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# Illustrating Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

## Keywords

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illustrations  
*Pride and Prejudice*  
nineteenth century  
British literature  
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## Abstract

*Throughout the nineteenth century, Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice (1813) was repeatedly picked up for publication; however, it was slow to be illustrated. Austen tells the story of the Bennet family, as the five girls in the family come of age and are seeking husbands. Mr Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet become the titular characters, and have inspired millions of readers for them to root for their union. The book, of which the countless film adaptations attest, has found a lasting audience. Through an examination of the publishers and the various artists that worked on the editions, I want to examine how the book epitomized trends in the publishing industry. Key publishers like Richard Bentley and J. M. Dent, hired some of the most important illustrators of the time, including John Gilbert, John Proctor, C. E. Brock, Hugh Thomson and Chris Hammond. Through an examination of the artists and the illustrations, we can begin to examine the popularity of the book and why this endearing novel's popularity is so lasting. Focusing on characters, fanciful clothing and revelatory conversations, these illustrators contributed to the books' position as one of the most popular romance novels of the century.*

*Pride and Prejudice* famously begins, 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife'. Jane Austen (1775–1817) immediately sends the reader on a journey of love and self-discovery, as our protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, must determine not only who she is, but what she wants from a man. The novel satisfactorily culminates in Elizabeth's coupling with the prideful but generous Fitzwilliam Darcy. While those two characters anchor the story, one of the main reasons the book has endured as a cherished novel is because of Austen's inventive supporting characters. Mr Bennet, Elizabeth's father, is the kind, supportive dad who acts as a foil to the pushy, overbearing Mrs Bennet who is constantly attempting to find husbands for her five daughters. Elizabeth's older sister Jane, widely acknowledged as the most beautiful daughter in the family, is continually referred to as 'sweet' and 'pleasant'. The middle daughter Mary is considered quiet and bookish, while the two youngest, Catherine and Lydia, are always immaturely scheming to meet the soldiers in town. This endearing family struggles to maintain the upper-class lifestyle that they yearn to present to society. Character development becomes a key feature of Austen's work, as each character brings a unique and memorable persona to the novel. The heroine was so unforgettable that when the book was first released in America it was called *Elizabeth Bennett, or Pride and Prejudice*.

In 1796–1797, when Austen was just 21, she wrote the story *First Impressions* now known as *Pride and Prejudice*. While the novel is filled with delightful characters, Austen focuses the plot on the relationships of the protagonist. After the prideful Mr Darcy offends Elizabeth, she is unwilling to put aside her own ill feelings towards him, despite his attempts. Darcy must prove himself by helping the Bennet family and redeeming his past mistakes. Only after his redemption can Elizabeth recognize her own prejudices and allow herself to marry Darcy. George Austen, Jane's father, sent the manuscript out for publication in 1797 to the well-known publisher Thomas Cadwell, though it was quickly returned by 'decline of post' (Morrison 2005: 1–2). After the unsuccessful attempt at publication, Austen wrote to her sister and confidant, Cassandra Austen saying 'I would not let [my friend] read "First Impressions" again upon any account, and am very glad that I did not leave it in your power' (Morrison 2005: 2). Her misgivings about the novel caused her to move onto other projects, and *Sense and Sensibility* became Austen's first novel published anonymously in 1811 in three volumes, which was popular enough to warrant a second printing in 1813 (Gilson 1982: 12). That same year saw the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*, also in three volumes, 'by the author of "*Sense and Sensibility*"' (Figure 1). Despite the preventative efforts to keep her identity a secret, she received many letters of praise that same year demonstrating the awareness of Austen's role as author (Gilson 1982: 24–27). For the novel, Austen received 110 pounds from Thomas Egerton of Military Library (Morrison 2005: 1). The book received a second printing in that same year, and a third edition in 1817. Unfortunately, she sold the copyright to Egerton in 1813, and therefore she reaped no financial benefits from the later editions (Gilson 1982: 30–43). The book would not be printed again until the first American edition was published in 1832. Throughout these four editions, no illustrations were included.

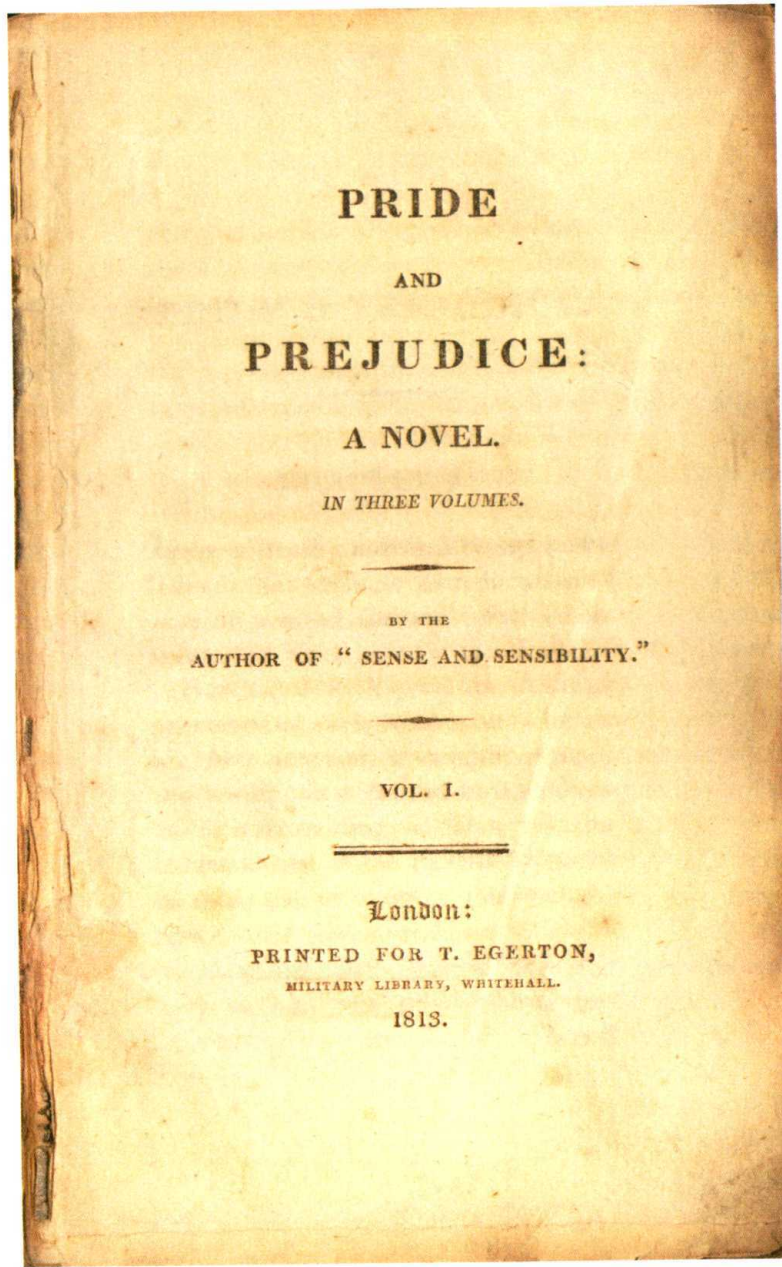


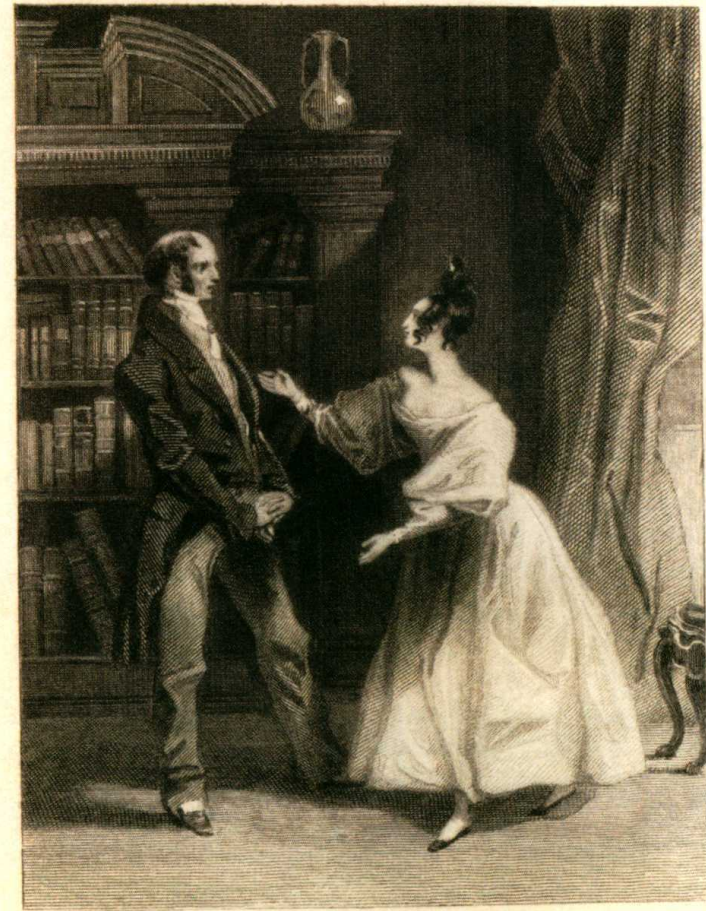
Figure 1: Title Page, *By the author of Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice* (1813), London: T. Egerton, Military Library, Whitehall.

In fact, *Pride and Prejudice* would not be illustrated until 1833 when Richard Bentley (1794–1871) bought the copyrights to all of Austen’s novels for publication in his Standard Novel series (Gilson 1982: 211). This series was a combination of classic literature and a few new novels that were printed in inexpensive editions. In the 1830s, the price of book production began to dramatically decrease as the use of machine-made paper increased and cheaper boards helped to lower the cost of bindings. In addition, the process of sewing the books was dismissed in favour of gluing the folded sheets in a pre-made case (Altick 1957: 309). The cheapening of the process and materials allowed Bentley to substantially lower his prices on the Standard Novels in comparison to his competition. In 1813, *Pride and Prejudice* cost eighteen shillings unbound and 26 shillings bound while in the 1840s, the Bentley novels were selling for six shillings, sometimes five (St. Clair 2004: 220). In speaking about the Standard Novels series, John Carter claims that ‘Never before had the public been offered novels so cheap, yet so handy; and the fact that quite a number of new books as well as reprints were included in the series, still further increased its popularity’ (1934: 133). Bentley’s inclusion of *Pride and Prejudice* in the series reflects an emerging trend of publishers attempting to find new readers for the novel in a mass audience.

*Pride and Prejudice* was intended for a middle- to upper-class audience and, indeed, the expense of its first print run guaranteed that. Richard Bentley’s publication of the books in a cheaper format revolutionized the novels (Sutherland 2005: 1–4). Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, the novel was printed in various standard and discounted editions. The cheaper it was printed the more people bought it, and the more frequently and better it was illustrated. Only two scholars, Deb Williams (2003) and Maggie Hunt Cohn (1986), have examined the illustrations that accompany *Pride and Prejudice*, and both of them attempted to illuminate which artists were working on the book. Unfortunately, they were both missing at least three of the illustrators.<sup>1</sup> Laura Carroll and John Wiltshire (2009) and David Gilson (2005) address the broader concept of illustrating Austen novels, incorporating more and different illustrators, but do not discuss this particular novel in depth. By examining the work of the variety of illustrators who worked on the novel in nineteenth century England, it becomes apparent that as the book was gaining in popularity, publishers sought out talented and more popular illustrators to create new editions of *Pride and Prejudice* in hopes of encouraging more people to purchase the book.

Bentley’s Standard Novel edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, as mentioned, was the first version to include illustrations. Richard Bentley most likely turned to illustrators who worked frequently with his firm, as he produced a number of books in this series that used the same or similar format (Gilson 1982: 224–27). The book included a frontispiece and a title page vignette, both engraved by William Greatbatch (1802–c.1885) after George Pickering’s (1794–1857) drawings (Figure 2). Not much is known about Pickering other than that he was a landscape painter and illustrator, as well as an educator who taught drawing for many years. Jane Austen’s chief bibliographer, David Gilson, suggests that he worked frequently for Bentley (1982: 213–19). The illustrations, themselves, reflect

1. Neither Cohn nor Williams look at the illustrations by John Gilbert, John Proctor, or Christine Hammond, nor do they discuss the publication of the brightly colored covers of the railway novel editions. Williams also does not look at the W.C. Cooke prints.



Pickering del.

Greatbatch sculp.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

*She then told him what Mr Darcy  
had voluntarily done for Lydia. He  
heard her with astonishment*

*London. Published by Richard Bentley, 1833.*

Figure 2: George Pickering, drawing and William Greatbatch, engraving, Frontispiece for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1833).

Pickering's time, as they lack the interest by later illustrators in recreating the styles of the Regency Period, preferring to focus on intimate conversation. The frontispiece shows a tender moment between a decadently dressed Elizabeth Bennet and her father, as the caption reads 'She then told him what Mr Darcy had voluntarily done for Lydia. He heard her with astonishment'. Elizabeth again appears in the smaller vignette on the title page, though now she talks with Lady Catherine de Bourgh who angrily confronts her: 'This is not to be borne, Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?'. Without the captions, these works could be a number of scenes in the novel, as there is nothing specific that gives any important plot information to the viewer nor do these drawings share any information about the novel's historical context.

These first British engravings begin to demonstrate the problems that arise when illustrating a novel such as *Pride and Prejudice*, which is essentially a character-driven novel with little physical action. Despite the title, and the prominent theme of love and relationships throughout the book, Pickering focuses on two scenes showcasing caring family members. Formally, these elaborate engravings display complex backgrounds and a full tonal range. Pickering attempts to recreate the techniques of painting, rather than engage with the printmaking methods more appropriate for book illustration. He creates a detailed setting and environment for his figures to interact leaving very little of the print. While he does create an entire scene, the two illustrations do not revolve around animated events; rather, they are scenes of contemplation, discovery even. Again, these very illustrations of characters in conversation demonstrate the difficulties in choosing scenes to illustrate in *Pride and Prejudice*.

This Bentley edition marked an important milestone in the publishing of Jane Austen's work, not just in that it included the first illustration. The selection of her novels to be incorporated in the series of Bentley's Standard Novels acknowledges the importance of her work in the early nineteenth century. In addition, its inclusion in this inexpensive series allowed an entirely new audience to have access to her works. To print these works, Bentley had to buy the copyrights of the works, most of which still belonged to the Austen family. *Pride and Prejudice*, however, belonged to Thomas Egerton, and therefore, the copyright had to be purchased from his estate for the price of 40 pounds in 1832. Bentley then owned *Pride and Prejudice's* copyright exclusively until it expired in 1841, which then allowed it to be published freely in the second half of the nineteenth century (Gilson 1982: 211).

In fact, its next major publication would be another discounted publication. In 1850 when George Routledge and Sons published a one-volume copy of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* with a wood-engraved frontispiece by John Gilbert (1817–1897), the famed newspaper illustrator. Gilbert was extraordinarily prolific, making nearly 30,000 drawings for the *Illustrated London News*. His work on allegorical scenes and popular Christmas imagery perhaps made him most famous, but along with all of those drawings he continued to produce book illustrations (Daniels 1988: 59). Gilbert picks a quiet scene from *Pride and Prejudice* to illustrate this combined edition, deciding against a livelier situation or even a caricature of the more illustrious figures in the novel (Figure 3).



Figure 3: John Gilbert frontispiece for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1851).  
Courtesy of Special Collections, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University  
of Kansas Libraries.

This print showed Elizabeth Bennet reading Darcy's letter, a pivotal moment in the story where she realizes her many misconceptions concerning Mr Darcy. Elizabeth dons a bonnet and a layered dress as she stands among full trees that dominate the frame. He avoids recreating the effect of painting as Pickering does in his work, and instead focuses on using a tighter line to create his variety of tones. Gilbert was a high-profile illustrator, and Routledge's choice to include his print with the novel was a pivotal move, in that he was an influential and highly publicized illustrator who could contribute to raising the status of the novel. Gilbert's inclusion becomes more about the famed illustrator himself than the end drawing.

This copy of the *Pride and Prejudice* comes at a time when the prices of books were again dropping significantly. The cost of Bentley's Standard Novels went from 6 shillings in the 1840s to around 3 shillings in the 1850s (Carter 1934: 134). In 1852, the Booksellers Association was dissolved, and their role in fighting against low prices and underselling was eliminated, causing the prices of books to fall considerably.

In the 40 years since *Pride and Prejudice* was first published in 1813, more and more readers were able to access the book. At the time of its first printing, the high costs and inaccessibility of the English book trade discouraged the spread of reading (Altick 1957: 260). *Pride and Prejudice* originally sold for 26 shillings bound at a time when the highest skilled workers were making just 36 shillings a week (St. Clair 2004: 195). Moreover, throughout the first half of the century, the common reader would have no access to copyrighted works, which generally included all recent books by English authors, unless they could afford admittance to a good, circulating library. By the second half of the nineteenth century, books began to become available to readers of more modest means through classic reprint series (Altick 1957: 264). One of the next big publications of *Pride and Prejudice* was in fact, another intentionally inexpensive book series. Richard Altick, in his revolutionary research on English literacy and publishing, explains the next type of book *Pride and Prejudice* was published as:

Cheap railway novels (or 'yellow-backs' as they were called after 1855, when their characteristic binding – glazed colored paper laid over boards, with an eye-catching picture on the front and advertisements on the back – was established) were the most inspired publishing invention of the era. For one or two shillings a volume, the scores of 'libraries' that sprang up offered a tremendous selection to suit every taste but the crudest and the most cultivated.  
(1957: 299)

Railway novels were not always the most dignified texts, yet as the inclusion of *Pride and Prejudice* demonstrates, these publishers were attempting to include classics and more influential texts, rather than just new works. Furthermore, the publication of this book as a railway novel was crucial because



2. These illustrations are sometimes identified as being created in 1902 (Cartmell 2010: 44–45). However, I am referring to an early version of *Pride and Prejudice* published by John Dicks in 1887.

the book was never issued serially. Charles Dickens and George Eliot had been published and illustrated as a weekly or monthly release of new chapters, which was an easy way to expose their works to a larger readership. As *Pride and Prejudice* was not released in that format, these inexpensive Railway novels provided a means of accessibility that had not yet been afforded to the Austen novels.

These discounted books did not feature illustrations in the text, but instead created vibrant, colored pictures and advertisements on the cover of the book itself (Figure 4). Railway novels were invented as railway transportation increased across England. Riders wanted to have a cheap, easy-to-read novel for the train ride. Leisure time also increased, as the 1860s began to see a half-Saturday holiday introduced and the 1870s saw the increasing acceptance of a fifty-four hour work week. That increase in free time allowed working-class Britons more time not just for reading, but for travelling. That time spent on the train implied an hour or even a day of leisure – and what better way to be entertained on a long ride than by reading a book (Altick 1957: 85–90).

At least two versions of *Pride and Prejudice* were printed as Railway novels, one by Chapman and Hall in 1870 and another by George Routledge and Sons in 1883. Both featured brightly colored drawings and advertisements on the cover. According to Gilson, the Routledge version depicts Mr Collins' proposal to Elizabeth, an important moment in the story (1982: 259). By contrast, the Chapman and Hall version chooses an extremely unique image for the cover. No longer is Elizabeth, who has been seen in every illustration so far, the centre focus. She is now entirely absent. Her younger sister Lydia is shown surrounded by handsome soldiers. Lydia, who was always enamoured by military men, has run away with the handsome but conniving officer George Wickham. This scene was probably chosen because there was an interest at the time (which still exists today) in men in uniform. Two of Austen's brothers were in the navy, and as the author of the novel, she allowed the two youngest Bennet daughters in *Pride and Prejudice* to be infatuated with military men. The three handsome soldiers surrounding a lavishly dressed young lady could easily cause a viewer to stop and examine the book on the way to catch a train. Just as romance novels use half-dressed, handsome men today to sell copies, attractive soldiers would attract nineteenth century buyers.

Similarly, an 1887 version of the text incorporated illustrations that focused on beautiful people in fanciful situations. Published by John Dicks, Harry Evans was commissioned to do the cover design, while John Proctor (1836–1914) completed the eight illustrations.<sup>2</sup> The cover and illustrations work in tandem, focusing on well-dressed men and women engaging in upper-class leisure activities like dancing and playing music. The cover shows a man and woman dancing, presumably Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy, as two people look on in the background (Figure 5). Unlike the Railway novels, this black and white cover is more understated, focusing on the figures, the costumes and simple details of the room. Perhaps attempting to appeal to a more respectable, higher-class audience, Evans focused more on the central characters and the narrative of the story.



Figure 4: Cover boards for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1870).

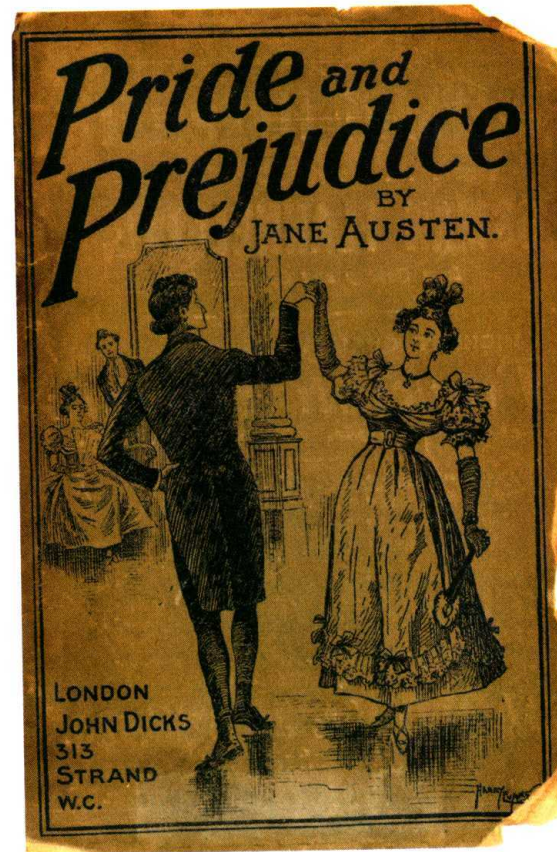


Figure 5: Harry Evans, Cover for Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1887).

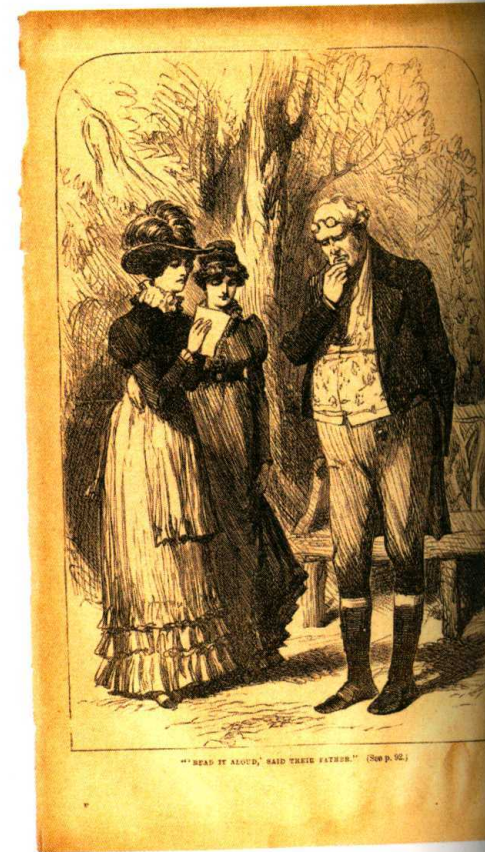


Figure 6: John Proctor, "Read it aloud", said their father for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1887). Courtesy of Goucher College Archives.

3. These percentages are only an estimate based on a survey of marriage licenses, primarily the signatures on them. Altick emphasizes that while these signatures can provide us with some idea of the literacy rate, it is only a guess. (1957: 170–71).

Proctor's illustrations do include more background detail, as he includes much more line build-up and cross-hatching. Proctor, who became well known for his newspaper cartoons, did book illustrations on the side (Forbes 1898–1899: 467–71). His style is often characterized by focusing detail on the figures and the background information in the centre of the image, as the lines become looser and more abstract as you move towards the edges. In the illustration, "'Read it aloud", said their father', Proctor shows Mr Bennet, Jane and Elizabeth deep in conversation, as they read the letter concerning news of the sister who has run off with Mr Wickham (Figure 6). Their heads are all slightly tilted downwards, and Mr Bennet even rubs his chin in contemplation and concern. Their downcast eyes allude to the heaviness of the situation at hand, but Proctor reinforces the gravity of the moment with the dark tones throughout the images. The shading in the background coupled with the darkness of the clothing emphasizes the somberness of the situation. Proctor's and Evans' illustrations are in line with the first illustrators of the novel, as they focus on quieter moments of the story.

From 1813 until the 1880s, *Pride and Prejudice* had not been illustrated with more than a few illustrations, and it would not be until the 1890s that more illustrators were commissioned to work on Austen's novel. Just as the price of books went down throughout the century thereby allowing more people to access the book, literacy began to increase substantially throughout the country. When Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, two thirds of English men were literate, while about half of English women could read (Rose 2002: 33). At the same time, education reforms encouraged the promotion of literacy. In 1832, public education had just recently been accepted by the people, with the passage of the Reform Bill. The next year, funds were allotted for the first time to education, though it was severely limited (Altick 1957: 144–45). In an attempt to encourage literacy, the English Government instituted a new code called 'Payment by Results'. Standardizations were enacted as to what subjects the students took and what books they read, upon which an examination was given. Each student who failed the test cost the school three shillings from the following year's grant. These results forced teachers to focus on fundamentals, thereby the number of students who could read increased (Goldman 1994: 34). Due to these efforts, literacy continued to rise throughout Victoria's reign, such that when the railway novels were published in the 1870s, 80% of British men and 74% of British women could read. By the early 1890s, when cheap publishing reached new heights, roughly 93% of British citizens could read and by the turn of the century only 3% of the population was illiterate.<sup>3</sup> The 1890s, then, emerge as a key decade in British publishing, as now practically everyone had some reading ability and the prices of books were beginning to hit rock bottom.

By this time, a shilling in the publishing world could produce much more in both quantity and quality. Richard Altick recognizes the ultimate development in cheap bookmaking that emerged in the 1890s as reprinting the classics pocket-sized (1957: 314–16). In addition, James Thorpe argues

that there had never been a more favourable time for illustrators, as they had plenty of opportunities and an open market for their work. He continues:

Never have so many capable draftsmen been engaged in producing illustrations, and the work of the best of these is sufficient to form a very great feature in the history of English art. Never have there been such perfect conditions for the training and development of young artists, some of whom used them as a prelude to a career in painting, while others remained constant and developed remarkable proficiency and facility in craftsmanship and invention.

(1935: 1–2)

*Pride and Prejudice* was illustrated at least four different times from 1890–1900 in England alone: from the watercolor-like drawings by W. C. Cooke (1866–1951), the influential line drawings of Hugh Thomson (1860–1920), C. E. Brock's (1870–1938) accurate engravings, and the rarely discussed illustrations by Chris Hammond (1861–1900).

The first illustrator of the nineties, William Cubit Cooke, illustrated the entire collection of Austen's novels for J. M. Dent and Company in 1892. Despite these being some of the first prints he ever published, the illustrations are characteristic of his later painterly style. R. E. D. Sketchley, in her 1903 text *English Illustrators To-day*, saw them as successful prints, claiming 'Mr. Cooke's wash-drawings to Jane Austen's novels [...] have more force, and represent with some distinction the stir of ballad romance, the finely arranged situations of Miss Austen, and the sentiments of life' (86). Cooke used the same light tone throughout his six full page drawings for *Pride and Prejudice*, and they do seem recall Pickering's own painterly approach to the illustration.

It is his depiction of Elizabeth that is unique from other versions, as Maggie Holt Cohn sees Cooke's version as 'Gibson Girl', a personification of the feminine ideal as created by Charles Dana Gibson (1986: 218). While this seems like a very logical comparison to make, the origination of the Gibson Girl is usually dated around 1895 in America, three years early then Cooke's drawings (Gillon, Jr 1969 and Patterson 2005). The similarities of the two figures are quite apparent, as Elizabeth was a tall, feminine woman, whose corset encouraged her shapely figure. Furthermore, the large bouffant hairstyle typical of the Gibson Girls reoccurs in each of Cooke's illustrations. Regardless of the appearance of other characters or lush backgrounds, Elizabeth is the starring character in his illustrations as she is shown receiving visitors and dancing at the ball, and also seated while Mr Collins proposes and Lady Catherine questioned her. Despite her interactions with people in his first drawings, Elizabeth always appears quite passive and even as she begins to dance at the ball, the tilt of her arm and her posture seem to imply her hesitation, perhaps even her resistance.

The last two illustrations that Cooke created for the novel show Elizabeth alone. The first drawing shows Elizabeth reading Mr Darcy's letter, while the other work places Elizabeth at the table, as the caption 'More Humiliations' illuminates her remorse and embarrassment (Figure 7). By this point, it



*More Humiliations.*

Chap 46

Figure 7: W. C. Cooke, 'More Humiliations' for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1892).

seems quite appropriate that he depicts Elizabeth alone, allowing her the solitary contemplation she seems to desire in the other images. Cooke did include modern symbols of status and beauty in his use of clothing and decoration, instead of attempting to dress Elizabeth appropriately for the early nineteenth century. In her exhaustive study *Jane Austen Fashion*, Penelope Byrde recognizes that the dress styles were often 'light, simple and flowing, strongly influenced by the neo-classical taste. Plain white muslin could be embellished for evening wear by different types of white or metal thread embroidery and with beads' (1999: 21). These styles differ greatly from Cooke's full gowns with large, swollen sleeves, as he clearly maintains his interests in contemporary styles, in the same manner as George Pickering.

By contrast, Hugh Thomson was recognized for his attention to historical costume; he was the next illustrator to tackle *Pride and Prejudice* in England, in an edition published by George Allen 1894. As historian James Thorpe details:

Thomson appeals to us by his sound drawing, the sureness and freedom of his line, his complete knowledge of the costume and accessories of the period and his very human sense of character and human [...] He not only understood but loved the period which he was portraying, entered into it and drew it from within.

(1935: 240–41)

Thomson was mainly self-taught, and his early illustrations for *The English Illustrated Magazine* earned him some notoriety. His drawings for Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* (1891), however, were pioneering in his adaptation of the novel into an entire illustrated experience. His attention to period details, along with his ability to capture characters and caricatures earned him numerous commissions for similar novels, which became known as the *Cranford* series. Kathryn Sutherland adroitly discusses his drawings for *Pride and Prejudice*, though her comments easily apply to the *Cranford* style:

[I]t is a whimsical, chocolate-box idyll, reflecting a nostalgia for a lost pre-industrialized society [...] Sneer though purists may at Thomson's coy miniatures [...] and at the latitude he allowed himself – cherubs and children, conspicuously lacking from the text of Austen's narratives, peep out from initial letters.

(2005: 6)

In 1894, the publishing house George Allen commissioned Thomson to do a series of illustrations for *Pride and Prejudice* in the 'exact imitation of the *Cranford* style' (Carter 1967: 174–75).

Thomson's illustrations utilize simple white backgrounds allowing the drawings to emerge effortlessly from the page. This style emerged out of necessity, as he was using a new, cutting-edge technique called line-block drawings, which were developed in the 1880s. The artist could only use

clear black lines and simple forms, no half-tones. This development had tremendous economic benefits and despite its restrictions, a number of artists such as Thomson were able to create memorable and successful work with the new technique. Thorpe articulates:

Much of [the line-block drawings] charm lies in the seeming fineness of line which make their vignettes harmonize so pleasantly with the printed page, but this is largely due to the ability of the camera to reduce their original drawings which were usually of a far greater size than the block.  
(1935: 51–52)

This switch to the line-block production was made quickly, starting with the inclusion of Thomson's drawings in the *English Magazine* in April 1886. By the 1890s, commercial wood-engraving had practically ceased to exist. Thomson was quickly able to master the technique and the delightful qualities that the line drawing illustrations could possess. He went on to become the most famous of this type of illustrators, though Charles Brock and Chris Hammond achieved their own fame, it was clearly under Thomson's influence.

Thomson created 160 illustrations for *Pride and Prejudice*, and his feat earned recognition and prominence on the title page, even adding value to the publication (Carroll and Wiltshire 2009: 69–70). Along with the larger full and half page illustrations, he also created drawings of letters that would start each chapter, even allowing the letter drawings to interact with chapter headings (Figure 8). Because of his captivating and pleasing drawings, R. E. D. Sketchley sees Thomson as the finest character illustrator of the moment, able to 'understand the "parlour" as a setting for delicate human comedy' (1903: 81). For example, in one little drawing, 'I'm the tallest', the three youngest Bennet girls stand with their backs together, attempting to figure out who is the tallest. The humour lies in that none of the girls is in the position to judge the tallest, as their backs are all to each other.

Thomson is at his best when illustrating the characters in the novels that become caricatures of themselves. Many critics have argued that Austen was just as adept as creating charming yet flawed characters such as Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy as she was at developing caricatures and unique types of people. D. W. Harding articulates:

Some [characters] are offered as full and natural portraits of imaginable people; others, while certainly referring to types of people we might easily have come across, are yet presented with such exaggeration and simplification that our response to them is expected to be rather different.  
(1968: 83)

Thomson, himself, seems to pick up on Austen's caricatures as he revels in drawing certain figures like the tempestuous Mrs Bennet (Figure 9).

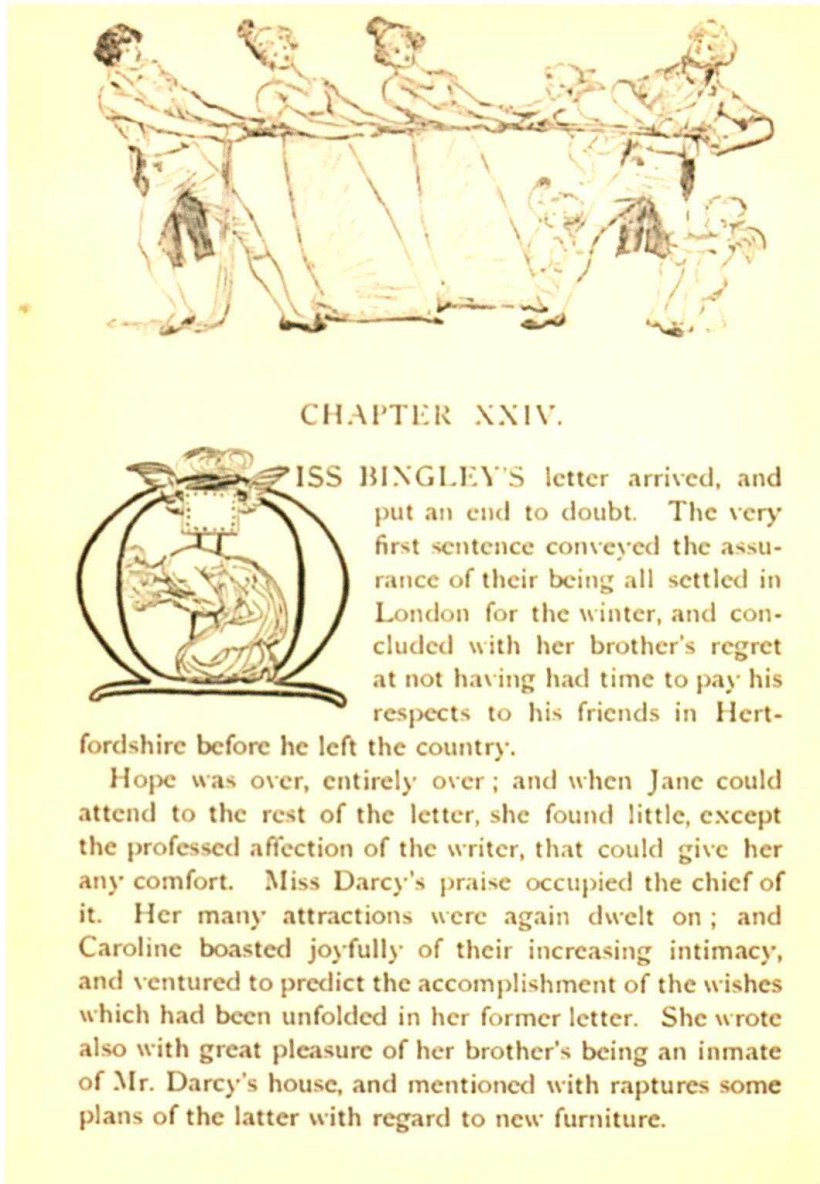


Figure 8: Hugh Thomson, first page of Chapter 24 for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1894).



Figure 9: Hugh Thomson, 'Mr. & Mrs. Bennet' for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1894).



In one of the first drawings, he shows Mr and Mrs Bennet as she attempts to persuade him to call on Mr Bingley, a new neighbour and potential suitor to one of her daughters. He depicts the two figures seated, with their backs to each other. As Mrs Bennet pleads and begs, Mr Bennet does not acknowledge her. He continues to read his book, refusing to return her gaze. The plume of feathers on her head hovers ridiculously, and her arms are crossed and pressed up against her chest as she looks hopelessly at her husband who refuses to take her seriously. Thomson shows Mrs Bennet again slightly later in the book, this time walking with her youngest daughters Lydia and Kitty. The two daughters appear in identical gowns, and Thomson has even given them the same face. Their hats and hairdos differ, as does the way they hold their umbrellas, yet the two similar girls function to bookend the haggard and hunched Mrs Bennet. She hobbles beside her much younger daughters, and she has even lifted her skirt ever so slightly, sloppily exposing her petticoat. Clearly, Thomson enjoys poking fun at the eldest Bennet woman.

Thorpe has acknowledged the popularity of Thomson and images such as these. In comparing him to Edmund Sullivan, a book illustrator of familiar English classics such as Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1896) and who was also quite popular, Thorpe explains:

[Thomson's] art was more delicate than that of Sullivan, lacking his obvious strength and vigor. Although the construction was just as sound and conscientious, we are spared the insistence on the means employed to produce the drawings. The results were equally satisfactory and, perhaps because of this concealment of art, more artistic and pleasing. We can admire Sullivan's drawings; we love Hugh Thomson's.

(1935: 240–41)

His popularity cannot only be seen in the countless reprints of his illustrations that continue to the present day, but he was also paid a hefty sum for his work. He received 500 pounds for *Pride and Prejudice*, and seven pennies on every copy sold after 10,000 from George Allen. Prior to this, he worked almost exclusively for the publishing firm Macmillan, who along with George Allen, published cheap and accessible novels. While it was too late for Macmillan to have Thomson illustrate their version of *Pride and Prejudice*, they immediately commissioned him to illustrate the other five novels by Austen for them. His edition for George Allen was successful – in one year it sold 11,605 copies (excluding the 3500 sent to America) and by 1907, it had sold 25,000 copies (Spielmann et al. 1931: 86–92).

At the same time, Macmillan realized that they had to counter Thomson's success, and they turned to C. E. Brock to illustrate their own edition of *Pride and Prejudice* in 1895, completing their release of all of the Austen novels, and giving Brock his first major commission. While Brock was clearly influenced by Thomson's line drawings and his technique, Brock managed to find his own style (Figure 10), one that included more background detail and information than Thomson's designs (Kelly 1975: 50).



Figure 10: C. E. Brock, 'Jane had not been gone long before it rained hard' for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1895).

In his forty illustrations, he chose a wide variety of views including more active scenes, some that Thomson, who drew more than five times as many illustrations, chose not to include. For example, Brock included a drawing of Jane Bennet riding her horse in the rain. Her mother had forced her to take the horse in the hopes that she would be required to stay the night at her love interest's home. The harsh rain beats upon Jane and the best she can do is to hold her hat with one hand and then hang on to the horse with her other. The rain is portrayed as straight lines breaking across the drawing at the same repeated angle. Brock gives enough information and detail so that the subject matter is quite clear, yet he chooses to keep his style simple and austere, appropriate to the line-block technique.

Brock came from a family of illustrators, and he frequently collaborated with his brother Henry Brock. Since the 1890s, illustrators attempted to portray Austen's novels with more accuracy, just as Thomson had started in his illustrations (Cohn 1986: 221). The Brocks had an even greater interest in historical correctness, and were championed as some of the most precise illustrators working at the moment, which was encouraged by their own strong collection of Georgian furniture and clothing and elaborate files of magazine and newspaper clippings. They also had a number of costume prints and Regency Period fashion plates. In addition, the Brocks commissioned the fabrication of clothes and accessories of the Regency Period, which they then hired models to wear for their engraving work (Houfe 1996: 197–98). Accordingly, Charles Brock pays careful attention to furniture, as in 'You mean to frighten me, Mr. Darcy' where the harpsichord and the chandelier receive the same amount of attention and detail (if not more) than the figures that are included in the piece.

As Thomson stayed away from the heavy-handed line drawing, Brock begins to explore it extensively in the last illustrations of the book. In a scene between Darcy and Elizabeth in front of a window ('Now, be sincere; did you admire me for my impertinence?'), despite the bright light, the illustration remains quite dark because of the repeated lines. In 1903, Sketchley seems to have recognized the emphasis on the materiality of the line, as she says, 'Mr. Brock at times has shown himself an illustrator to whom matter rather than a particular charm of manner seems of paramount interest' (83). Indeed, the playful caricature of Thomson is not present here, but rather an intense focus on the furniture and the surroundings, as well as the medium itself.

As the last illustrator of the nineteenth century, Chris Hammond worked on an edition of *Pride and Prejudice* for Methuen & Co., published in either 1898 or 1900, where she seems to have learned from both Thomson and C. E. Brock. This particular edition is often forgotten, perhaps because Chris Hammond was also known as Christine Hammond. She lived in London with her sister Gertrude, who was also an illustrator. Her penwork is rather free and she excelled in costume subjects in a style not unlike that of the Brocks' drawings. Along with the Austen novels, she also illustrated W.M. Thackeray and Shakespeare, while contributing to English Magazines (Houfe 1996: 331).

She made just six illustrations for *Pride and Prejudice*, each centring on a conversation and a relationship between different people (Figure 11). They lack both the whimsical caricature of Thomson and the emphasis on furniture by Brock, instead focusing on the body language and interaction between the characters. 'Mr. Darcy declares himself' shows Mr Darcy as he is professing his love to Elizabeth. Instead of the hesitant body language, when Darcy leans towards Elizabeth, she returns his gaze. She focuses on the subtle positioning of the figures in her work, allowing these characters to establish a relationship with each other, while creating a mood not seen in the other illustrator's work. What emerges from this discussion of the four artists who illustrated *Pride and Prejudice* in the 1890s is the variety of interpretation that existed in the ten years that saw literacy reach most of the population Britain and the continual decrease in the price of books.

What the illustrators of the 1890s do that had not been done by the earlier illustrators is to actually show Darcy and Elizabeth together. The Bentley edition's frontispiece and vignette depict reactions to Mr Darcy's behaviour. In Gilbert's illustration for the novel, he chose to depict Elizabeth reading Darcy's letter, while the two railway novels again do not focus on the couple at all. W. C. Cooke's six illustrations centre on Elizabeth's own development in the novel. The first appearance the two make together in illustrations is one of the most memorable scenes in the novel, when they meet at the ball. Mr Bingley attempts to persuade Mr Darcy to dance with Elizabeth, encouraging him to ask her because she is so lovely. Darcy's retort is simply that 'She is tolerable' as the caption that Thomson chooses states (Figure 12). Elizabeth is pictured looking away from the two men discussing her, yet her proximity assures the viewer that she would hear everything that they are saying. Thomson shows Darcy with his hands behind his back, sticking his nose up at Elizabeth and exemplifying the pride that he possesses at the beginning of the novel.

Thomson's drawings have persisted as the chosen illustrations for later reproductions, because of their whimsy and his skill at representing the key themes of the novel. As Thorpe said, we can love his illustrations. Additionally, his designs also included a few nods to the popular Aesthetic movement in England, which placed an emphasis on art for art's sake, as well as on color and form. Thomson's grandest acknowledgement of the movement comes in his inclusion of peacocks, including the cover design of the book itself, which he envelops with an intricate peacock whose feathers sweep over the entire cover, only leaving room for the body of the bird perched on the pedestal and the title information. Whistler's *Peacock Room* (1998) is perhaps the most famous use of the peacock in art, and a work that Thomson probably knew. Decorated in 1876–1877, the dining room of Fredrick Leyland housed a collection of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain that surrounded a large mural of two peacocks in gold and silver (Merrill 1998: 14–15). Peacocks were a traditional theme in Japanese art, which Whistler was clearly influenced by, along with other members of the Aesthetic movement. By choosing a peacock for his cover, Thomson was clearly pandering to the interest in Japonisme as well as the Aesthetic movement's interest in formal qualities.



Figure 11: Chris Hammond, 'Mr. Darcy declares himself' for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1900).

Figure 12: Hugh Thomson, 'She is tolerable' for Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1894).

While there is no mention of anything relating to peacocks in the book, Thomson seems to have found an appropriate symbol. One of the main points of the novel is that one cannot trust one's first impressions. Peacocks can be very unassuming from the front, without their tails splayed out in grandeur. Darcy's 'proud as a peacock' attitude must change. Once Darcy shows his true self, and Elizabeth can get past her initial prejudices against him, the two can finally be together. Thomson's endearing images persist because he was the first illustrator who really understood what was so central about the book, just as he was the first to show us Darcy and Elizabeth together.

That central relationship is the main reason the book has continued to persist in popularity today, evidenced by the countless film versions of the novel. While the book may not have had the most influential illustrators, those that did illustrate the novel embraced Austen's charming characters. Examining the illustrations of *Pride and Prejudice* brings to light issues of literacy, publishing throughout the century, and practices of artists. As we pass the 200th anniversary of the novel's publication, the continued preoccupation and fascination with the novel persists. Even today, readers continue to turn the page to find out just how Elizabeth and Darcy will end up with each other.

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