her husband. This might be a choice Charlotte is ready to live with, but Elizabeth cannot get herself to make this choice. Elizabeth needs to find a man with whom she can live happily, not just content. This will be shown in further detail in the discussion.

4. Mansfield Park

4.1 Presentation of *Mansfield park* by Jane Austen

Mansfield Park is the story about a young girl named Fanny Price. She is sent away from her family to live with her aunt and uncle Bertram. Mrs. Bertram is the sister of Fanny's mother. Her mother had not married well and was living in poor conditions with too many children. Her sister on the other hand had married very well and became a baronet's lady. This did in theory raise the hopes of her sisters to also marry well. Alas, Miss Frances married a Lieutenant of Marines. He had no fortune or education to speak about. Mrs. Bertram had not had much contact with her sister before she sent a letter asking for the Bertram's to take in one of her children. They agreed upon the eldest girl, who might benefit from more attention than her mother could give her and at the age of nine, Fanny was separated from her family to live with the Bertram family.

In the beginning Fanny was shy and missed her family a lot. She would be quite and withdrawn from the other, but she did in time find a friend in her cousin Edmund. Her cousins Maria and Julia were not directly unfriendly to her, but they made sure Fanny knew her place in the family. Fanny's eldest cousin Thomas was more indifferent to Fanny. His interests were more in drinking and betting than creating a relationship with Fanny, which was not uncommon in a young man of wealth. He was one day to inherit his father's fortune. While living at Mansfield Park, Fanny enjoyed the benefits of receiving an education. She was a willing learner even though she was not as gifted as her cousins Maria and Julia.

As the years went by, Fanny found her place in the family, and she became quite precious to her aunt Bertram. Her aunt Mrs Norris was more critical of Fanny. Mrs. Norris was very devoted to her nieces and in particular Maria. This became abundantly clear when Maria later left her husband, Mr Rushford, for Henry Crawford. Mary Crawford and Henry Crawford arrived in Mansfield to visit their sister Mrs. Grant who was married to Dr Grant, a clergyman. He took over the parsonage after Mr. Norris died.

The introduction of Mr and Miss Crawford stirred the calm that once was Mansfield Park. They came over to visit the Bertram's quite often. Mary Crawford was quite outspoken and crass, but she still managed to get both Bertram boys to fall in love with her. She first set her efforts to charm Tom Bertram, but he soon went away with Mr. Bertram abroad and she settled for Edmund. He was not what she imagined, especially when she found out he was to be a clergyman. Still, she strung him along for as long as she could and in the end, it was

Edmund that broke the attachment when she excused her brother's behaviour when he ran away with Maria. Maria and Henry Crawford had been flirting the whole time before she finally married Mr. Rushford. "[...] Fanny was the only one of the parties who found anything to dislike; but since the day at Sotherton, she could never see Mr Crawford with either sister without observation, and seldom without wonder or censure [...]". (Austen a, 93). When Maria finally married, Fanny did not welcome Henry's attempts to charm her instead. She had seen what he was like. He tried and almost convinced her he was in love with her. He even came to visit her when she went to visit her mother and father. Considering her having the worst time being at home, Henry was an almost welcomed distraction and she almost saw herself falling for him. But not long before Fanny was to return to Mansfield, Henry had run off with her cousin Maria and both her relationship with Henry and Edmunds attachment to Mary, ended.

In the aftermath of Maria's discretion, she was divorced from Mr. Rushford and sent away with her aunt Norris. Julia had eloped with Mr. Yates at the same time Maria had disappeared with Mr. Crawford. Even though this would have been a big scandal, it faded in proportion to what Maria had done. Even though Julia wished she could have had Mr. Crawford instead, she lives comfortably with Mr Yates. Edmund spent some time getting over what had happened, and when he finally did, he also finally saw Fanny for what she was: Someone he could love and marry.

"I purposely abstain from dates on this occasion, that everyone may be at liberty to fix their own, aware that the cure of unconquerable passion, and the transfer of unchanging attachments, must vary much as to time in different people. – I only entreat everybody to believe that exactly at the time when it was quite natural that it should be so, and not a week earlier, Edmund did cease to care about Miss Crawford, and became as anxious to marry Fanny, as Fanny herself could desire."

-(Austen a, 378)

True to the Austen ending, everything worked out well for our heroine. She ended up with the man she had loved all along. She did think her feelings for Edmund was brotherly for quite some time, but both she and Edmund finally found their way together even after everything they went through. The next chapter will describe Fanny's view on life and relationship with her family.

4.2 Fanny and her views on life and relationship with her family

Fanny starts off as a quiet girl. When she moves to her aunt and uncle, she does not really find her spot in the family, and she struggles to stay happy. Things change when she finds a friend in Edmund. In chapter two, there is a scene where Fanny Price is crying on the stairs. She has not been able to make a connection with anyone in the family she has come to. She is far from home with no one to confide in. Until her cousin Edmund, asks her what is wrong, why she is crying. She tells him because she misses her family and one brother in particular, William. This conversation between Fanny and Edmund at this time is what sparks their friendship. Edmund helps Fanny write a letter to William and because of this, she starts to trust him and becomes more open and happier. This situation is also what starts Edmund adoration and interest in Fanny. From then she grows more confident and stronger under the guidance of Edmund.

Edmund's sisters Maria and Julia are not that nice to Fanny. They always remind her that she is not part of the family and that she should not get too confident. She must remain in her rank. Edmund sympathises with Fanny. She takes his advice and confides in him about how she is doing. He becomes like a brother to her, although she has had deeper feelings for him for a long time. Fanny always tries to be a good girl. She spends her time trying to please her uncle and aunt. Her aunt Bertram enjoys how Fanny spends her time with her and that she is nice to her pug. Mrs Bertram appreciate how gentle Fanny is compared to her own daughters.

Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Bertram's sister, has since her husband's death been much more attentive towards her nieces. She spends her time speaking her mind and that almost always revolves around praising her nieces, especially Maria. Mrs. Norris thinks it her duty to pay much attention to the girls. Maria and Julia receive much praise from their aunt Norris, but Fanny is almost always criticized. Nothing Fanny does is good enough. Considering Fanny is quite a gentle soul, this criticism affects her quite a bit. She tries her hardest to live up to everyone's expectations to her. The only person who even tries to calm her mind is Edmund. Perhaps this is also why she develops so deep feelings toward him. He is the only one who shows her kindness and advice. He becomes her safe haven in the new family.

Compared to Maria and Julia, Fanny always tries her best to please her uncle. Whenever a situation arises where their actions might displease Mr. Bertram, Fanny is the first one to speak up and air her worries that he will not be pleased with their actions. It also shows clearly how Edmund has influenced her. He is also very varying of how their father

would react, while Tom, Maria and Julia decide to challenge their father's authority on several occasions. This is clearly shown in the scene with the play the decide to put on while he is away abroad:

'I think it would be very wrong. In a *general* light, private theatricals are open to some objections, but as *we* are circumstanced, I must think it would be highly injudicious, and more than injudicious, to attempt anything of the kind. It would show great want of feeling on my father's account, absent as he is, and in some degree of constant danger; and it would be imprudent, I think, with regard to Maria, whose situation is very delicate one, considering everything, extremely delicate'.

-(Austen a, 100).

Here we can clearly see Edmund's feelings towards putting on a theatre and he refers to his father thought opinion on the matter. Compared to Tom, Edmund is a more thoughtful son to his father. He does not want to displease him. This is shown in the decisions he makes. Still, he can be convinced otherwise by the beautiful Miss Crawford, and he ends up acting in the play with the others. Fanny on the other hand objects to the play the whole way but is torn between disappointing Mr Bertram or her cousins and the other gentlemen in the play. She is finally convinced to help them out with the play when their father comes home from abroad. Their play is quickly shut down when Sir Thomas comes home.

Through these events we can clearly see how Fanny struggles to impress both Edmund and Sir Thomas. She wants to do things right and have opinions that Edmund and his father would approve of. Her cousin's affection she does not chase as much. Fanny is more concerned with keeping Maria and Julia out of trouble with their father than she is trying to win their affection. Society have expectations towards women and Fanny believes that Sir Thomas and Edmund will guide her to be a good example of these expectations.

Fanny works hard to earn Sir Thomas' approval and be a good woman according to his views. And even though he might be hard on her at times, he does care for Fanny. She might not be his daughter, but he does dote on her to some extent. When he comes home from his trip his feelings toward Fanny can be seen very clearly: "'But where is Fanny? – Why do not I see my little Fanny?', and upon perceiving her, came forward with a kindness which astonished and penetrated her, calling her his dear Fanny, kissing her affectionately, and observing with decided pleasure how much she was grown!". (Austen a, 140). Fanny has become dear to him, and she finally feels more affection towards him as well.

Throughout the story Fanny becomes fonder of her uncle and after Maria is married and Julia goes with her to London to live with the newlyweds, Fanny receives even more attention from Sir Thomas. His approval of the woman she has become, becomes clearer throughout the story and this helps Fanny become more confident in who she is. She is still very eager to please and become a good woman according to his teachings.

Fanny does very well until Henry Crawford asks for her hand in marriage. This is the beginning of Fanny's rebellion towards what is expected from her. This is the time she finally speaks her true mind and defies Sir Thomas. Fanny has been eager to please and live up to the expectations to her as a woman of this time, but she knowingly defies this when Henry Crawford asks for her hand. Her refusal to his marriage proposal upsets Sir Thomas, but he is not as upset as if it would have been one of his daughters: "[...] I should have been much surprised, and much hurt, by such proceeding. I should have thought it a gross violation of duty and respect. *You* are not to be judged by the same rule. You do not owe me the duty of a child. But, Fanny, if your heart can acquit you of *ingratitude* –". (Austen a, 255). Sir Thomas implies here that he has some right to have an opinion on what Fanny does to her life. He thinks she does not owe him the duties of a daughter, but that she does owe him something in return for taking her in and raising her as his own. This of course affects Fanny greatly and she feels very appreciative to everything he has done for her, but her own feelings toward Henry Crawford forbids her to marry him. In this instance she finally shows her defiance towards the system she is being raised in compared to Maria and Julia.

The next chapter will explain in more detail how all these women defy the role they have been put in by society and how they all defy it, with varying results. Fanny is the only one who gets what she wants, and still stays on good terms with the men in her life.

4.3 Fanny Price, Mary Bertram and Mary Crawford

Christopher Stampone, at the university of Johns Hopkins, wrote the article "*Obligated to yield*": *The Language of Patriarchy and the System of Mental Slavery in Mansfield Park*. In his article he describes Fanny Price as a "mental slave of the patriarchy". (Stampone, 198). When Fanny rejected Henry Crawford's offer of marriage, she was terrified of the punishment she might receive from Sir Thomas. Although he did not react the way she was expecting. Instead, he said he did not expect the same duty from her as he did from his daughters. He did however expect a feeling of gratitude towards him from Fanny. Even though Fanny is not Sir

Thomas' daughter, he did take her into his house and raised her. Sir Thomas thinks she lacks this sense of gratitude because she does not accept Henry's proposal of marriage. (Stampone, 198). Stampone tries to paint Fanny as a "slave to patriarchy" through this example. Sir Thomas tries to decide how Fanny should behave through the way he speaks to her and through his expectations to her.

Stampone explains it like this: "[...] duty expected from [girls] is, like all the duties arbitrarily imposed on women, more from a sense of propriety, more out of respect for decorum, than reason; and thus taught slavishly to submit to their parents, they are prepared for the slavery of marriage." (199). This whole idea of educating women to behave "properly" is a way of enslaving them, first by their parents, then by their husband and society. The patriarchy decides their future. If women don't do as they are told, they will fall outside society and will bring shame upon their families. In this way, women will have to behave in a female and feminine manner to be accepted into society and to have an acceptable future.

Both Sir Thomas' daughters fails to uphold their duties. Maria is even sent away to the remote land to live out her days because she neglected her duties to Mr. Rushworth and pursues Henry. Julia marries a man whom her father did not accept, but she is accepted back into the family because her sins were not as big as Maria's. (Stampone, 208-209). All three women, Fanny, Maria, and Julia are well aware of their duties when it comes to marriage, but they all handle this duty differently. Women are not the only ones enslaved by the patriarchy. Men must also do their duty. For example, Edmund. He wanted to pursue Mary. This came to an end when he became a clergyman. This was his duty to his family, but Mary would not have him when he fulfilled that duty. (Stampone, 208). Men are also expected to find someone to marry, someone worthy of him. They cannot marry for love any more than any woman can, but they have more freedom in seeking a partner. They have more choices in finding a mate than women are, but they are not completely free to choose whoever they want.

Fanny is trying to always please her uncle. She does what she can to make him proud of her. The only time she goes against his good opinion is when Henry Crawford asks her to marry him. This is the first time Fanny knowingly and on her own, defies him. "Sir Thomas himself was watching her progress down the dance with much complacency; he was proud of his niece, and without attributing all her personal beauty as, Mrs Norris seemed to do, to transplantation to Mansfield, he was pleased with himself for having supplied everything else;

- education and manners she owed to him.” (Austen a, 222). Sir Thomas considered her almost to be one of his daughters. Therefore, he spent much time trying to convince Fanny to marry Henry Crawford. He felt she owed him her respect when it came to decisions in her life. He felt she needed to take his advice seriously, but since she was not his daughter, he made it clear that this was her decision even though he was a bit disappointed she did not accept him.

Fanny was a girl who had not thought she deserved much when it came to marriage. She would take what came her way, but she was still sensible and had made up her own opinions when it came to the man she would marry. Her choice in men was someone like Edmund, or more accurately, Edmund himself. She developed deep feelings for him over the years they lived together at Mansfield. Edmund was a man whose opinion she trusted, and she could confide in him almost everything. The only thing she kept for herself was her opinion of the Crawford’s.

Fanny’s idea of marriage was something of mutual respect, someone she could confide in and trust to make good decisions. These are all things she found in Edmund, he taught her these things. Henry Crawford was the exact opposite. He spent his time pursuing Maria even though she was engaged to someone else. Fanny watched him flirt with both Maria and Julia. She did not trust him and did not think he was a good man. She thought he acted inappropriate and without respect towards Mr. Rushford. This was especially seen when they took a trip to Sotherton. “‘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.’ Fanny feeling all this to be wrong, could not help with making an effort to prevent it.” (Austen a, 80). Fanny felt it was inappropriate for Maria and Henry Crawford to go off on their own without her and Mr. Rushford. There were many incidents where Fanny felt Henry Crawford pushed the limits of what was propriate in his actions towards both Maria and Julia, but Maria in particular. Even though Fanny did not think she was worthy of a rich man, she wanted someone honourable, and Henry Crawford did not live up to her expectations.

When it came to Maria, she knew full well her duties to marry a man of stature and money. Mr Rushford was a man her father found agreeable. Still, she was almost haunted by the idea of marrying for love. She enjoyed feeling wanted by a handsome man like Henry Crawford and she happily indulged him in his flirting. She kept flirting with him and giving him her attention even though Mr Rushford was right there in the room. Her action was

anything but appropriate. Even though she in various situations indulged in flirting with Mr Crawford, she married Mr Rushford out of duty. Since the beginning of her acquaintance with the Crawford's it was clear her future would not end happily. Her marriage ended in divorce with Mr Rushford, and she was shipped away to live out her life away from her family at Mansfield, and her aunt who felt so sorry for her, went with her. Maria was her favourite after all. Maria knew her duty well, but she wanted to rebel against this. This led to her own downfall in society.

Unlike Fanny, Maria never spoke up about her true feelings until it was too late. Maria's need for adventure and excitement ruined her reputation and doomed her to live out her life apart from her family. Her respect for marriage and duty was only portrayed in her actions and usually in pretend in front of her father. Inside she was rebellious and ended up disappointing her father. Maria knew her duty but did not live up to it in the end. She was seduced by Henry Crawford and left her husband and family to do what she wanted. Julia also ended up somewhat departed from her family. She was very much influenced by Maria but was also jealous of her. Even though both Maria and Julia wanted Mr Crawford, Maria was the more handsome woman. Henry did still string Julia along. This was also something Fanny saw and ended up disliking him for. Julia's fate did not end as tragically and Maria's. She did elope and married Mr Yates, but considering Maria's unfaithfulness, her betrayal towards her family was less in comparison. Both Maria and Julia took their duty towards their father and family lightly, Fanny on the other hand, felt more deeply her need for Sir Thomas' approval.

Mary Crawford, an orphan, had more freedom when it came to her choice in a husband and moving in society. Her father was not there to control her life. She was a woman of fortune and had her choice in how she lived her life to a certain extent. She had family that took care of her, but she had great freedom in conducting herself in public. Mary Crawford was also a very outspoken woman compared to both Maria, Julia, and Fanny. She was not controlled in the same way they were. Miss Crawford was not directly responsible to the men in her life. None of them held the same power over her, as with the other women. Many of her conversations with Edmund and the others showed this.

Originally Mary had her eyes set on Sir Thomas' oldest son, Tom. Tom on the other hand had some personal traits that drove her away. She eventually became closer with Edmund. She tried to convince him that he deserved to take over Sir Thomas' estate, but he was set on becoming a clergyman. This disappointed her and she strung Edmund along. She

made him fall in love with her almost like it was a game to her. In the end she did finally show her true colours to Edmund, and he decided he needed to stop pursuing her and move on. Her feelings toward decorum had been for show only and when it came to her brother and Maria running away together, she showed how little she really cared for how society would receive it. She tried to convince Edmund it was just a little small mistake that could be forgiven in time.

“The manner in which she treated the dreadful crime committed by a brother on my sister [...] but the manner in which she spoke of the crime itself, giving it every reproach but the right, considering its ill consequences only as they were to be braved or overborne by 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 change of a marriage which, thinking as I now thought of her brother, should rather be prevented than sought – all this together most grievously convinced me that I had never understood her before, and that, as far as a related to mind, it had been the creature of my own imagination, not Miss Crawford, that I had been too apt to dwell on for many months past.”

-(Austen a, 367).

Miss Crawford’s feelings and reaction to this tragedy finally convinced Edmund of her true character. She thought young people could almost do as they pleased, and everything would sort themselves out in the end. She had clearly known of her brother’s faults for a long time and did nothing to prevent them. Her clear disregard of people’s honour and duty had brought her relationship not only with Edmund, but his entire family, to an end. Playing with other people’s feelings and not considering the devastating consequences brought clarity to everyone at Mansfield Park. The only good thing to come out of her and her brother’s actions towards the Bertram family, was Edmund finally realising his feelings for Fanny and bringing them together.

5. Caitlin Moran's *How to be a Woman*

5.1 Presentation of *How To Be a Woman* by Caitlin Moran

In Caitlin Moran's memoir *How To Be a woman*, Moran talks about her journey to understand what it means to be a woman in the 21st century. The reader is walked through her journey from a teenager into a woman and the experiences she went through to become a woman. Her book is a like a biography with several advice and thoughts to other women about womanhood.

Moran grew up in a small house with 7 younger siblings, the house was crowded. (Moran, 5). Moran start by taking the reader through her teenage years. This contains several embarrassing incidents. For example, first period, "becoming fuzzy", first bra and of course losing her virginity. Moran explains all these incidents as something to be hidden from everyone else, even the people in her family. When Moran started her first period her mother had never told her about them. "I'd only found out about periods four months ago, anyway. My mother never told us about them – 'I thought you'd picked it all up from *Moonlighting*,' she said, vaguely, when years later, I asked her about it [...]". (Moran, 15). Being open about the female body might be a challenge for many.

The way Moran tells her story makes it seem like women might not know whom to ask about these things. She tried to talk to her sister and mother about what was happening to her body, but the answers she got was less than helpful. (Moran, 18). Moran continues to speak about femininity and sexuality, and women's attempts to navigate these. Her overall view on these things amounts to her feeling the patriarchy is still governing who women are and how they are supposed to live their lives. How are they going to look, how are they supposed to act, what are their goals in life, and what are they not supposed to do at all? These are questions Moran answers in her memoir. Women are supposed to do what they can to precure a man, marry him and have children. This is the end goal of everything women do with their lives and their bodies.

Becoming a woman felt a bit like becoming famous. For, from being benevolently generally ignored – the base-line existence of most children – a teenage girl is suddenly fascinating to others, and gets bombarded with questions: What size are you? Have you done it yet? Will you have sex with me? Have you got ID? Do you want to try a puff of this? Are you seeing anyone? Have you got protection? What's your signature style? Can you walk in heels? Who

are your heroes? Are you getting a Brazilian? What porn do you like? Do you want to get married? When are you going to have kids? Are you a feminist? Were you just *flirting* with that man? What do you want to *do*? WHO ARE YOU?

-(Moran, 9)

Women find themselves having to answer question no one would ever think of asking a man. There are two questions people should ask themselves to find out if they have been subjected to sexism or something misogynistic: Is this polite? Are the *men* doing this, as well? (Moran, 289). Moran is trying to make women see that many of the things they struggle with and obsess over about their bodied or their meaning in life is based on what men think women should look like or should do, not necessarily what women themselves have decided they need to do to be happy in life.

Even though the waves of feminism have left a woman's choice in life in her own hands, through social expectations, many choices are still not left to the individual woman. There are still many ways the patriarchy is controlling people lives. She is crying out for another wave of feminism where women finally have the same right to govern their own lives the same way men can. The various things Moran talk about in her memoir are elements in a woman's life that needs to change, or at least the attitudes towards them. Moran claims that it isn't having a Brazilian wax, getting married or having children that needs to change, but societies expectation to these things. Women are expected to be beautiful and have children to be defined as a woman. "Men and women alike have convinced themselves of a dragging belief: that somehow, women are incomplete without children." (Moran, 241).

When women in the 21st century have the chance to get an education, have a profession and have their own economy, should they not also receive the decency of not being judged for choosing whether they want to have children or how they look? Should not women, like men, have the freedom to be judged on who they are instead of who they could be? Moran, a journalist, wife, and mother seem to think women should be allowed to look how they want and not to have children without being called "selfish, loners and unfulfilled." (Moran, 241). Moran is trying to kill the stigma against women who chooses to do things that are deemed unfeminine by society.

Her memoir tries to make people understand that looks, children, and a husband is no longer what makes a woman, but that a woman is exactly what she herself decides she is. Women should also have the chance to be judged by their abilities and brain no matter her marital status and looks. Moran's writing is perfectly in line with what Lee says about the

second wave of feminism focusing on self-awareness. As soon as women can be judged more on what they can do, and not what they should do, or what they look like, they have more freedom to be what they want.

5.2 The modern woman and marriage

When discussing Jane Austen's heroines and what they had to go through to procure a husband, their focus was mostly on looks, income and ability to be "a good woman" for her husband. This included many things. For example, a good woman was someone who was accomplished, educated (in music, sewing and reading), being able to run a household and elegant and proper in public. A good woman, and wife material, was someone who made their husband look good. Society had many expectations and ways for women to be considered a good woman, and in return find a decent husband.

The modern woman is not so different. Yes, society has changed since the time of Jane Austen, yes women have more choices when it comes to their own life and no women today do not need to procure a husband to ensure that she has money to live on for the rest of her life. Women today have financial independency and can usually live of her own income. This does not however change societies expectations for women to be a certain way. Most people would like to find someone to spend the rest of their lives with. If not because of outside pressure, but to find someone to confide in, share joy and sadness with and make a life with.

The modern woman, with all her freedoms, are still expected to behave certain way and have certain skills in order to 'fulfil' her duty as a woman. Even independent women need to be accepted in society to feel like they belong, and to belong they need to fulfil certain expectations that society sets for them. Moran talk about a lot of these expectations in her book. Still, there is one thing that separates Moran from both Elizabeth and Fanny.

Throughout her memoir, she hardly mentions her father or her duties to her family. The modern independent woman is not bound to her family's honour in the same way Jane Austen's heroines was. The modern family is not dependent on their daughters marrying well to secure their future. From what it seems in Moran's tale of her 30 something old life, it is that her choices in life does not depend on what her family wants or needs to survive. The modern woman has managed to free herself from her family. Moran also does not mention her husband having any control over what she does with her life. Where Elizabeth and Fanny needed to secure their future through marriage, Moran have the opportunity to get an

education and a job to support herself. This is what separates the modern woman from the 19th century woman.

According to French law, obedience is no longer included among the duties of a wife, and each woman citizen has the right to vote; but these civil liberties remain theoretical as long as they are unaccompanied by economic freedom. A woman supported by a man – wife or courtesan – is not emancipated from the male because she has a vote; if custom imposes less constraint upon her than formerly, the negative freedom implied has not profoundly modified her situation; she remains bound in her condition of vassalage.

-(Beauvoir, 689)

Throughout the 1900s women were slowly trying to achieve what Simon de Beauvoir is talking about. Equality. To give women the vote, or equal rights to men, does not mean they are equal as long as men dominate most professions and are the minds behind how society is structured. This is also what Moran is talking about. Just because women have the same opportunities that men have, they are still not equal until they are represented in the same areas of society as men. The modern woman needs the chance to also be treated as an equal. If women are still having to explain their choice not to have children or judged on whether they are a good mom if they work too much, women are not equal to men. Patriarchy is still wielding its' ugly face on society. A key word here, of course, is economic freedom.

When Beauvoir is writing about female independence, economy is a key aspect. When women were allowed to make their own money, their dependence on a man who could provide, disappeared. Women could have more autonomy of their own lives when they themselves could work and use that money to fund their own lifestyle. Economic independence ultimately meant the freedom of women from men. After this came the acceptance of career women and their right to partake in areas of society that earlier had only been for men. This could mean academically, in business, in law making and ruling countries. Female influence was no longer mostly held to beauty and to increase someone's status, women could make their impact on society, in their own right, not necessarily accompanied by a man. When Catlin Moran speaks of how to be a woman, she talks about women's right to be the architect of their own fortune. She explains the challenges and prejudice women might still face, even though Beauvoir and earlier feminists have fought for women's right to be accepted like men have been accepted.

How someone dress can say something about who they are. “Social custom furthers this tendency to identify herself with her appearance. A man’s clothes, like his body, should indicate his transcendence does not attract attention; for him neither elegance nor good looks call for his setting himself up as object; [...]” (Beauvoir, 543). The focus on looks and appearances for women, has changed in form over the centuries, but the pressure to look presentable is still important to women’s opportunities in life. Moran explains through many examples how clothes and fashion functioned in her life.

Growing up in a middleclass family did not give Moran many chances to explore her own style and she was afraid people would judge her for it. “I’m not being a proper woman, I think, staring at my wardrobe. All other women are ‘putting together outfits’ and ‘working their looks’. I am just ‘putting together the cleanest things’. Now I’ve got some money again, I should sort this out.” (Moran, 197). Beauvoir talk about how a woman’s clothes can show others her social standing. For example, only prostitutes should have saffron-dyed hair, high heels, clinging satin or heavy make-up. (Beauvoir, 545). Women show who they are through their looks and clothes. This is not something new to women, but it seems Moran is trying to make it less intimidating to not have the perfect appearance. She is trying to make herself a good journalist, to be seen as someone of other qualities besides looks. Looks is what is considered feminine, but feminism is trying to portray women as also being intellectual beings. Beauvoir and Moran are trying to show this in their writing.

6. Discussion

6.1 What is the role of a modern woman?

Growing up in the 21st century has given the writer of this thesis a different view on the role of a woman in a society compared to women in Jane Austen's novels. When a 21st century woman read about the women in Austen's novels, she might see things differently from how Austen's protagonists were seen when the story was written. Women in Austen's society was supposed to be elegant, kind, proper, they should not speak out of turn or behave in any way that could be seen as stepping outside the social norm. They were supposed to be feminine. Toril Moi lists what is considered feminine qualities in contemporary American culture in her book *What is a Woman*. "[...] affectionate, cheerful, childlike, compassionate, flatterable, gentle, gullible, loyal, sensitive, shy, soft-spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm and yielding. [...]". (Moi, 103). Women was given attributes that would serve or please others. Feminine women were also seen as good women. One can come to this conclusion when reading what Austen describes a good woman in her books.

The main character's goal in life was to find a good husband. Someone rich, perhaps, or at least somewhat fortunate. Both Elizabeth and Fanny are urged to behave in certain ways to attract a husband. Moran also faces these kinds of expectations to a certain point, although in her book, the focus is a lot more towards appearance than personal attributes. Her chapters deal with subjects of body hair, body size, and breasts, all which are supposed a look a certain way in the hope of securing a job or love. Looks have become the first focus of modern women. It's not like Austen does not describe her female characters and beautiful or that looks is not important to her writing, but Moran portrays a society where women is judged more on their looks than anything else.

Being feminine today is just as important as it was in Austen's times, but the criteria of what this entail have changed a bit. Modern women have the luxury of not needing to be perfect in every aspect when it comes to femininity, because their whole future will not be ruined if she is not perfect. The modern woman can support herself and does not need to find a procurer for herself. The 21st century woman, can forgo femininity to some extent, and still make a future for herself. A choice, women in Austen's time did not have. Even though Austen made her heroines go against the flow, did not mean this was the reality for women at this time. It ended well for Austen's heroines, but this fiction, not reality. When it came to

happy endings, they were often reserved for fiction in her time. Austen's stories were more a hope for the future of women, than a reflection of reality for women in this time.

Mary Wollstonecraft analysed in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, femininity as social construction. This was in reference to female writing. She makes the argument that femininity is a social and educational construct rather than a natural condition of women. (Tauchert, 148). The man should be strong and active, while women should be weak and passive. The argument could be made that women should behave in a certain feminine way to strengthen the feeling of masculinity in men. (Tauchert, 146). To put it in other words, women should do what they can to make men feel like men. Tauchert tries to prove this argument in her text. Women are supposed to go from daughter to wife. They are not supposed to have goals in life other than these. Women are there to serve as a wife to their husband.

In Austen's novels her heroines seem to be going against this. They are looking for something more in life, they want to marry for love, not convenience. For example: Elizabeth Bennet, when forced to speak on the subject, makes a strong declaration of female independence: "[...] 'I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me' [...]." (Tauchert, 151). To resolve her heroine's independence, Austen makes them marry at the end of the story. They marry in the end, and this makes up for the "wrong way" they have been acting towards the expectations from their family and society. They were expected to marry someone even though they didn't want to, but they defied it to the end when they could finally marry for love. This made their mistakes in the past almost forgotten.

For Moran, this was not an issue. Her "happy ending" in the book, was not staged to make up for her faults. Moran is not only a character in a book written a 200 years ago, but she is also a real woman whose happiness in life is all dependent on herself. Her happiness comes from inward acceptance of her situation and not society accepting her because she married well even after she behaved inappropriately. The modern woman does not earn her acceptance in society because of a good marriage. Her acceptance is dependent on herself and her own achievements. Her role in society is to be successful in her own rights, not her husbands. This is what separates Caitlin Moran from Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price.

Hui-Chun Chang tries to make the argument that Elizabeth Bennet is not a feminist extreme, but rather a woman wanting to proclaim her independence from the societal bounds and influence traditional views on marriage. (Chang, 1). Elizabeth, in contrast to other women in the story, tries to fight the expectations to her when it comes to finding a husband. An example of this is when she refuses to marry Mr. Collins even though this is her mother's

wish. (Austen b, 98). The reason for these expectations to women and marriage stems from the patriarchal society. Chang uses Marxist Feminism to explain this world view on gender: “Marxist Feminism recognizes that constructions of gender are male-centered according to the acceptable view of men at the time”. (Chang, 77). Elizabeth fights this view of the world through her constantly fighting the expectations towards her. This results in Mr. Darcy changing his view of the world and in the end manages to make Elizabeth fall in love with him and in the end, she marries him.

Chang speaks in her article about the expectations to women in society and how Elizabeth defies them. For example, in her changing Mr. Darcy’s world view. Also, because women have no rights by law to for example real-estate, they must find other ways to secure their future. The Bennet girls have no right to their father’s estate, and since there are no male heir, the Bennet girls must marry well to secure their future. Especially the eldest Bennet girl is trusted to secure her and her sisters future. In the end she is successful and marries Mr. Bingley. Elizabeth also manages to secure their future by marrying Mr. Darcy. This is the point Chang wants to make and manages to make in her article. Women are bound to the conditions of their patriarchal society, but Elizabeth tries to defy these and succeeds. Elizabeth is a feminist of her time. Elizabeth refuses to give up her independence and search for romance for financial security. (Chang, 81).

Since Moran is free to earn her own money, she is also free to buy her own home and support her own lifestyle. She is also free to have her own opinions and disregard other people’s opinion of her. Moran’s feminist uproar is to say so out loud to anyone willing to listen and not subtly suggest through her actions that she is fighting for women’s right to govern their own life. The modern woman’s role in society is different from Austen’s heroines in the way that she can scream as loud as she’d like about what is unfair and unjust treatment. Women today can have a more active role in changing their fate than Austen’s heroines. Modern women are not in need to have men allow them to make changes in their life if they are not happy with where things are going, they can vote, speak, and earn a living in order to conduct their life in the way they please.

Feminists like Austen, Beauvoir and Moran have not been trying to make one certain kind of woman. They are not trying to tell women: this is the only way to be a free, independent, and strong woman. No, they have shown in their work that there are different kinds of women out there, strong in their own way. “[...] Because the purpose of feminism isn’t to make a particular *type* of woman. The idea that there are inherently wrong and inherently right ‘types’ of women is what screwed feminism for so long – [...]”. (Moran, 88).

These feminists have been vital in the making of the modern woman and her role in society. The writers have allowed women to become aware their own voice and how to use it. Austen, Beauvoir, and Moran have all given women the drive to become free to be whatever they would like today.

Equality is an important word to consider when thinking about being a woman in the 21st century. Men and women have, in theory, the same opportunities and options in this time. They all have the right to an education and the option to choose what they want to become. Both men and women can be in leadership position, be a doctor, teacher, nurse, or carpenter. The right to an education and independence were not possible for Elizabeth and Fanny and limited their possibilities to be independent. When women received education, the expectation that they should also partake in the job-force followed. This created room for women to become independent. Moran takes full advantage of this and comes off as more independent than Austen's protagonists do. The next chapter will discuss how women's autonomy over their own lives have changed.

6.2 How does Elizabeth, Fanny and Caitlin show their independence?

Women Austen's in this time was supposed to behave in a certain way. Women were expected to find a husband to secure their future life. To find this man they needed to be accomplished in arts and be a good wife as shown earlier in this thesis. Women were expected to behave in certain ways to please society and procure a husband.

Jane Austen's heroines often portray a rebellious attitude towards the high-class aristocracy. "She [Austen] is no great admirer of the high aristocracy, as we can see from her portrait of the appalling Lady Catherine de Burge in *Pride and Prejudice*. Such *grandes dames* and their over-privileged menfolk bring out her rebellious middle-class instincts." (Eagleton, 2).

Jane Austen's protagonists Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price are these kinds of women. They want to live life on their premises and break from the traditional roles they were put in. They want to marry for love and not fall to the pressure of being the "perfect woman" they are expected to be. Elizabeth is more obvious in her attempt to fight this than Fanny is. Fanny is a lot quieter and rarely voices her opinions aloud, unless it is to Edmund. The reason for Elizabeth and Fanny to act in a certain way is to procure a husband. Although, to be able to get this husband they need him to like the way they conduct themselves around him and

others. What he sees will either get him to propose to them or move on to someone else. The problem is, Elizabeth and Fanny do not want to follow the rules of society blindly.

Elizabeth Bennet plays nice and follow social rules when she is in the company of others, but as soon as people challenge Elizabeth, she speaks her mind. When for example Lady Catherine ask her if any of her younger sisters are out and Elizabeth says yes, one can tell Lady Catherine is not satisfied with Elizabeth's answer. "[...] But really Ma'am, I think it would be very hard upon younger sisters, that they should not have their share of society and amusement because their elder may not have the means or inclination to marry early. [...]" To which Lady Catherine answers: "Upon my word [...] you give your opinion very decidedly for so young a person [...]". (Austen b, 140). It might not seem as this is very rude for someone brought up in the 21st century, but Lady Catherine seems very shocked by Elizabeth's outspokenness. From what one can interpret in this scene; Elizabeth wants to express her point of view even though people from a higher social standing might not agree. They might find her rude and disrespectful to their status.

Another scene that portrays Elizabeth's rebellious feelings towards the higher class is when Lady Catherine de Bourgh comes to find out if it is true that Elizabeth is engaged to her nephew. Lady Catherine came all that way to hear from Elizabeth herself that the reports she had received was untruthful. Elizabeth did not answer her directly. This angered Lady Catherine, and she demanded an answer, telling Elizabeth "Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? I have not been accustomed to such language as this". (Austen b, 296). This kind of privileged attitude does not entice Elizabeth to decline ever to accept a marriage-proposal from Mr. Darcy. She does admit not to be engaged to him at present, but when Lady Catherine asks if she will accept any offers from him, she says she will not make such a promise. When Lady Catherine leaves, she is not pleased with her visit and conversation with Elizabeth. (Austen b, 296-298). She expected to be treated with more respect and what she considered civility towards someone of her social standing.

Throughout these interactions with Lady Catherine one can see Austen's attitudes towards the higher aristocracy. The way Elizabeth wants to be treated as an equal is a testament to these feelings. Austen is marooned between patrician magnates and the middle class. Other nineteenth century writers were marooned between the higher class and common people. Austen's novels live out similar conflicts but in a higher society. (Eagleton, 2). Austen's middle class people act out the social rules of the aristocracy better than they do themselves. They expect to be treated a certain way, but they do not necessarily act in the

same manner towards others. They might think these rules don't apply to them if they are in company of people with the same status or lower.

In *Mansfield Park*, one can also detect these kinds of attitudes in Fanny Price. As Eagleton points out, Fanny Price is an outsider who champions the values of the aristocracy better than the aristocracy does themselves. Eagleton says that Fanny, as an outsider, can see rather more than the insiders can. (Eagleton, 2). From this one can conclude that Eagleton means outsiders of the aristocracy is more tentative to these social rules and are more likely to try and follow them almost to the letter to be accepted by the higher rank people. Fanny Price is an outsider to the other people in her household. She is expected by the Bertram family to be grateful to be there and to act in the manner they teach her. Their expectations to her are in conflict to what she wants. For example, when Mr. Crawford asks her to marry him, she cannot accept him. "It is not merely in *temper* that I consider him as totally unsuited to myself; though in *that* respect, I think the difference between us is too great, infinitely too great; his spirits often oppress me – but there is something in him which I object to still more. I must say, cousin, that I cannot approve his character." (Austen a, 279). Even though Fanny should have been glad someone of a higher rank than her wanted to marry her, she stood by her feelings and rejected him.

Fanny, who according to Eagleton was more likely to follow the social rules of aristocracy, found flaws in Mr. Crawford's behaviour. To her, Mr. Crawford acted unsuited for someone of his status. She references his actions to Maria during the play they set up at the house. His total disrespect towards Mr. Rushworth, Maria's fiancé, did not sit well with Fanny. (Austen a, 279). Austen uses her heroines to make a point about the social rules they are raised in. Austen makes them oppose these rules and still they get their way in the end. Both Elizabeth and Fanny have a happy ending where their personal feelings did not ruin their chance of happiness. Also, the way both heroines still end up marrying someone of a higher social standing is a testament to Austen's rebellion towards the upper-class.

Elizabeth and Fanny's reluctance to let rank be a factor in their decision not to marry someone, is very uncommon for their time. Even though Elizabeth is a lot more outspoken about her opinions than Fanny is, both clearly demonstrates that they are not willing to sacrifice their feelings and better opinions to please others when it comes to their future. Elizabeth is quite forward with Lady Catherine when she tells her she does not feel Mr Darcy is too good for her. Lady Catherine is quite shaken by Elizabeth's words and calls her a "[...] Unfeeling, selfish girl! [...]". (Austen b, 299). To Lady Catherine honour, duty and gratitude are qualities Elizabeth should project. "[...] I am only resolved to act in that manner, which

will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to *you*, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me.' [...]'". (Austen b, 300). As one can see, Elizabeth is not willing to change her mind and act the way people of high status would expect just to please them. Unlike what was expected at the time, she was quite resolute to stand her ground.

Fanny was a bit more subtle than Elizabeth in this regard. When Fanny spoke her mind, she was careful and timid, mostly only really speaking her mind fully to Edmund. She was quite aware her own position and did not want to disappoint anyone with her objection to their opinion. In speaking to her Uncle Bertram, she is very careful and pleading, not wanting him to be mad at her. She tries to make him see her point of view without angering him. The conversation between them when Sir Thomas brings news of his conversation with Mr Crawford brings her to tears. She could not bear disappoint Sir Thomas, but Fanny could not give her hand in marriage to Mr Crawford. "[...] 'I am very sorry,' said she inarticulately through her tears, 'I am very sorry indeed.' [...]" (Austen a, 255). In contrast to Elizabeth, Fanny feels the disapproval of others much deeper. Especially those who are of a higher rank than her. She is eager to please everyone around her, but not to the extent of sacrificing her own heart.

Moran in many ways is the same as Elizabeth and Fanny. She is strong, confident and are very much out to make a life for herself that she could be pleased with. When it comes to relationships, she is very quick to break up with a guy when she finally realizes that he is not even in love with her. Moran is convinced she only need to make him happy, and then their relationship will be fine. That is not the case, and she breaks up with him as soon as the realization hits her. "[...] 'The thing is,' I say to Caz, totally ignoring Courtney, 'is that I can't even break up with him, because I was never going out with him in the first place. I've been imagining the whole thing.' [...]" (Moran, 162). Moran is like Elizabeth and Fanny in the way they are not willing to enter or stay in a situation that is not likely to end with them being happy.

Moran is different to Elizabeth and Fanny in the way she can date openly and choose whom she is going to date on her own. Moran's family is not privy to choose whom Moran should date and, in the end, marry. Elizabeth and Fanny are taking much bigger risks when they show their independence than Moran is. Considering how Moran is not damaging her family's reputation or risking her siblings' chances to find a partner, Moran stands a lot more freely to make her own decisions without thinking about any severe consequences. At least not consequences that will affect others in a big way. Her family might be disappointed or

worried about her choices is life, but her whole family will not suffer the damage if she fails in her quest to find love and financial security.

6.3 How has women's autonomy over their own lives changed from Jane Austen days until today?

Jane Austen's heroines Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price, considering the time they lived in, had some freedom of choice over their lives, even though this was mostly caused by their own strong will. Through their stories, they both faced choices that would change the course of their lives. Elizabeth and Fanny made a choice that could end their social acceptance to hang on to their own independence and control over their own future. The strong independent woman, set on deciding over her own life, faces the risk of being excluded from society. She is considered the monster in the stories that is doomed to live her life alone and in isolation, instead of the princess who finds her prince charming and lives happily ever after. A woman who is outspoken or want to live her life on her own premises can be seen as vulgar and not desirable for a man to be interested in according to Lois Tyson (85).

Elizabeth could have made many people happy had she married Mr Collins. Choosing this man who proposed to her was almost expected. He was a clergyman who one day would have right to Elizabeth's home and marrying him would make sure there was always a Bennet in the house. This was something Elizabeth's mother was very interested in making happen. Nothing would make Fanny happier than having one of her daughters marrying Mr Collins. Jane would be the obvious answer, but she was hoping to receive an offer from the wealthy and handsome Mr Bingley. That meant Mr Collins switched his interest towards Elizabeth. When he inevitably proposed, Elizabeth faced a difficult choice: Marry this man and make her mother happy, or turn him down and hope she find a decent man in the future she could fall in love with?

Elizabeth was a strong headed girl and knew very well how the world worked. She was to do what was expected of her, but she was intelligent and hopeful she could somehow escape these expectations and find her own way. There was nothing more she wanted than to find a man whom she could love. Mr Collins was not this. When Elizabeth turned him down, Fanny almost disowned her: "[...] – I have done with you from this very day. – I told you in the library, you know, that I should never speak to you again, and you will find me as good as my word. I have no pleasure in talking to undutiful children." (Austen b, 98). As one can see, Mrs Bennet thought it Elizabeth's duty to the family to accept this man's offer. Her turning it

down was considered so awful by Mrs Bennet that she would ignore her daughter if she went through with it. Elizabeth views her mother as a silly woman, she puts more trust in her father's opinion on things. Her father is more inclined to think it is acceptable for Elizabeth to refuse Mr Collins. "[...] 'An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. – Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr Collins, and I will not see you again if you *do*.' [...]" (Austen b, 97). Mr Bennet is a more rational being than his wife. He would like to see his daughters married off, but not just to anyone.

Like Elizabeth, Mr Bennet appreciates a sensible man, preferably with money. The reality of the situation might be that Elizabeth will never again receive a marriage proposal, but based on her own actions, she would never settle for a silly man. Elizabeth wanted a man with some sense and a willingness to love her. "There are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well. The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it; and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependency that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense." (Austen b, 116). This quote is found in the conversation Elizabeth has with Jane after she receives the letter that Mr Bingley has left for London and most likely will not come back. This means that the engagement people had been hoping for is lost. Elizabeth expresses her frustration in the lack of merit and sense in people. This is a good example of what Elizabeth hopes for herself if she ever enters a marriage.

Mrs Bennet on the other hand feels more urgency in getting her daughters married and thinks her daughters should accept the first, best man that comes in their path. To her marriage should be judged on whether the two people can gain something from each other, money, or position, and that will bring them happiness in the marriage. Elizabeth is more concerned about actual compatibility in mind and temper than Mrs Bennet. Charlotte also has some of the same attitudes towards marriage as Mrs Bennet. When Elizabeth and Charlotte are discussing Jane's display of affection, or lack thereof, towards Mr Bingley she says: "[...]' I wish Jane success with all my heart; and if she were to be married to him tomorrow, I should think she had as good a chance of happiness, as if she were to be studying his character for a twelvemonth. Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. [...]" (Austen b, 21). This idea of happiness or love in marriage was an idea that did not exist in the minds of many people at the time. This was a new idea, a dream, but not reality for most people in Jane Austen's time.

Most people thought like Mrs Bennet and Charlotte: marriage was to benefit the families through money or position, not to satisfy peoples yearn for love. Maria Grace writes, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, that marrying for love and compatibility was an idea that was slowly entering the minds of society back in Jane Austen's time. The ideas Elizabeth had about her future and how she made her choices was not normal for someone living in this time. For this reason, one can say that Elizabeth went against expectations from society, and in part, her family, when she refused Mr Collins. Her responsibility to her own emotions outweighed expectations from society and her family. This was unusual and did not always end well for the woman.

For a modern woman the man's role in the relationship might not seem as much. They expect their men to do more than just provide for the family. They expect them to be involved in family life, raising the children and be a good partner. A man and a woman should be equals in a relationship. In this interpretation, also lies the expectations of love in a relationship. Today men and women marry for love in most cases and not for reason. A sensible relationship could mean a good match when it comes to social class or property.

An example of how this went wrong in Austen's novels one can find in Fanny Price's mother and Lydia Bennet. They chose love and ended up living a hard life, abandoned, or sent away from their family. Lydia faired a bit better than Fanny's mother, but both had disappointed their family and threatened to ruin the family's reputation. Lydia was a strongheaded girl who was easily distracted and carried away by handsome men. Throughout the book she is often found running around chasing men. Her actions could be dismissed as youthful play considering her age, but at some point, her recklessness faces some real consequences. After being allowed by her father, towards Elizabeth's advice, Lydia is allowed to accompany Colonel Foster's wife in Brighton where the military company has made camp.

As for Elizabeth herself, this invitation was so far from exciting in her the same feelings as in her mother and Lydia, that she considered it as the death-warrant of all possibility of common sense for the latter; and detestable as such a step must make her were it known, she could not help secretly advising her father not to let her go. She presented to him all the improprieties of Lydia's general behaviour, the little advantage she could derive from the friendship of such a woman as Mrs Foster, and the probability of her being yet more imprudent with such a companion at Brighton, where the temptations must be greater than at home. He heard her attentively, and then said, 'Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public

place or other, and we can never expect her to do with it so little expense or inconvenience to her family as under the present circumstances.”

-(Austen b, 195).

This event comes soon after Elizabeth came home after visiting Charlotte in her new home with Mr Collins. There she had met Mr Darcy and he had explained in a letter his dealings with Mr Wickham and his reason for driving Mr Bingley away from Jane. Parts of his meddling with their relationship was the behaviour of Elizabeth's sisters, mother and sometimes father. This whole ordeal made Elizabeth worried about how their family was perceived from the outside and how Lydia's going away to a place filled with officers would affect the family. Elizabeth feared Lydia would do something stupid, which she did. Lydia ran away with Mr Wickham in the end. Unlike Elizabeth and Jane, she would live out her life with a man who did not love her, away from her family. This was usually the fate for men and women who decided to follow their hearts instead of marrying out of duty and convenience.

Wickham was pressured into marrying Lydia in exchange for Mr Darcy paying his debts to the many people he owed money, and to save the Bennet's reputation from further tarnish. Mr Darcy did all this because he loved Elizabeth and did not want her reputation to suffer because of one reckless little sister. “If you *will* thank me, ‘he replied, ‘let it be for yourself alone. That the wish of giving happiness to you, might add force to the other inducements which led me on, I shall not attempt to deny. But your *family* owe me nothing. Much as I respect them, I believe, I thought only of *you*.” (Austen b, 306). Darcy's involvement in saving Lydia and the other's reputation was for Elizabeth only. Mr Darcy's saving of Lydia did as much as to prove his feelings for Elizabeth as to manifest her. She finally realised that she loved him, very much. Her love for him grew gradually, and this action was enough for him to show his true character to Elizabeth. He was not only proud, but he was also intelligent and caring, and someone Elizabeth could be with without compromising her own intellect and wish for affection.

After Mr and now, Mrs Wickham, has married and left Longbourn, Austen does not mention them until the very end of her book. Here the reader will get a little look into the life of Mr and Mrs Wickham. “They were always moving from place to place in quest of a cheap situation, and always spending more than they ought. His affection for her soon sank into indifference; hers lasted a little longer; and in spite her youth and her manners, she retained all the claims to reputation her marriage had given her.” (Austen b, 324). It appears Lydia maintained the illusion, to some extent, that she was happy with Mr Wickham, but Austen did

not give Lydia the happy ending she was seeking in running away with Mr Wickham. Even though her situation was not as bad as Mrs Price, Lydia did end up somewhat unhappy just like Fanny's mother.

Fanny Price was also a woman who, though her own sense of responsibility to her emotions, went against what was expected of her. Like Elizabeth Bennet, her story also had a happy ending. When it comes to having control of one's own life, Fanny and Elizabeth fared better than many of their female counterparts. They both, in the end, ended up having exactly what they had hoped for in life. A husband that loved them and respected their mind and personality, not their status and prospects in life. Elizabeth found her man in Mr Darcy, Fanny found her ideal man in her cousin Edmund. He was the only man whom Fanny had met who valued her opinions and listened to what she had to say. Unlike Elizabeth, Fanny was a bit more compliant and silent about her own thoughts and ideas. Elizabeth spoke to some extent freely about what she thought about various subjects. Fanny was more prone to agree with the people around her. She was shyer, and unlike Elizabeth felt beneath the others in rank. Which she of course was, and she knew her place well. Even though Fanny spent most of her time agreeing with others, and perhaps trying to hear everyone's point of view, she relied on Edmund to shape her mind. Fanny adored him and thought he was reflected in his opinions. His opinions also very often had his father's approval in mind, something Fanny also sought. Edmund and Sir Thomas Bertram's approval was something Fanny sought. She wanted to be good for them and not disappoint them.

As it turned out, Edmund was also dependent on Fanny to voice her opinion and he turned to her for advice more than once. For example, when Sir Thomas was gone, Edmund was unsure of what a good idea it was to be acting and put on a play. "Can I speak with you, Fanny, for a few minutes?" said he. 'Yes certainly.' 'I want to consult. I want your opinion.' 'My opinion!' she cried, shrinking from such a compliment, highly as it gratified her." (Austen a, 123). As one can see from this quote, Fanny is not used to being sought out for her opinions. She is more used to listening and learning instead of taking a stand on an issue. Her opinions were usually only meant for her own head, not everyone else's. Even though Fanny was used to hanging around in the background, observing the others, she was sometimes pulled into the spotlight. Whenever this happened, she was uncomfortable and not sure she was worthy of the attention. This becomes very clear throughout Henry Crawford's courtship to Fanny. Considering her observations of him flirting openly with both her cousins, she is very reluctant to truly believe that he wants a serious attachment to her. "[...] – How could she have excited serious attachment in a man, who had seen so many, and been admired by so

many, and flirted with so many, infinitely her superiors – [...]”. (Austen a, 246). This makes the attention towards her even more uncomfortable to her. Fanny is constricted between being flattered that a man of his status and rank would even look at someone of her rank, on the other hand, she finds his blatant flirting with so many women to be off-putting. Fanny is torn between being flattered and disgusted by his habits with women. In her mind she knows she might never be approach by a man with his means again, at the same time she feels she deserves someone with a kinder character. Ultimately Fanny decides to follow her own good judgement and turn down Henry Crawford.

When he proposes to her, she tells him no. He does not give up and continues his attention toward her, till the point where she almost believes him. His advances are interrupted, however, by his affair with Maria Rushford. This ultimately helps Sir Thomas understand why Fanny was so reluctant to accept him. Sir Thomas tried his best to make Fanny accept Mr Crawford. He could not understand why she would turn him down. “Sir Thomas looked at her with deeper surprise. ‘This is beyond me.’ Said he. ‘This requires explanation. Young as you are, and having seen scarcely anyone, it is hardly possible that you affections – [...]’. ‘his wishing to marry at all so early is recommending to me. [...]’” (Austen a, 253). Sir Thomas could see nothing wrong with Henry Crawford wanting to marry Fanny and he finds it almost impossible to believe that she will not have him. The only reason he thinks Fanny would reject him for, is if she has affection for someone else. It does not even cross his mind, that Fanny might have other objections and reasons for not wanting to marry him. After trying to persuade her into accepting Mr Crawford’s proposal for a little while he decides in the end to leave it be, seeing as Fanny was warming, slightly, up to Mr Crawford. He figured it would solve itself in time. When Maria is found leaving her husband’s house to have an affair with Mr Crawford, he finally understood what Fanny had been seeing in him. He was not to be trusted.

When the news broke, Fanny was blamed for the incident by Mrs Norris. She blamed Fanny for not accepting him and meant that this could all have been avoided if she had married Mr Crawford. “Had Fanny accepted Mr Crawford, this could not have happened.” (Austen a, 360). Fanny felt as though she had let everyone down, at the same time, she was happy for herself. She was glad she never attached herself to such a man. In the end this would pay out for herself when she finally got the man she was craving, Edmund. Sir Thomas also realised through this whole ordeal, that Fanny was the daughter he wanted. He praised himself for taking her in when she was a little girl.

“His charitable kindness had been rearing a prime comfort for himself. His liberality had rich repayment, and the general goodness of his intentions by her, deserved it. He might have made her childhood happier; but it had been an error of judgement only which had given him the appearance of harshness, and derived him of her earlier love; and now, on really knowing each other, their mutual attachment became very strong.”

-(Austen a, 379-380).

Considering the woman Fanny came to be, one could almost agree with Sir Thomas and say he had some doing in making her become this way. Her want for his approval did control most of who she became as a woman. His own daughters did not have the same need to win his approval, and they both ended up, in various ways, to disappoint him. Maria was sent away with Mrs Norris to live out her days in a different country, and Julia’s elopement was not accepted well by her family. Fanny is in many ways a good girl who follows the expectations to her by her family and society, yet she found a way to follow her own will, nonetheless. Her defiance was not based on a need for thrill and excitement like her own mother, Maria and Julia had done, but rather a need to live a safe and happy life not betraying her own feelings and intellect.

Both Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price made this choice and were rewarded by Jane Austen by receiving a happy ending to their story. Even though it was difficult for women in Jane Austen’s’ time to have autonomy over their own lives, Austen rewarded her heroines for standing up for themselves. Her fiction was her expression for change in what choices she felt women in her society should have.

Caitlin Moran was not the subject of the same expectations as Elizabeth and Fanny were. In many ways, Caitlin Moran was a woman who could do almost anything she wanted. Elizabeth and Fanny could also, in theory, do whatever they wanted, but the consequences they could face would be much more damaging than they were for Moran. Austen’s heroines could for example be excluded by their families, forced to live out a life of poverty and misery. Moran on the other hand, would most likely only face judgement from others. The life as she knew it would not be taken away from her. She could still find a nice man, get a good job and live a comfortable and happy life.

Moran’s dependence on family was not even close to a necessary as it were for Elizabeth and Fanny. Caitlin Moran was always free to have the education she wanted and ended up paying for her own life the moment she moved out of her parent’s house. This meant she could finally by the clothes she wanted or eat the food she wanted. Even the fact

Moran was allowed to move out of her parent's house into a London apartment was something Elizabeth and Fanny could only dream about. One can see that women's autonomy over their own lives have changed dramatically from Jane Austen's time until today. This is mostly caused by the various feminist waves that has swept through society. One of the more important things that have come out of these waves, is economic independence for women as Beauvoir mentioned. This has given women the real opportunity to decide over their own lives, pay their own way, and given them a real option of marrying for love. This is something Jane Austen could only dream, and write, of happening. When Jane Austen was writing, marrying for love was not the reality for most women, but Austen might have helped to plant the idea of this in people's minds making it easier for women's rights activists to make this a reality.

Another thing Austen's heroines did not have, was an official education. Caitlin Moran had access to education and opportunities Elizabeth and Fanny did not have. Economic independence is often the result of education that offers a career. Moran found a career within journalism and writing, something that would not have been easy to achieve for Elizabeth and Fanny. They were both skilled readers, but this offered no career. Their skills were only appreciated if it offered help to their husband in running a household or uphold a certain social life. Elizabeth's reading and intellect was something Mr Darcy admired in her. "[...] A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages. [...] 'All this she must possess,' added Darcy, 'and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading'". (Austen b, 35). Miss Bingley lists the traits she and society find important in an accomplished woman. None of these traits serve any purpose in procuring her a career, but instead to make her interesting to men.

Today this would also be impressive in a woman, but in return she would be able to make a living for herself. These talents were in Austen's time a way to be useful to your husband, not any professional market. Fanny was also a skilled reader. Her reading and education were much influenced by Edmund. Where Elizabeth read for her own pleasure and her desire to expand her mind, Fanny's expansion of mind was encouraged by Edmund. "He knew her to be clever, to have a quick apprehension as well as good sense, and a fondness for reading, which properly directed, must be an education in itself. [...] but he recommended the books which charmed her leisure hours, he encouraged her taste, and corrected her judgement [...]" (Austen a, 17-18). Edmund found that Fanny would expand her mind and teach her what she needed through books. He also helped form her mind through picking her books and

correcting her judgement to those of his own. In many ways Edmund shapes Fanny into who she became in the end, which was a strong and smart woman. She may not have received an education to support herself, but through reading and Edmund's advice, she acquired the knowledge she needed to become an interesting woman.

Moran did not necessarily possess many talents, but she did earn herself an education that would procure her a career and a living. She did not need a man to provide for her in the same way Elizabeth and Fanny did. Moran's search for love was more in the hope of finding someone to share her life with and have her emotional needs met, not necessarily financial needs. Being able to read was not necessarily a skill for Moran as it was for Elizabeth and Fanny, but it was a big part of her education non the less. Still, Moran had almost full autonomy over her own life. Her family did not expect her to marry a man of wealth to procure her future. Moran's future would be secured by getting an education and a job. This gave her a much bigger autonomy over her own life than Fanny and Elizabeth could only dream about.

Accompanying economic freedom, women in the 1900s was gradually given more say in their own lives. Women were finally able to make a life for themselves without the help of a man. Still, she was not considered the same or equal to a man. "The woman who is economically emancipated from man is not for all that in moral, social, and psychological situation identical with that of man." (Beauvoir, 691). Even if financial expectations were not an issue in the same way for the modern woman as it was for a Regency era woman, it did not remove the social control over women. Even if women were given the same opportunities as men, they were held to other standards than men.

Men and women are not the same. The ideas of women being feminine, elegant, and behaving in certain ways was not removed from society as easily as a family's control over a woman. Simone de Beauvoir and Caitlin Moran might have the luxury of the vote and opportunity to make their own money, but that does not mean all expectations regarding their role as women were changed. In this regard, their control over their behaviour was not necessarily a given. Society still expected women to behave in a certain way, which sometimes made it difficult or uncomfortable to work in a man's world. 1900s women might be controlled or put in their place by the continuance of sexism. This is one way, for men, to keep women in their place, controlling their behaviour. "Take, for instance, a small dispute in the office. You have had a difference of opinion about a project. A male colleague has taken it quite badly and stomped off. When he returns, he places a packet of Tampax on your desk."

(Moran, 131). Elizabeth and Fanny faced their own kind of controlling men, Moran faced a different type, but not necessarily less influential kind of controlling men.

Women's autonomy over their own lives have changed over the decades, but that does not mean society or men are not trying to control women in some way or another still. The severity of their impact has changed, and women today are much less likely to end up living their life on the terms others have set for them. Moran is a prime example of a modern woman, taking control and living her life as she herself wishes, even if everyone does not approve. Moran has the advantage of being able to continue living her life without being sent away to live out her days in a different land, so her family's reputation does not continue to be tainted, like Maria in *Mansfield Park*. A "rouge" woman today does not necessarily impose shame onto her family. In this regard, women's autonomy over their lives have changed.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has shown through literary analysis how female autonomy have changed over the years since Jane Austen's writing, until Caitlin Moran published her memoir in 2011. Through the waves of feminism, the modern woman has gained a lot more autonomy over her own life. These are the main findings in this thesis:

1. Women in the 21st century have much more freedom to make their own choices and decide over their own lives compared to women of 19th century who were more or less governed by their families and the expectations of society at that time.

Moran's family does not have a say in deciding her future while Jane Austen's protagonists, Elisabeth Bennet and Fanny Price, are expected to follow the will of their families and what they decide for them. Women in Austen's time were supposed to dabble in the arts and entertain the house. (Grace, 17) to be as eligible as possible to a future husband.

2. The modern woman of today is financially independent. The access to education regardless of gender gives men and women equal opportunities to make their own career. Moran is not dependent on finding a man to marry to secure herself and her family economically, but Austen's protagonists are. The main goal for their families is to find a good match for their daughters to whom they can marry, someone of the same social class or higher in the hopes of securing their own future. In the 21st century, people in Western-European countries are expected to find a person to spend their life with by themselves and not as an arrangement by the family.
3. Along with achieving financial independence the right to vote was something the feminist Simone de Beauvoir was overly concerned with. For women to be free from being dependent on men, they needed both the vote and the financial independence. When women were given the right to vote it implied that women were trusted to have their own opinion about vital things in life. Moran proves this as a journalist by publishing her opinions and views frequently. The thesis concludes that giving women the right to vote and the right to go out and make a living for themselves have been some of the most significant changes to women's autonomy of their own lives.

This thesis proves that women in literature are portrayed as a reflection of the society they are written in. Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price are trustworthy characters but not

entirely common representatives of the time since they do not automatically yield to the rules of society and the expectations from their families. After struggling to gain the autonomy they want, Austen gives her heroines freedom to choose the men they love in contradiction to what the family initially wanted. In this respect Austen shows that she is ahead of her time. But then Austen takes her liberty as an author, particularly in *Pride and Prejudice*, to construct a surprisingly happy ending for her protagonist in the way that Elisabeth Bennet gets the man she loves who very conveniently happens to be a man of wealth.

In the two novels this thesis has also mentioned that Austen also portrays women who have not fared so well when they make their own decisions. An example of this is Maria and Fanny's mother in *Mansfield Park* and Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice*. Their fate is more realistic when it comes to showing what happened to people who did not adhere to social constructions and expectations contrary to Elizabeth and Fanny who in the end marry for love and still remain accepted by society.

Throughout time women have had noticeably clearer roles in the society they were a part of. Through reading Jane Austen and discovering her heroines' lives, women today realize they have a quite different life from these women. Where Austen's heroines were concerned with finding a partner who could help support them, Moran had the freedom to make her own living. This thesis has shown how women's autonomy to govern their own lives has changed from Jane Austen's time of writing, until Moran's memoir in 2011. Women have gained this autonomy by freeing themselves from their family and gaining financial independence.

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