

## Analyzing Stereotypes and Personality Types in Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" through the Application of the Myers – Briggs Theory

Asset Lect. Anwar Abbas Merzah

College of languages -University of Kufa

**Keywords :** Pride and prejudice, Jane Austen, Myers Briggs theory Stereotypes

### Summary:

This research paper provides a modern interpretation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* by analyzing the characters' personalities using the Myers – Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). While previous studies have largely focused on social, feminist, or class analyses of Austen's work, this study aims to explore the novel through a psychological lens, utilizing MBTI personality stereotypes. The analysis focuses on dichotomies such as Extraversion (E) vs. Introversion (I), Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N), Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F), and Judging (J) vs. Perceiving (P) to examine how characters reflect these personality types. The research addresses two primary questions: how the characters of *Pride and Prejudice* represent MBTI personality stereotypes, and what insights MBTI can offer in literary studies. The significance of the study lies in providing a new psychological perspective on Austen's characters and challenging existing stereotypes within the narrative. Additionally, it aims to demonstrate how Austen subtly breaks traditional gender and personality norms through characters like Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy. By applying Myers – Briggs theory to literary characters, this paper contributes to interdisciplinary studies combining literature and psychology. The study concludes that *Pride and Prejudice* not only engages with themes of class and social structure but also provides a deep exploration of personality traits, offering fresh insights into character development and relationships within the novel.

### 1.Introduction

#### 1.1 Problem

Most of the research papers which study Pride and prejudice were based on different critical thinking. The majority of them were based on social or feminist analysis, yet this research paper aims to give new modern interpretation to Pride and prejudice depending on Myers Briggs theory of personality stereotypes in order to analyses the character's personalities. Taking for instance the following types: Extraversion (E) – Introversion (I), Sensing (S) – Intuition (N), Thinking (T) – Feeling (F). Judging (J) and Perceiving (P).

### 1.2 Research Questions

The questions are listed as follows.

1. How are the characters' personality stereotypes reflected in "Pride and Prejudice"?
2. What are Myers Briggs stereotypes?

### 1.3 Aims of the Study

The aims are presented as follows.

1. To explain stereotypes according to Myers Briggs
2. Showing how Jane break the stereotypes in Pride and Prejudice.

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

This research paper is of high importance because it's going to give new visions and add new interpretation to social and psychological literary studies. Student of different fields used Myers Briggs theory of Stereotypes, but it was rarely applied on literary works which is the aim of this research paper.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Jane Austen's Life

Jane Austen was born to George and Cassandra Austen in 1775, in an English village called Steventon. Her father was a clergyman who had been educated at Oxford School, and her mother was a cheerful aristocratic woman, so Jane grew up in a very educated family. Within encouraging environment of her family's house,

her passion for writing was cultivated. At the tender age of fifteen, she commenced crafting her own novels amidst this vibrant milieu. By the age of twenty – three, she had authored the preliminary manuscripts of *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. (Tomalin, 1997, p. 22).

Jane Austen's (1775 – 1817) style has distinct literary dimensions that depend on the style of mixing free direct speech with satirical imitation, as it relies on the realistic vision in criticizing events in a sarcastic way, with the aim of forming an effect in a comedic style. She sarcastically criticized the sentimental and Gothic novels of the eighteenth century, which depict women in an unrealistic way. Jane Austen expanded her criticism of these novels by highlighting social hypocrisy, and through free indirect speech that creates a sarcastic tone where the characters' thoughts and words are integrated into the narrator's voice. Critics believe that the literary characters presented by Austen are characterized by psychological depth, while some critics claim that these characters fall within the realistic tradition, due to her accurate descriptions of individual characters, in addition to her emphasis on "everyday life". Other critics claim that her characters lack the depth of psychological feeling compared to previous works, and this view, along with Austen's controversial tone, places her outside the realistic tradition. (Johan, 2001, p. 25).

"Austen's novels have variously been described as politically conservative and progressive. For example, one strand of criticism claims that her heroines support the existing social structure through their dedication to duty and sacrifice of their personal desires. Another argues that Austen is sceptical of the paternalistic ruling "other", evidenced by her ironic tone. Within her exploration of the political issues surrounding the gentry, Austen addresses issues relating to money and property, particularly the arbitrary quality of property inheritance and the precarious economic position of women. Throughout her work there is a tension between the

claims of society and the claims of the individual. Austen is often considered one of the originators of the modern, interiorized novel character". (Fisher, 1991, p. 38).

Pride and Prejudice, published under the title First Impressions in 1830, is about the distrust of first impressions of things. The new title indicates the novel's central theme, which traces how pride and prejudice have come to be seen as human qualities in relationships. This insight is most clearly exemplified in the nature of the relationship between the two main characters, Mr. Fitzwilliam and Elizabeth Bennet. These two characters are generally thought of as studies in pride and prejudice in turn, but it would be an oversimplification to say that this insight alone illustrates the full significance of the title. (Fisher, 1991, p. 66).

Pride and prejudice are the dominant traits of Mr. Fitzwilliam. This is confirmed in his first appearance, when he makes himself completely undesirable, as he is revealed to be insufferably haughty and utterly unbearable, and content with nothing. His pride, arising from his superior intelligence, and his immense wealth based on his noble origins, makes him deeply prejudiced against Elizabeth's family and her low connections. Fitzwilliam's vanity is in fact evidence of social prejudice, a kind of traditional aristocratic arrogance.

Although "he had never been bewitched by any woman as he was by her", Even when he can no longer hold back his feelings, Fitzwilliam feels that admitting his true feelings and love for her is beneath his dignity, so he proposes to Elizabeth.

'he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than on pride.

Elizabeth's rejection takes on a self – critical, reflective tone as he is seen as a man whose pride has been humiliated by the other party. This is evident in the way he welcomes the Gardiners to his estate, as well as in his long, detailed speech to Elizabeth that runs through the novel's end. The heroine and heroine of Pride and Prejudice, Elizabeth is the most beloved of the five sisters. Lizzie, or Eliza, is the most beloved of Austen's female protagonists. She is the second daughter of Mr. and Mrs.

Bennet, owners of the Longbourn Estate. Although Lizzie is planned to marry Mr. William Collins, her intuitive thinking and sharp, conscious mind warn her against it. (Fisher, 1991, p. 121).

Pride and Prejudice, circa 1813, involves the second of five children, Elizabeth Bennet (Lizzie), a sardonic character with a sense of humor and strong rational views on marriage. While her sister Jane is interested in the newcomer Mr. Bingley, Lizzie is introduced to his best friend, Mr. Fitzwilliam; an unmarried, wealthy, shy man with a mental superiority of birth. Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam become embroiled in a plot of major themes of class, wealth, and pride, as the novel follows their evolution away from prejudice and snobbery. (Johan, 1991).

Jane Bennet is the eldest of her sisters, and becomes Mrs. Bingley when she marries Charles Bingley, and is the most prominent figure after Elizabeth. Although she is the most beautiful, she does not attract Mr. Fitzwilliam, and is attracted to Mr. Bingley, who falls in love with her. She is close to Elizabeth, and holds her honor dear.

George Wickham, a charming military officer living at Pemberley, is indifferent to Elizabeth, but eventually their love ends, and Elizabeth is saved from this contradiction by the arrival of Mr. Fitzwilliam. Fitzwilliam's father raised Wickham as his own son and left him some inheritance. However, his addiction to gambling puts him at Fitzwilliam's mercy. In loyalty to this position, he tries his luck with Mr. Fitzwilliam's sister Alves (1999, p. 107).

The Victorian era was notable for its prohibition on women showing love or desire. This was the basis of Jane Eyre's principles and a central reason for her rejection of Mr. Rochester's scandalous proposal. Such an offer would not have come from a woman at the time, and female writers wanted to avoid showing male readers any harmful intentions.

### 2.3 Myers Bridge Theory

The Myers-Briggs theory is based on classifying people into personality types based on their responses to forced – choice questions. Based on psychological theory, it is a way to understand ourselves and others. The Myers-Briggs theory was developed to reveal the innate details of what is natural to us rather than what is a product of our culture and environment. But these classifications are preferences, and can change depending on an individual's environment or circumstances. To understand what role gender might play among personality types in whether stereotypes affect the outcome. (Darian, 2001, p. 121).

Each of the personality has its strengths, struggles, and unique qualities. However, like with any other label, Briggs Myers' system of personality typing is a guideline to understanding personal growth. Everyone is an individual. "Both are interconnected with each other. Stereotypes lead to hostility towards a group, Stereotypes are beliefs or opinions about social group attitudes from a psychological point of view, stereotypes can be explained with the help of the basic structures of our cognitive system. This dilemma becomes explicit when stereotypes and their composition are impugned. If the stereotype is for example challenged due to contradictory observations, a person reflects more or less consciously on a stereotype. In light of the dilemma of stereotypes, there are two possible outcomes: Either the stereotype is maintained or it is consciously suppressed".

### 2.4 Stereotype Theory

Stereotyping is a method of portraying and judging others in fixed and uncompromising terms. These terms revolve around the supposedly fixed characteristic of the category into which they are being classified. They are integrated into the resulting stereotype, rather than being seen as individuals with personality traits and characteristics. Rather than being treated as distinct individuals, they are simply portrayed in a non – judgmental way by their

classification and the homogeneous and natural characteristic they are made to bear. (Kahnweiler, 2013, P. 32).

The belief that stereotypes are not eliminated reinforces the collective view of people who view individuals who represent them entirely in terms of descriptive assumptions about their "biology, gender, sexual orientation, age, or whatever." These assumptions are based, for example, on what is supposed to be most distinctive among broad, non-distinctive categories, thus making the categories seem categorical.

"Anyone assigned to a stereotype is then perceived primarily, if not solely, through the alleged characteristic that is considered to be definitive of who they are and what they do. Their identity and conduct is seen as the natural – and therefore required and unchangeable – consequence of that one key element. This is the fallacy of essentialism, which reduces a person to the attribute claimed as necessary to the category with which they are identified". In this way stereotypes reproduce notions of others as radically different to those responsible for circulating and assigning credibility to the stereotypes. According to Myers there are four personality type which are:

"Extraversion (E) – Introversion (I) The dichotomy of extraversion and introversion was explored by Jung in his theory of personality types as a way of describing how people respond and interact with the outside world around them. While these terms are familiar to most people, the way they are used here is somewhat different from their common usage".

"Extroverts are "outward – turning" and tend to be action-oriented, enjoy the more frequent social interaction, and feel energized after spending time with other people. Introverts are "inward – turning" and tend to be thought-oriented, enjoy deep and meaningful social interactions, and feel recharged after spending time We all exhibit

extraversion and introversion to some degree, but most of us tend to have an overall preference for one or the other". (Kahnweiler, 2013, P. 30).

The Sensing (S) – Intuition (N) theory is based on the scale that looks at how individuals gather information around them. Like openness and introversion, people spend some time sensing and intuition depending on. According to the MBTI, people tend to want to dominate in one area or another. People who prefer sensing tend to pay a great deal of attention to reality. Especially what they can learn from their own senses. They tend to focus on facts and details and enjoy having hands-on experience. Those who prefer intuition are more interested in things like patterns and impressions. They enjoy thinking about possibilities, imagining the future, and abstract theories. (Kahnweiler, 2013, p. 32).

Thinking (T) – Feeling (F) This scale is based on how individuals make decisions based on information obtained from their sensing or intuition functions. Individuals who favor rational thinking rely more heavily on objective data and facts. They tend to be logical, consistent, and impersonal in their perception of things and in evaluating a decision. Those who favor feeling are more likely to consider people and emotions when reaching a conclusion. (Kahnweiler, 2013, p. 33).

Judging (J) – Perceiving (P) The final scale involves how people tend to deal with the outside world. Those who lean toward judging prefer structure and firm. People who lean toward perceiving are more open, flexible and adaptable. These two tendencies interact with the other scales. Remember, all people at least spend some time extraverting. The judging/perceiving scale helps describe whether you extravert when you are taking in new information (sensing and intuiting) or when you are making decisions (thinking and feeling)". (Kahnweiler, 2013, p. 35).

### 3.The Analysis of Characters' Personality According to Stereotypes

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the archetypal portrayal of a stereotypical female character is one whose primary objective is to marry advantageously and prioritizing wealth in a



prospective husband. This is because, as demonstrated by Jane, a family's social standing is dictated by the status of its male members. Consequently, Jane emphasizes the female characters who conform to the archetype of women fixated on marriage, as well as those who are thoughtful with financial matters. Given that women were socially conditioned to rely on men for monetary sustenance, becomes its evident that financial stability was an essential factor in a marital union. As such, a stereotypical female character can be defined as one who is simultaneously consumed by the pursuit of marriage and wealth.

Jane identifies Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Lucas as two prime examples of characters obsessed with marriage, as they diligently strive to secure prosperous and reputable husbands for their daughters.

### 3.1: Sensing (S) – Intuition (N)

"This scale involves looking at how people gather information from the world around them. Just like with extraversion and introversion, all people spend some time sensing and intuiting depending on the According to the MBTI, people tend to be dominant in one area or the other". It is indeed valid to associate this characteristic with Mrs. Bennet, as her obsession with marrying off her daughters, it could be argued that she embodies the archetype of the irrational, garrulous woman, given her persistent and outspoken pursuit of suitable marital prospects for her daughters (Jane, 1998, p. 2).

As Mrs. Bennet excitedly informs her husband about the imminent arrival of an eligible bachelor in their vicinity, she eagerly points out that this newcomer is indeed unmarried and, more importantly, possesses substantial wealth. In her estimation, the man's annual income falls between four and five thousand pounds, rendering him an exceptionally promising prospect for their daughters (Austen, 1998, p. 1).

It becomes unquestionably apparent that Mrs. Bennet is clearly preoccupied with the notion of finding suitable husbands for her daughters, as she is quick to set her

sights on any eligible bachelor who enters their social sphere with this express intent in mind. Furthermore, her character conforms even more closely to the stereotypical archetype due to her relentless fascination with wealth, particularly in relation to securing affluent matches for her offspring. An illuminating instance that showcases Mrs. Bennet's heightened fixation on both matrimony and financial gain occurs when she discovers that Mr. Fitzwilliam intends to propose to her daughter Elizabeth. (Young, 1999, p. 82).

### 3.2: Extraversion (E) – Introversion (I)

"In *Pride and Prejudice*, introverted Mr. Fitzwilliam stays on the sidelines, watching, thinking, observing. Extroverted Elizabeth is with people, dancing, talking, laughing, and joking. She doesn't really stop to reflect until she gets Fitzwilliam's letter after his failed proposal. Of course, his failure causes Fitzwilliam to reflect even more, and to actively change his behavior. Elizabeth does enjoy solitary walks, so she is not a very strong extrovert. But everyone has some of both tendencies".

And even a person who loves social gatherings will eventually need some time alone. Fitzwilliam is also contrasted with Wickham, a very social, charming, extrovert, though an unprincipled one. Jane and Bingley is another pair of opposites. Bingley is gregarious, social and outgoing. Jane is much quieter, not talking about or even showing her feelings. This creates misunderstandings between them. (Wilson, 1985, p. 72).

As extraversion character, during a conversation with Jane, Lydia proudly proclaims her elevated status as a married woman, implying that Jane must now assume a lower position within their family hierarchy. Moreover, her keenness to be addressed as Mrs. Wickham by their acquaintances suggests that she derives

pleasure from the societal recognition associated with marriage, perhaps more so than from the emotional fulfillment that a committed partnership can provide.

(Austen, 1998, p. 23).

### 3.3: Judging (J) – Perceiving (P)

This scale involves how people tend to deal with the outside world. Those who lean toward judging prefer structure and firm. People who lean toward perceiving are more open, flexible and adaptable. So Elizabeth thinks it is very important to only marry a man she loves and respects, despite the pressure to achieve economic security.

"By the end of the novel, Lizzy's commitment to integrity has been rewarded because she marries a partner who will truly make her happy. She has also come to see that she can sometimes be too rigid and judge too quickly, since she was initially mistaken about the nature and ethics of Wickham and Fitzwilliam. The novel endorses the importance of integrity, but it also reminds readers not to be too quick to pass judgment on who has it and who doesn't". (Fordyce, 1998, p. 187).

Mr. Bingley is financially and socially independent, and he relies on the opinions and judgment of female family members, such as Caroline Bingley and Lady Catherine de Bourgh. People outside the family are judged by the behavior of their family members, which is why Fitzwilliam suggests to Lizzie that he is doing her a favor by proposing to her even though she comes with awkward family ties. The theme of family shows that individuals do not live completely independent lives, and that independent individual actions have wider societal implications. (Jane, 2000, p. 176).

Caroline Bingley, refuses to relinquish her pursuit of Mr. Fitzwilliam's affections without a fight. Observing his progress through a book with rapt attention, Miss Bingley persistently attempts to engage him in conversation by posing questions and casting glances at his page. Despite her best efforts, she fails to divert his focus from his reading; he offers only brief responses, maintaining his composure throughout their interaction (Austen, 1998, p. 41).

### 3.4: Thinking (T) – Feeling (F)

This scale focuses on how people make decisions based on the information that they gathered from their sensing or intuition functions. Elizabeth falls in love but she never forgets to fall in love with a person who can provide her future comfort and luxury. It seems that husband hunting becomes the major concern in such a novel.

In the novel both Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam are guilty of pride and prejudice, and both of them acquit themselves from pride and prejudice during the course of the novel. Fitzwilliam's pride is humbled midway through the novel when he proposes to Elizabeth and to his astonishment is rejected. The lesson he learns is that he has to earn his right to consideration by respect for others. Elizabeth's prejudice scatters when she learns that it was Fitzwilliam who helped her family in Lydia – Wickham episode, and that Wickham had lied against Fitzwilliam.

"Elizabeth's pride is more subtle and her enlightenment requires the space for the whole book. She seems unconscious that she suffers from pride at all. She sees everyone's errors and mistakes but her own. The false assurance of friendship from Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst do not deceive her. She already has too low opinion of them. She sees and enjoys the follies of Mr. Collins. But She also quite unreasonably

persists in thinking ill of Fitzwilliam, and just as perversely, in thinking well of Wickham, even when there is evidence that he is a fortune-hunter". (Fordyce, 1998, p. 186).

Caroline's exact words: "Miss Elizabeth Bennet!" "I'm completely taken aback. How long has she been so popular? -and when am I to wish you happiness?" "You will have a lovely mother – in – law, and she will be with you at Pemberley all the time" (Austen 19) Caroline Bingley appears to be the type of woman who elevates herself at the expense of others and makes herself appear better than she is. Caroline "often tried to provoke Fitzwilliam into disliking [Elizabeth Bennet] by talking of their supposed marriage, and planning his happiness in such an alliance," according to the book (Austen, 1998, p. 39).

### Conclusion

This research paper aimed to give new modern interpretation to Pride and prejudice. Based on Myers Briggs theory of personality stereotypes, analyses the character's personalities. Taking for instance the following types: Extraversion (E) – Introversion (I), Sensing (S) – Intuition (N), Thinking (T) – Feeling (F). Judging (J) and Perceiving (P).

The Myers – Briggs theory is a powerful tool for understanding ourselves and others. It reveals to the individual the details of his nature, not what is natural to him. But it is important to note that all of these classifications are preferences that can change and shift depending on the environment in which the individual lives or his surrounding circumstances.

Despite the presence of stereotypical depictions of men and women in Pride and Prejudice that reflect gender disparities, the novel remains engaging for readers of all

genders. Moreover, this research aimed to illustrate how a literary work can provide readers with a distinctive aesthetic experience. Through the narrative, readers are transported to the nineteenth century, gaining insight into the lives of men and women, the qualities valued in each gender, and the power dynamics at play.

In encountering these historical gender roles, readers have the chance to question their validity and draw comparisons to contemporary society. They may ponder whether female virtue is still as coveted in women today as it was during the nineteenth century, or if attributes such as wealth, titles, and strong morals are as desirable in men now as they were in Jane Austen's era. This introspection allows readers to recognize both the progress made in addressing gender inequalities and the work that still lies ahead.

## References

1. Alves,A.(1999). Marxist-Feminist Reading of Pride and Prejudice." Folsom, McClintock, New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
2. Baker , M. (1991). Some reflections upon marriage. In Eighteen – century women: An anthology (ed.) Bridget Hill, Oxen, Routledge, London, UK.
3. Darian,L.(2001). Gender issues reflected within nature in Jane Austen's novel Pride and Prejudice. BA dissertation, Linnaeus University, Sweden.
4. Fisher, J(1991) Stereotypes of Women in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice (1813)". Greenwood. Greenwood Press.
5. Fordyce, J. (1998). Sermons to Young Women, Caret, Philadelphia & I Riley, New York. USA.
6. Jane ,A. (1998). Pride and Prejudice, Republished by Global Grey London, London, 2018. UK. Subsequent references will appear in the text.
7. Johan, J. (2001). Georgette Heyer's Regency world, London: William Heinmann, UK.
8. Kahnweiler, A. (2013). The Myers – Briggs Type Indicator: The Modern Language Association of America.

9. Tomalin, K (1997). Elizabeth Bennet's disregard for the contemporary marital conventions. BA Dissertation, Linnaeus University, Sweden.
10. Wilson R. (1985). Themes in Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen, Macmillan Master Guides. Palgrave, London, UK.
11. Young, A. (1999). Culture, class and gender in the Victorian novel: Gentlemen, gents and working women. London: Palgrave Macmillan, UK.

## تحليل أنواع الشخصيات النمطية في رواية جين أوستن كبرياء وتحامل من خلال نظرية

مايرز برجز

م. م. أنوار عباس مرزرة

كلية اللغات - جامعة الكوفة



[anwara.aljbori@uokufa.edu.iq](mailto:anwara.aljbori@uokufa.edu.iq)

الكلمات المفتاحية: كبرياء وتحامل، جين أوستن، نظرية مايرز برجز، أنماط الشخصيات  
الملخص:

تقدم هذه الورقة البحثية تفسيراً حديثاً لرواية "كبرياء وتحامل" لجين أوستن من خلال تحليل شخصيات الرواية باستخدام مؤشر أنماط الشخصية مايرز - برجز. بينما ركزت الدراسات السابقة إلى حد كبير على التحليلات الاجتماعية أو النسوية أو الطبقيّة لأعمال أوستن. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الرواية من خلال عدسة نفسية باستخدام أنماط الشخصية كالحسد و الاستشعار و الانطوائية مقابل الإدراك والحكم والشعور و التفكير في تحليل الشخصيات. . بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تهدف إلى إظهار كيف تقوم أوستن بتفكيك الأعراف التقليدية المتعلقة بالجنس والشخصية من خلال شخصيات معينة مثل إليزابيث بينيت والسيد فيتز ويليام دارسي. هذه الدراسة تجمع بين الأدب وعلم النفس من خلال تطبيق نظرية مايرز - برجز على الشخصيات الأدبية، وتلخص أن رواية "كبرياء وتحامل" لا تتناول فقط موضوعات الطبقة والبنية الاجتماعية، بل توفر أيضاً استكشافاً عميقاً للسمات الشخصية، مما يقدم رؤى جديدة حول تطور الشخصيات والعلاقات داخل الرواية والأعمال الأدبية.