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Discovery leads to new ideas and understandings or a revived perception of something which has been lost, forgotten or concealed. Discoveries can be abrupt or planned and are aroused by curiosity, necessity or wonder which you encounter through experiences. The intensity of the impact caused by discovery varies with each individual according to personal, historical, cultural and social contexts and values. In the film Life of Pi (LOP) and the poem Pretty, the concept of personal discovery is evidently displayed through the use of numerous cinematic and poetic techniques and themes. In Life of Pi, themes such as family, culture, religion and survival prompt towards a vivid interpretation of discovery of the character 'Pi'. Similarly, in Pretty, the themes which correlate with LOP are survival, hope and family. Discoveries provide us with unique understandings and stimulate renewed perceptions of ourselves and others. This essay will spectacle a comprehensive analysis of the characters' personal ideologies and the discoveries they made throughout their progression in life.

In Life of Pi, Pi's family has a very close relationship wherein each individual is free to voice their views openly. The father is considered the leader of the house and does not hold a very firm believe in God. He says 'Religion is darkness', and therefore encourages his children to focus less on religion and more on science-based philosophies. Despite being non-religious, Pi's father doesn't force Pi into his mind set, respecting Pi's decision. On the contrary, the mother is very cultural as she speaks to Pi and his brother in their mother tongue; the way she dresses and the food they eat all represent their culture. At the dinner table when Pi's family is having dinner, Pi's father approaches Pi regarding religion and belief in God. He tells Pi to choose a path and follow it to which Pi does not agree. Pi' father does pressurize him, however, does not violate him to believe in what he says. The lighting is consistent throughout the scene representing equality amongst the family members and that each individual has a voice and their opinions about the topic are acceptable.

Through this, it is visible that the family will not always stand by your personal decisions. Family influences your understanding and perceptions of certain things by imposing their views on you and making you accept it. However, in case of Life of Pi, Pi is fully determined by his own morals and values and does not let his family influence him into believing or changing his concepts of life.

Pi's continuous search for meaning of life and love for God leads him to explore new religions. Pi believes in three religions simultaneously and when questioned about it, he replies, "I just want to love God". Born a Hindu, Pi learns new ways of spiritually connecting to God through different religions. He learns new religions such as Islam and Christianity. As he explores Islam he comes across the customs of praying which helps connect to God. The praying scene represents Pi's devotion to God. The composition

of the surrounding and the setting highlight Pi's enlightenment whereas, his father in the background is in darkness. This reflects on their inner state of mind which allows the audience to see the difference between the two characters. It also portrays Pi's father's tolerance towards Pi's new decisions. Pi feels a spiritual connection with all three religions which provide him peace and resilience. His life greatly revolves around the Love for God. This is evidently depicted when Pi is left stranded on the boat with Richard Parker. His only hope which keeps him alive is believing in a divine being who he calls out to in the storm scene, "God? I give myself to you. I am your vessel. Whatever comes, I want to know. Show me." The high angle shot of Pi screaming to the sky reveals his submission and acceptance of the circumstances he is undergoing. Overall, religion and faith help Pi to survive. They are the key elements of Pi's life while he is on the lifeboat. **Learning new religions shape up his future, allowing him to face the consequences and not giving up. His understanding towards the suffering is a spiritual one as he depends fully on God for whatever comes his way.**

Survival becomes crucial as Pi is discarded on the lifeboat with Richard Parker, which challenges not just his starvation but also protection from the wild animal. Survival brings about suffering and loss of innocence. With very scarce resources, Pi is left alone to take care of himself and the tiger, Richard Parker. His fear of Richard Parker keeps Pi active. In order to live, Pi gives up on his previous values and habits. His hope comes through his spiritual beliefs, however, he is unable to enact upon his values. Previously, being fully dependent on his parents, Pi takes up responsibility as he is forced to plan for his survival. He takes into account the ways in which he can help himself and the tiger. He develops organisational skills by keeping note of the resources available. Pi adopts animalistic nature as he goes against his beliefs to survive.

In the scene wherein Pi catches a multi-coloured fish that changes colour reflects upon Pi's thought process and personal conflicts. The shift in colour of the fish manifests Pi's development. His morals are challenged as he was previously a vegetarian, however, he still holds a firm belief in God, "Thank you Lord Vishnu. Thank you for coming in the form of a fish and saving our lives." Pi versus Richard Parker on the lifeboat is a symbolism of tolerance and reliance. Pi disregards fear in order to be able to think rationally and logically. He avoids letting fear conquer him as it would affect the circumstances of his current situation. Overcoming this fear, Pi is able to handle and cope with Richard Parker enhancing the chances of survival. This moulds Pi into a new person. **His mind set, morals, values and habits are all altered as he discovers his true self in a situation such as this. Left with literally no other option, Pi improvises greatly, reconsidering his previous values.** He modifies his nature to suit the circumstances he faces allowing the audience to get a deeper understanding of his inner state.

In addition, 'Pretty' by Katie Makkai is a poem about the journey taken by the poet. It is a personal intuition of the poet as she discloses her life experiences and the struggles faced throughout her life. Makkai recalls her childhood

experiences, explaining the concepts in which she was brought up in. “Will I be pretty?” A rhetorical question repeated in the poem leaves the reader wondering about the true meaning of pretty. As a child, her struggles included going through several surgeries and medications to stand up to the level of society. She blames the society for the immoral psychology and understanding of the word pretty. **As Makkai grew up, a sense of realisation shook her mentally making her mindful of the awful journey she had made to meet with the standards of society.** Her struggles can be felt by the audience because of the way the poem is delivered, and in the poetic techniques used such as imagery, simile and alliteration. “Twisting it this way and that way as if it were a cabbage she might buy.” This is a simile which provides a vivid sense of imagery and highlights the comparison made between her face and the cabbage. It shows her importance in this world which is not more than a cabbage. Makkai speaks out in a very frustrated tone to convey her struggles to the audience. **Discovering the true meaning of pretty, Makkai regrets the changes she has made to her physical self in the past. However, she is aware of her mistakes and misconceptions and can educate others not to follow in her footsteps.**

Furthermore, family plays a great role in physically transforming her into a completely new person. Makkai mentions her mother as, “my poor mother”, displaying the fact that her mother is not to be blamed but the environment she was brought up in. **The poet feels a sense of pity and sorrow for her mother for not being able to realise the true meaning of pretty and dragging her under this ideology. Her points of view shifts as she changes from a narrator to that of her mother and then back to the narrator. This emphasises on the fact that this is not just about her but is for everyone struggling.** The meaning of pretty portrayed by her mother is very baseline; it largely focuses on the physical appearances of oneself and highlights the height of changes people would make just to look attractive and socially recognised. Makkai’s meaning of pretty is a deeper one as she prioritises what is inside and not what is seen by others on the outside. Her aim is to wipe out the concept of Pretty as being the most beautiful person in the room while having a wretched personality. As the poet speaks, a sense of regret is felt by the audience. She regrets obeying her mother as it left her totally unbearable. “I have not seen my own face in 10 years.” Walking a severe path, Makkai has developed her own understanding of the word pretty which is way more than physical appearances. **Her traumatic experience has left her depressed. However, she is eager to change the minds of future generations, helping them to not fall into the trap of disregarding all other aspects just to look beautiful.**

In final consideration, Life of Pi and Pretty present a journey taken by the narrators and the discoveries made during that journey. Both protagonists in the film and in the poem discover something. In Life of Pi, Pi’s previous morals and beliefs are put to the test in a highly adverse situation. Due to his will for survival, he had to go against some of his former values. Moreover, Makkai recognized the true definition of ‘Pretty’. Undergoing immense physical changes, she drew regret from her decisions. She learnt that the true

illustration of pretty was what lied inside, not that what was apparent on the outside. **Their personal discoveries, that came about through insurmountable struggles and hardships grinded them, resuscitating(resesatating) their perceptions and induced new understandings.**

In what ways is your appreciation of both texts enhance by a comparative study of identity in Pride and Prejudice and Letters to Alice.

Both Austen and Weldon convey the relationships based on empathy and respect offer opportunities for individuals to positively transform their perspectives. By examining how social attitudes and values have shifted between the Regency era and the 1980's, the reader comes to better understand the process towards the recognition of ones self identity and that self fulfilment may be best attained from discovering a balance between autonomy and conformity.

Both Austen and Weldon convey that relationships based on the realisation of identity allow readers to appreciate the characters throughout both texts. The rise of the traders as a result of the industrial revolution had resulted in a less rigid social hierarchy which is reflected through Elizabeth and Darcy changing their attitudes towards each other. In Pride and Prejudice, Darcy's arrogant tone in (Elizabeth) is "...not handsome enough to tempt me" and Elizabeth high modality in "...your defect is a propensity to hate everybody" reflect their inherited disdain of their class. However, later, when Elizabeth receives Darcy letter informing her of Wickham's true character, she questions he own beliefs about Mr Darcy and her epiphany is evident through the authors intrusion in "She grew absolutely ashamed of herself...she had been blind, partial, prejudiced". This self-examination allows Elizabeth and Darcy to develop mutual respect for each other, which catalyses their appreciation of each other. This is evident through Darcy's emotive language in "I was...selfish and overbearing...dearest, loveliest Elizabeth! What do I not owe you!", conveying his reflection on how his aristocratic upbringing and wealth have influenced his proud nature. Thus Austen highlights that the characters' realisation of their own individual identity allows readers to question their own, consequently appreciating both texts, a viewpoint also reinforced in Weldon's letter to Alice almost two centuries later.

Similar to Austen, in Letters to Alice, Weldon encourages Alice to go against social pressures in order to enrich an individual's identity. The second wave feminism (1970's – 1980's) polarised views on women's roles in society as revolutionary feminists who dealt with, a wide range of controversial topics including sexuality and reproductive rights, criticised the more conservative reformists for their limited goals, reflecting a lack of respect for each other within the movement. Weldon deliberately

constructs Aunt Fays voice to instruct both Alice And responders and she criticises such a lack of empathy through the rhetorical question “Are we to disapprove?” Charlotte Lucas found happiness with Mr Collins, inspite , of marrying him for all the wrong reasons”. This, along with her modern analogy in “Now it is the pretty girl from Java who marries the rancher from North Australia”, indicates that individuals should not criticise women who sought financial security through marriage by being ignorant of parallels today. Furthermore, the intertextual reference, “Mrs Bennet, the only one with the slightest notion of the sheer desperation of the world”, conveys that Aunt Fay’s second-wave feminist context allows her to broaden her views by sympathising with Mrs Bennet’s concerns rather than criticising them. Thus Weldon and Austen reflect the climate of their respective contexts in emphasising the importance of one’s self-recognition of their own individual’s potential.

Both Austen and Weldon draw their own contexts to reflect the necessity of realising ones true identity with the admission of both the regency period and the 1980’s. Women’s financial dependence on men was enshrined in law in the Regency era as before the Married Women’s Property Act (1882), married women could not own property. Reflecting this, Charlotte’s pragmatic views on marriage are evident in the matter-of-fact tone in “Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance”, emphasising her sacrifice of her personal desires and agency for material security. Furthermore, even aristocrats such as Lady Catherine are subject to Regency gender constraints on freedom, and in her desperation to prevent Darcy and Elizabeth’s marriage, she breaks social protocols and insults Elizabeth through the tricolon in “You refuse to obey... duty, honour, and gratitude... you are [to]... make [Darcy] the contempt of the world.”. The authorial intrusion in “Happy for all her maternal feelings was the day on which Mrs Bennet got rid of her two most deserving daughters” conveys that Mrs Bennet’s joy is a reflection of the reality that unlike that of Alice or Aunt Fay’s modern capacity for economic autonomy, Elizabeth’s independence and stability are ultimately tied to her marriage to Darcy. Elizabeth’s use of superlatives in “I am the happiest creature in the world” after she accepts Darcy’s second marriage proposal highlights that while the reward for her independence is found in Darcy’s attraction to the “liveliness of... [her] mind“, she also fulfils the conventions expected of her gender in the Regency era. Evidently Austen conveys that social restraints may tamper with one’s individual courage hence making it crucial for one to develop their own identity.

In Letters to Alice, Weldon, like Austen, freedom within the constraints of society. The Equal Pay Act (1970) reflects a workforce radically different from Austen’s time as more women became financially independent.

Aunt Fay continually attempts to instil her own beliefs in Alice, emphasised through the irony in “How can I possibly tell you how to run your life?... I could offer a few general rules”, similarly to how Lady Catherine’s words to Elizabeth reflect her belief that her own views are superior. Aunt Fay’s reference to classical literature in “I bet \$500 you have not read ‘The Hound of Heaven’” highlights her narrow view of only canonical literature being important. Ironically, she also encourages Alice to form her own views instead of conforming to social pressure, expressed through the hyperbole in “It is murder, mental murder, twisting your head to get into someone else’s place”. Alice chooses to follow this instruction while ignoring Aunt Fay’s advice about the merits of classical literature. This balance between Alice’s independent thinking and her conformity to Aunt Fay’s opinion results in her success with her novel, evident through Aunt Fay’s comparison in “You have sold more copies of *The Wife’s Revenge* in three months... than all of my novels put together”. Such financial success is only possible due to a gradual disintegration of legal and cultural barriers to gender equality. Thus both Weldon and Austen evidently express the importance of freedom against social pressures, allowing readers to appreciate how they develop their own individual identities.

In their respective texts, both Austen and Weldon explore the impact of the values and attitudes of their context in shaping the realisation of one’s identity. Ultimately, despite changing contexts, both authors emphasise that empathy in relationships may catalyse the process in which one discovers their self and that individuals may find self-fulfilment by being autonomous within the socially acceptable barriers of their time.

How has your understanding of *Pride and Prejudice* been reshaped by the connections you have made with *Letters to Alice* on first reading Jane Austen.

Pride and prejudice with letters to Alice on first reading Jane Austen further reflects the changes in context that leads to a corresponding shift in values, influencing the reader's reception of the texts. This is further refined in approaching the contextual values dealing with the choice of marriage and how it differs in *Pride and Prejudice* where success is inherited through marriage for a woman that is educated rather than earning success regardless of gender as expressed through *Letters to Alice*.

Austen's writing reflects the contextual values associated with the Regency period, including the idea that social and financial success was only achieved through matrimony. This concept is directly conveyed to the readers through the use of dialogue states, ‘i wish Jane succes with all my heart’, dictating that marriage constituted success for women.

This is also reinforced in ensuring her daughters get married as an economic necessity. Within Jane Austen's time, women were reliant on fathers or husbands as they earned the wealth and influenced social ranking, in this case "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance". Weldon explains, Austen "believed it was better to not marry at all, than to marry without love". "Such notions were quiet new and they swam against the stream of communal ideas" that typified her time. Weldon is able to evaluate the unique personality of Elizabeth against other women conformed to what was socially acceptable, like Charlotte Lucas. Weldon emphasises contextual gap between Austen's world and the current society highlighting the variation in the value of marriage "it is the stuff of our magazines" Aunt Fanny explains, "but it was the stuff of their life, their very existence", accentuating the variation in the significance of marriage. Weldon uses a didactic tone in her letter to Alice to strengthen her assertion, "child, you don't know how lucky you are". The intrusive manner that Weldon addresses throughout her letters insinuates that Alice is lucky to have been born in a time where marriage is not her primary concern in life. Both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Letters to Alice* provide readers with an in-depth understanding of the view on marriage based on context. Readers are able to see the shift in values within society from the Regency period to the 1980's.

Letters to Alice on first reading Jane Austen's author Weldon articulates the importance of quality literature to the modern child through the guise of the characters "Aunt Fanny", a value lost through the generations of social change and technological advancement. Weldon utilises a didactic tone to stress the significance of literature "with a capital L" as written by Jane Austen "as opposed to just books". "You must read Alice, before it's too late" emphasises the imperativeness of literature. "How can I convince you...when you have McDonalds around one corner and an American werewolf in London around the next?" Weldon's rhetorical question prompts the audience to contemplate the individual participation in literature. Through the extended metaphor of "the city of invention" Weldon engages readers in the multi-dimensional city "trying to define literature by what it does, not by what it is. By experiencing not idea" revealing the timeless value of quality literature unknown to her niece Alice. Weldon highlights the timeless intertextuality through contextual contrasts "millions staring then and now...man and especially women, does not live by bread alone. He has to have books". This demonstrates Weldon's appreciation of literature through old times by contrasting it with the approach "children in the modern age" deal with literature. During Jane Austen's time, women were of more value to marriage if they were educated. The rich had governesses to care for proper etiquette that was essential to maintain. The value of literature is

supported by Austen as an accomplished women “added by darcy” ...must yet add something more substantial in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading”.

Jane Austen established wealth as a measure of success in her novel. Austen reflects in her novel, a time where men are spoken of in regards to their wealth, of which determines their desirability to a woman. This notion is exemplified through the direct speech of Mrs Bennet upon Mr Bingley’s arrival “oh!..a single man of large fortune, four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls”. Mrs Bennet thinks Mr Bingley is a very desirable husband solely for the reason of his wealth indicating success. The inequality of women stipulated that the only chance for social and financial success was through marriage “as women only inherited through their husbands...women were born poor and stayed poor, and lived only through their husbands favour”. This is contrasted in weldon's text, letters to alice, on first reading Jane Austen, when alice writes her own novel and becomes extremely successful and popular. The formula for success in *Pride and Prejudice* is influenced by Austen's context, where wealth and social status are significant aspects in the value system of their particular society. It is upon the realisation of societal norms that readers are able to understand how morals and values evolve over time.

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