The Impact of Feminist Undertones in Pride and Prejudice Example

During the eighteenth century, feminism was a subject that was scarcely considered in society, as it was defined the theory of the political, economic and social equality between the sexes. The aspect of feminism did not gain the comprehensive structure until the late 20th century. As not being widely known for during her time period, Jane Austen uses the concept of feminism to be portrayed in a discreet technique in her novel "Pride and Prejudice". Furthermore, she displays her perspectives on the admissible issues such as what is expected in marriage between a man and woman, and how society manipulated women. Her views can be compared to Mary Wollstonecraft views on modern feminism. The main concept of separate spheres relied on the definition of the "natural" characteristics between women and men. Women being limited to the domestic sphere and advised to avoid public sphere, the men had an authority of the public sphere such as politics and work. Although education was required for women to have numerous accomplishments, this directed the majority of them to be prepared to search for a husband.
Austen conscious of the important political and social issues during her time expresses her opinions on these particular issues using an ironic tone in her writing style. In the introduction of chapter one of Pride and Prejudice, the novel insists, "It is a universally acknowledged truth acknowledged, that a single man in possession of good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen 1). This quote illustrates itself as entirely rational and while using words like "universal truth" (Austen 1). Being the first opening line of the novel, it sets the ironic tone of the whole story. Not only that, it happens to flip the perspective by saying that the men are in fact "the rightful property of... their daughters" (Austen 1). In consideration of men obtaining all the wealth, power and rights in every event of their lives. In an article written by Christine Marshall, she acknowledges one of the outstanding trademarks in Austen's writing career "disguised behind the irony and laughter" (Marshall 39), then led to this emerged perspective of "a beneficiary of feminist" (Marshall 39). Multiple critics have noticed the structure of the history and political points of view have "influenced gender relations" (Marshall 39), that was discovered in what Austen wrote. With a writing style of "both overt and covert" (Marshall 39) acknowledged the society that "women's lives were constricted in ways that men's lives were not" (Marshall 39-40) Within the same quote in Pride and Prejudice, as stated above, it also has another meaning of modern marriage to be defined as a union of "equal" partners. The emphasizes on the word equal was interpreted as the man having the majority power, although throughout the novel multiple times it is seen that not the man is seeking a wife but the other way around. This leads to the novel being focused around marriage and the perception of love between two different social classes. "It is a universally acknowledged truth acknowledged, that a single man in possession of good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen 1). By indicating how frequently in society men were given the freedom to marry any girl of their choosing, despite whether she was financially stable or not. As the majority of Austen's heroines do end with marriage, they are not necessarily good ones. Charlotte being an example in Pride and Prejudice, on the other hand, is desperate to find a husband and only obtains herself a few if any opportunity for marriage. In the article written by Miriam Ascarelli, discusses Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins as I "reveals Austen's clear-eyed assessment of the economic underpinning of marriage" (Ascarelli 5). Then followed by a quote from Pride and Prejudice, "Charlotte's reflections were in general satisfactory... must be their pleasantest preservative from want" (Ascarelli 5).
This quote displays for the audience what kind of view marriage had in society, it being a matter of chance and be in consideration of financial security and nothing more. But for Elizabeth, Austen portrayed the protagonist in the novel as a woman who took independence and "thereby responsible for their choices" (Marshall 43). Austen reveals her unique point of view on marriage to be initially based on feminist values such as gratitude and recognition. Throughout the novel Pride and Prejudice, Austen uses "irony and sense of humor" (Ascarelli 1) to demonstrate a feminist stance during her time. While Mary Wollstonecraft acknowledged the "key points regarding women and the family" (Ascarelli 2). Within the lines of both their novels, there is a clear comparison/similarities between the two, Wollstonecraft moves towards the argument for women's rights. Considering the fact that there was a connection that links between Austen and Wollstonecraft. "Furthermore, Sir William was a neighbor and friend to Austen's uncle, James Leigh-Perrot" (Ascarelli 6).

This contributed to creating the majority of her heroine's to be constituted as females, including a strong female lead during this time period. But what makes Jane Austen different and unique compared to Marry Wollstonecraft is the "focus on the reasoning skills women need to survive" (Ascarelli 2). On the other hand, Austen writing style was recognized as soft and gentle. In the end, Austen "managed to infuse her books with a Wollstonecraft-like feminist critique that is less politically charged but just as potent" (Ascarelli 6). Austen constructs her novels for the heroine not to glorify constructions in society. She controls the irony so it can be located in the lines of conversations between two or more characters, as she attacks the expectations of the society that commonly hold a traditional cultural view over women. Although there are many different stands on the issue of a feminist perspective in Pride and prejudice. Many can agree with how the author was able to portray modern marriage to be a union of equal partners while having separate independence. Applying an ironic tone in this novel to outline and criticize established values between the sexes, following a similar objective to Mary Wollstonecraft.