

Explain how Austen presents attitudes to marriage in this extract and the novel as a whole. - Chapter 19

Austen satirises society's preoccupation with marriage for the benefit of social and financial security through the character Mrs Bennet. Mrs Bennet's enthusiasm is reflected through Mr Collins proposal; the excessive use of punctuation such as dashes and exclamation marks highlights her excitement for the potential marriage. She behaves hastily, and is willing to accept the proposal on behalf of Elizabeth Bennet and this emphasises her preoccupation with marriage.

After Mr Collins's sermonising and tedious speech, Elizabeth replies "You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time."

Elizabeth understands that Mr Collins is abrupt and unwilling to accept the refusal.

Elizabeth's short sentence represent her short breath as she is desperate to break away from his sermonising proposal. The direct address of "You" makes her speech more personal and immediate, it is evident that Elizabeth tries to make it as clear as possible to Mr Collins that she is not interested. "You could not make ME happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who could make you so.", the emphasis on "ME" portrays Elizabeth's self respect, this helps the audience visualise her as a respectful figure as she able to express her feelings unlike the other conventional character around her who seemed to be submerged by the concept of marriage. Although she is aware of her social standing, she takes into account her happiness and her satisfaction. Elizabeth is displayed as more practical and logical through her courageous actions, it highlights her strong willed nature and she seems more justified, this is done through the help of the narrator. The narrator favours Elizabeth by making Mr Collins seem unexceptionally pompous and imperious. Mr Collins is so predetermined that his proposal will be accepted to an extent where he comes to a shock when he is rejected not just once but thrice.

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