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Anxiety in the House of the Edrisis and Pride and Prejudice: A Comparative Freudian Reading

Sahar Amiri [1] , Shirin Razmjoo Bakhtiari [2*] , Maryam Akbari Mousaabadi [3]

1. M.A. in Persian Language and Literature, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran

*Corresponding author: sh.razmjoo@urmia.ac.ir

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a comparative psychoanalytic reading of anxiety in Ghazaleh Alizadeh's The House of the Edrisis and Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. Drawing on Freud's structural model of the psyche and his distinction among realistic, neurotic, and moral anxiety, the study examines how social hierarchy, parental authority, internalized norms, frustrated desire, and changing historical conditions shape the emotional conflicts of selected characters. The analysis focuses on Mrs. Edrisi, Leqa, Vahab, and Roxana in Alizadeh's novel, and on Elizabeth Bennet, Fitzwilliam Darcy, Jane Bennet, and Mrs. Bennet in Austen's. Rather than treating fictional characters as clinical patients, the article uses Freudian categories as interpretive models for patterns of conflict represented in the two novels. The findings suggest that The House of the Edrisis foregrounds anxiety generated by political upheaval, familial repression, loss, and resistance to social change, whereas Pride and Prejudice more strongly emphasizes anxiety arising from class hierarchy, marriage, reputation, and the tension between individual desire and internalized social expectations. Across both novels, anxiety may inhibit action, distort judgment, or intensify defensive behavior, but it can also accompany self-recognition and psychological change. The comparison demonstrates how distinct historical and cultural settings produce different configurations of conflict among desire, conscience, and external reality.

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Introduction

Literature and psychoanalysis have long been brought into dialogue because both are concerned with the forms through which desire, conflict, memory, repression, and fantasy become legible. Psychoanalytic literary criticism does not require the assumption that a literary work is a clinical document or that a fictional character can be diagnosed in the same manner as a patient. Its value lies instead in providing a conceptual vocabulary for examining recurrent conflicts represented by a text. In this sense, literature may dramatize psychic tensions that psychoanalytic theory describes through concepts such as the unconscious, repression, internalization, defense, guilt, and anxiety.

Hura Yavari describes the relation between literature and psychoanalysis as an encounter between two systems of thought rather than a simple doctor-patient analogy. From this perspective, literary structures and psychic structures can illuminate one another, and the task of psychoanalytic criticism is to attend to the ways in which a text gives form to conflict, displacement, repression, and desire (Yavari, 2007: 64–65). The present study adopts this interpretive rather than diagnostic understanding. It does not claim that the characters discussed below suffer from clinically identifiable disorders. Rather, it asks how the Freudian language of anxiety can clarify the conflicts through which their actions acquire narrative meaning.

Freud's work profoundly altered modern conceptions of motivation by emphasizing that conscious intention does not exhaust the causes of human behavior. Early psychoanalytic criticism consequently became interested in the ways that literary texts stage desires and fears that characters cannot fully articulate. Persian introductions to psychoanalytic criticism have likewise stressed the centrality of unconscious motivation and the heuristic value of reading behavior, speech, hesitation, fantasy, and contradiction as signs of psychic conflict (Karimi, 2007: 195; Guerin et al., 2015: 141–142). Payandeh similarly notes that the novel can resemble a psychoanalytic case history insofar as it presents symptoms, conflicts, and patterns of behavior whose causes the reader must infer rather than simply receive as an explicit diagnosis (Payandeh, 2022: 71). Freud's account of the ego, id, and superego is presented in The Ego and the Id (Freud, 1961 [1923]); his later reassessment of anxiety as a response to danger is developed in Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety (Freud, 1959 [1926]).

The analysis also draws on the familiar topographical distinction among conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mental activity. In this older model, conscious material is immediately available to awareness; preconscious material can be recalled with some effort; and unconscious material remains outside direct awareness while continuing to shape affect and behavior. The Persian psychological sources used here present the unconscious as the deepest and most active level of psychic life and use the well-known image of the mind as an iceberg whose greater mass remains below the surface (Karimi, 2004: 73–74; Guerin et al., 2015: 141–142). Although contemporary psychoanalysis has revised many details of this model, it remains important for the present article because the novels repeatedly represent motives that characters only partially understand.

This distinction also explains why dialogue, hesitation, fantasy, bodily reaction, memory, and self-contradiction matter to psychoanalytic

reading. A character need not explicitly announce the source of anxiety for the narrative to represent a conflict. The critic therefore follows patterns across scenes rather than treating a single utterance as diagnostic proof. In both novels, the most persuasive evidence emerges when external pressure and internal response reinforce one another over time.

This article compares two novels that are distant from one another in language, historical setting, and literary tradition: Ghazaleh Alizadeh's Khaneh-ye Edrisiha, now available in English as The House of the Edrisis, and Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. The comparison does not imply direct influence or formal equivalence. It is organized around a narrower problem: both novels place characters within powerful social systems—family, class, gender, inheritance, reputation, and political order—and dramatize the tensions that arise when personal desire confronts these systems. Freud's structural model of id, ego, and superego, together with his distinctions among realistic, neurotic, and moral anxiety, offers one way to compare these tensions.

In The House of the Edrisis, political upheaval violently transforms the space of an aristocratic household. Characters who have been shaped by inherited habits, hierarchies, losses, and familial expectations suddenly confront a new social order. Their anxieties are connected not only to immediate danger but also to long-standing conflicts that the revolution exposes. In Pride and Prejudice, by contrast, the principal pressures are mediated through courtship, class difference, family reputation, inheritance, and the social stakes of marriage. Yet these pressures also become internal conflicts. Elizabeth Bennet must revise a judgment in which pride, prejudice, attraction, and moral self-assessment are intertwined; Darcy must negotiate desire against class expectations; Jane Bennet's reserve complicates the expression of attachment; and Mrs. Bennet's apparently comic obsession with marriage is rooted in a material threat to her daughters' future.

The central question is therefore comparative: how do the two novels represent anxiety when individual desire, internalized norms, and external reality come into conflict? A second question follows from the first: do the same Freudian categories operate identically across the two fictional worlds, or do the novels reveal different configurations of anxiety because their social structures differ? The argument advanced here is that the categories are most useful when treated as flexible interpretive models. The House of the Edrisis foregrounds the interaction of political danger, historical rupture, family repression, and long-term psychic conflict, whereas Pride and Prejudice more strongly foregrounds class hierarchy, social judgment, marriage, and moral self-regulation. In both novels, however, anxiety can function ambivalently: it may inhibit the character, intensify defensive behavior, and distort perception, but it may also accompany recognition, adaptation, and change.

Review of Literature

No previous study located by the authors has undertaken a sustained comparison of anxiety in The House of the Edrisis and Pride and Prejudice through Freud's threefold distinction among realistic, neurotic, and moral anxiety. Existing scholarship, however, provides important foundations for such a comparison.

Research on Alizadeh has repeatedly emphasized the psychological density of her

fiction and the importance of character formation. Maryam Bagheri's M.A. thesis, Naqd va tahlil-e roman-ha-ye Ghazaleh Alizadeh [A critique and analysis of Ghazaleh Alizadeh's novels] (2008), and Masoumeh Gholizadeh Baldarloo's study of Alizadeh's fictional works (2009) examine characterization and the formal and thematic structure of her fiction. Farzi and Khosrowhosseini (2011) offer a specifically psychological analysis of major characters in The House of the Edrisis, while Doosti, Moshfeghi, and Mojallal (2023) study the defense mechanism of escape in Alizadeh's The House of the Edrisis and Tehran Nights from a Freudian perspective. These studies demonstrate that Alizadeh's characters lend themselves to readings centered on repression, defense, frustration, adaptation, and conflict.

The present article differs from these studies by organizing the analysis around Freud's classifications of anxiety and by placing Alizadeh's characters within a comparative frame. Such a frame is useful because anxiety in The House of the Edrisis emerges at the intersection of private history and collective transformation. The Edrisi household is simultaneously a family space, a repository of aristocratic memory, and a site invaded and reorganized by revolutionary power. The characters' reactions are therefore difficult to reduce either to purely internal psychology or to purely external social pressure.

Pride and Prejudice has generated a substantial body of psychoanalytic and psychological scholarship. Richard Almond's "Psychological Change in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice" analyzes character development through processes of mutual influence and changes in self-concept (Almond, 1989: 307–324). Margaret Ann Fitzpatrick Hanly (2009) discusses sibling jealousy, irony, denial, and psychological growth in the novel. Honghui Yang (2023) applies the Freudian structural model to Elizabeth Bennet in a comparison with Catherine Earnshaw in Wuthering Heights. Hana Djelloul (2024), using Karen Horney's theory rather than Freud's, examines basic anxiety, socialization, and parental influence in Pride and Prejudice and Emma. More recently, Wiendien and Thohiriyah (2026) interpret Mrs. Bennet's class anxiety in relation to material insecurity and social hierarchy from a Marxist perspective. These studies demonstrate that anxiety and psychological conflict in Austen are not unexplored subjects. The specific contribution sought here is a systematic comparison of Freud's realistic, neurotic, and moral anxieties across Austen's and Alizadeh's contrasting fictional societies, rather than a claim to have discovered anxiety in Pride and Prejudice for the first time.

These studies confirm the usefulness of psychoanalytic concepts for both novels, yet they also reveal a methodological risk: the language of psychoanalysis can become overly deterministic if fictional behavior is treated as proof of a fixed diagnosis. The present study therefore uses Freud's categories cautiously. When a character is described as experiencing "moral anxiety," the claim is not that the character has been clinically diagnosed; rather, the episode is read as dramatizing a conflict between desire and an internalized moral or social demand. Likewise, "neurotic anxiety" is used to describe moments in which the character fears the consequences of an internal impulse or cannot easily reconcile desire with self-regulation. "Realistic anxiety" refers to

reactions to identifiable dangers or pressures in the external world.

This interpretive caution is especially important in a cross-cultural comparison. The class system of Regency England and the revolutionary-aristocratic world constructed by Alizadeh are not interchangeable. Nor should Freud's categories erase the specific historical conditions represented by the novels. The comparative purpose is therefore not to reduce both texts to one universal psychological formula but to ask how a common conceptual framework becomes differently inflected in different social worlds.

Method and Scope

The study employs comparative close reading. It selects major characters whose conflicts are repeatedly connected to danger, guilt, repression, class, family authority, or frustrated desire, and reads their behavior through Freud's structural model and theory of anxiety. The principal characters examined are Mrs. Edrisi, Leqa, Vahab, and Roxana in The House of the Edrisis, and Elizabeth Bennet, Fitzwilliam Darcy, Jane Bennet, and Mrs. Bennet in Pride and Prejudice.

The method proceeds in three stages. First, the article identifies the external or internal conflict represented in a given episode. Second, it asks which part of Freud's model—id, ego, superego, or external reality—best clarifies that conflict. Third, it evaluates the form of anxiety that the conflict most closely resembles. These categories are not imposed mechanically. A single character can move among several forms of anxiety, and the same episode may involve more than one source of pressure.

The primary editions used in this study are Alizadeh's 2023 edition of Khaneh-ye Edrisiha and Reza Rezaei's 2022 Persian translation of Pride and Prejudice. Persian quotations from Alizadeh are presented in the original and followed by English translations. Quotations from Austen are given in the original English rather than back-translated from the Persian version; page references nevertheless correspond to the Persian edition on which the comparative analysis is based.

2. Freud's Structural Model of Personality

Freud's structural model divides psychic functioning into the id, ego, and superego. These agencies should not be imagined as three independent personalities. They are conceptual functions whose conflicts and compromises help describe the dynamic organization of mental life. The distinction among id, ego, and superego is discussed in Freud's The Ego and the Id (Freud, 1961 [1923]).

The id is the most radically unconscious component of the model and is governed by the pleasure principle. It seeks the discharge of tension and the satisfaction of instinctual demands without regard for social rules, moral prohibitions, or the practical constraints of reality. Persian introductions to personality theory frequently compare the id to an impulsive child whose demands are immediate and whose relation to reality is indirect (Feist, Feist, & Roberts, 2016: 42–43). In classical Freudian theory, the id is also the reservoir of instinctual energy and includes aggressive and sexual drives. When immediate satisfaction is impossible, wish-fulfillment, fantasy, and primary-process thinking may substitute for direct gratification (Schultz & Schultz, 2014: 84–85).

The ego develops in relation to external reality and is governed by the reality principle. Its function is not simply to suppress the id but to negotiate among instinctual demands, social conditions, consequences, and the

requirements of self-preservation. Freud's well-known image of rider and horse captures the tension of this relationship: the ego attempts to direct energies it did not create and cannot completely control. The ego therefore delays, redirects, or transforms gratification so that desire can be accommodated to reality. It is also the agency that mobilizes defenses when conflict becomes threatening.

The ego is consequently under pressure from several directions at once. It must acknowledge the demands of reality, negotiate the id's insistence on gratification, and respond to the prohibitions and ideals of the superego. This mediating position helps explain why anxiety is experienced by the ego even when its source lies elsewhere. When the ego anticipates danger from the external world, from instinctual pressure, or from moral condemnation, anxiety signals the need for a response. Defense mechanisms can then reduce immediate tension, although they may also preserve the underlying conflict.

The superego itself has two related dimensions. Conscience develops around prohibitions and experiences of punishment, whereas the ego-ideal develops around approval and admired standards. In fictional families these processes are often represented through explicit parental commands, comparison among siblings, class expectations, and culturally defined models of respectability. Childhood instruction is especially important because standards absorbed in early life may continue to operate even when the original authority figure is absent. This point is especially relevant to Mrs. Edrisi and Darcy, both of whom carry inherited social commands into adult desire.

The superego represents internalized prohibition, idealization, and judgment. It develops through identification with parental and social authority and contains both conscience and ego-ideal. The conscience punishes the ego through guilt, shame, or self-reproach, whereas the ego-ideal represents the standards toward which the subject aspires. The superego can therefore be both regulating and excessively demanding. It does not merely postpone gratification; it may prohibit a wish altogether, even when the wish is compatible with external reality. In literary characters, this is especially important because familial, religious, gendered, and class expectations can be represented as internal demands rather than merely external rules.

The model is particularly useful for the two novels examined here because each repeatedly stages conflicts in which desire is confronted by social expectation. Mrs. Edrisi's youthful love conflicts with family authority; Darcy's desire for Elizabeth conflicts with inherited class assumptions; Elizabeth's refusal of Collins places personal desire against a socially advantageous marriage; and Jane Bennet's self-restraint reflects a learned form of emotional regulation. The model does not explain these conflicts exhaustively, but it provides a language for analyzing how external values become internal forces.

Freud's Concept of Anxiety

Freud's theory of anxiety changed over the course of his career. In earlier formulations, anxiety was closely associated with the transformation of repressed excitation. In his later structural theory, anxiety became a signal produced by the ego in anticipation of danger. The later formulation is particularly useful for literary analysis because it connects anxiety with threats arising from three different directions: the external world, the id, and the superego (Akbari & Khanipour, 2019: 48–54). Freud's revised theory of anxiety is elaborated

in Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety (Freud, 1959 [1926]).

Anxiety differs from ordinary fear in that fear usually has a clearly identifiable object, whereas anxiety may be diffuse or only partially understood by the person experiencing it. Contemporary summaries of Freud describe anxiety as an unpleasant affective state, often accompanied by bodily sensations, that warns the individual of danger even when the danger is not fully conscious (Feist, Roberts, & Feist, 2023: 48–49). The ego functions as the site at which this warning is experienced.

For the purposes of this article, three Freudian categories are central. Realistic anxiety is a response to recognizable danger in the external world. It may be unpleasant but can be adaptive because it encourages self-protection. Neurotic anxiety concerns the feared consequences of instinctual or internal impulses: the ego anticipates that an impulse from the id may become unmanageable or lead to punishment. Moral anxiety arises when the ego experiences pressure from the superego and responds with guilt, shame, self-reproach, or fear of violating internalized standards. These categories often overlap in literary situations, and the analysis below avoids treating them as rigid diagnostic boxes.

Neurotic Anxiety

Neurotic anxiety is experienced by the ego but is associated with the fear of internal impulses and their possible consequences. It often emerges when desire cannot be expressed directly or when the person anticipates punishment, rejection, or loss if an impulse is acted upon. In a literary context, signs may include repetitive inner conflict, avoidance, displaced hostility, defensive behavior, inability to express attachment, and oscillation between desire and prohibition.

The category is especially relevant to characters such as Vahab, Roxana, Elizabeth, and Darcy, whose conflicts are not reducible to a single external danger. Their anxieties arise from what they want, what they fear wanting, or what they believe will happen if desire is acknowledged.

Moral Anxiety

Moral anxiety results from conflict between the ego and the superego. It is experienced as guilt, shame, self-criticism, or fear of violating an internalized standard. Such standards often originate in parental authority and social expectation. A person may therefore continue to feel guilty even when no external punishment is likely. In literature, moral anxiety is particularly visible when characters punish themselves, experience excessive remorse, or sacrifice desire to conform to internalized ideals (Schultz & Schultz, 2014: 89).

This category is crucial in both novels. Mrs. Edrisi's renunciation of Qobad can be read through her internalization of family duty; Roxana's later guilt toward her parents gives moral pressure a retrospective form; Elizabeth's self-reproach after Darcy's letter reflects the activation of conscience; and Darcy's class-based reluctance toward Elizabeth reveals the power of inherited standards even when his desire points elsewhere.

Realistic Anxiety

Realistic anxiety responds to recognizable danger in the external world. In The House of the Edrisis, the revolutionary seizure of the house, political instability, threat of violence, displacement, and loss of security provide

obvious occasions for this form of anxiety. In Pride and Prejudice, external dangers are less physically violent but remain materially significant: inheritance rules, social reputation, economic insecurity, family scandal, and unequal class relations can threaten future security.

The category is therefore not restricted to physical danger. A social threat may be realistic if its consequences are concrete. Mrs. Bennet's fear that the Longbourn estate will pass to Mr. Collins, for example, is comic in presentation but materially grounded. Likewise, Elizabeth's embarrassment at her family's conduct has realistic consequences because reputation affects marriage prospects within the social world of the novel.

The Novels and Their Social Worlds

Ghazaleh Alizadeh (1947–1996) is one of the most important Iranian fiction writers of the late twentieth century. Her career developed within the broader transformation of Iranian modern fiction after the 1960s, when writers increasingly experimented with narrative voice, symbolic structure, psychological characterization, and modernist forms (Mirabedini, 2007: 663). Her prose is frequently descriptive, imagistic, and psychologically dense. Critics have noted the philosophical, mystical, and psychological backgrounds of her fiction and the centrality of complex characters whose inner lives develop under social and historical pressure (Mirabedini, 2007: 752).

Alizadeh began publishing fiction in the 1960s and later produced works including Safar-e nagozashtani [The In-transitory Journey], Ba'd az tabestan [After Summer], Shab-ha-ye Tehran [Tehran Nights], and Chaharrah [The Crossroad]. Biographical studies emphasize both the intensity of her literary career and the personal pressures that accompanied it; she died by suicide in 1996 (Mohammadzadeh, 2010: 40). These facts are not used here to psychologize the novel through the author's biography, but they help locate her within a generation of Iranian writers deeply concerned with interiority, social transformation, and the instability of modern life.

Najafzadeh Barforush describes the setting of The House of the Edrisis as deliberately nonrealistic in its precise geography and chronology even though it evokes recognizable revolutionary histories (Najafzadeh Barforush, 1996: 60–61). This ambiguity allows the house to function simultaneously as a concrete domestic space and as a symbolic structure of memory, class, and historical displacement. The revolution does not merely enter the plot; it reorganizes the spatial and emotional grammar of the household.

The House of the Edrisis, first published in the early 1990s and later recognized as one of Alizadeh's major achievements, is set in a fictionalized revolutionary environment associated with Ashgabat. The household includes Mrs. Edrisi, her daughter Leqa, her grandson Vahab, and the servant Yavar. Their aristocratic and relatively enclosed world is disrupted when revolutionary "fire-workers" enter the mansion and reorganize its space. New residents from different social backgrounds are imposed upon the household. The novel thus places psychological change within a material transformation of class relations. Privacy, property, hierarchy, gender behavior, and the authority of inherited customs are all destabilized.

The novel's political setting should not be treated as merely historical background. It

actively changes the psychic possibilities of the characters. Leqa's fear of strangers and men, Mrs. Edrisi's long history of self-denial, Vahab's attachment patterns, and Roxana's unstable relation to revolutionary identity all unfold within a world in which social order is being violently rewritten.

Jane Austen (1775–1817), by contrast, writes within the social world of the English landed gentry. Pride and Prejudice centers on marriage, inheritance, class, reputation, and judgment. The famous opening—"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife"—immediately frames marriage as both personal desire and social institution (Austen, 2022: 11). The novel follows the Bennet family, particularly Elizabeth and Jane, through a sequence of courtships in which emotion is inseparable from money, status, family behavior, and social interpretation.

Austen published Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, and Emma during her lifetime; Northanger Abbey and Persuasion appeared posthumously. Her fiction is marked by irony, precise observation of manners, and sustained attention to the moral and emotional consequences of judgment. Trawick's history of world literature characterizes Austen as a writer whose formal restraint and social comedy distinguish her from the more overtly Romantic tendencies of her period and whose domestic fiction reaches an exceptional level of refinement (Trawick, 2016: 1051–1052).

The apparent calm of Austen's social world should therefore not be confused with the absence of pressure. The drawing room, assembly, family visit, letter, and proposal are all sites of evaluation. A misplaced remark can affect reputation; an imprudent marriage can damage an entire family; an entail can turn marriage into an economic necessity. Anxiety in the novel is often embedded in ordinary social rituals rather than represented through explicit psychological crisis.

Although the political and historical scales of the two novels are different, both construct anxiety through systems of evaluation. The Edrisis are evaluated by revolutionaries, by the legacy of aristocratic family authority, and by one another. The Bennets are evaluated through manners, class, reputation, marriageability, and propriety. In both cases, the external system becomes internal. Characters come to fear not only what society may do to them but also what their own internalized standards may say about them.

Anxiety in the House of the Edrisis

The characters of The House of the Edrisis experience anxiety at several levels simultaneously. The revolutionary occupation of the house creates realistic danger, but the upheaval also exposes conflicts that predate the revolution. The novel repeatedly shows that historical crisis does not simply create anxiety from nothing; it activates and reorganizes already existing wounds.

Mrs. Edrisi: Moral Renunciation and Neurotic Afterlife

The defining conflict in Mrs. Edrisi's past is her unfulfilled love for Qobad. In youth she becomes deeply attached to the soldier but abandons the relationship in order to satisfy her family and submit to the marriage selected by her father. This conflict can initially be described as a tension between id and superego: desire pulls her toward Qobad, whereas internalized parental and familial authority demands obedience. More cautiously, the episode can be understood as a dramatization of moral anxiety. The decisive

pressure is not merely the physical presence of the father but the authority of family norms that Mrs. Edrisi has internalized.

Roxana later summarizes the cost of this pattern when she tells Vahab that Mrs. Edrisi's life has been sacrificed to others:

«رکسانا خطاب به وهاب گفت: «مزخرف نگو! زندگی این زن سراسر فدای دیگران شده. همهٔ شما طفیلی او بوده‌اید. گذشته از تو، اول پدر و بعد شوهرش، پدر تو، لقا و حتی رحیلا.»

"Roxana said to Vahab: 'Don't talk nonsense! This woman's whole life has been sacrificed to others. All of you have lived off her. Apart from you, first her father, then her husband—your father—then Leqa, and even Rahila.'"

(Alizadeh, 2023: 199)

«چه عمر درازی کرده‌ام، هفتاد سال تمام! اما از دیروز یکباره برگشتم به سپیده‌دم زندگی... حالا در آخر خط باید از خودم بپرسم چرا زندگی نکرده‌ام؟»

"What a long life I have lived—seventy full years! Yet since yesterday I have suddenly returned to the dawn of life... Now, at the end of the line, I must ask myself: why did I never live?"

(Alizadeh, 2023: 272)

Mrs. Edrisi herself repeatedly formulates her past in the language of unlived life. The second quotation is especially important because it transforms long-term obedience into retrospective self-judgment. The anxiety that initially helped regulate conduct has not disappeared after the decision; it has become part of a life marked by regret, rumination, and depressive withdrawal.

The later phase can be read as neurotic anxiety because the conflict among id, ego, and superego persists internally, provided that the term is used with precision. The relevant feature is not that every depression or regret is automatically "neurotic." Rather, Mrs. Edrisi continues to experience the consequences of an unresolved desire that has been prohibited and internalized. Her psychic life repeatedly returns to a choice she cannot undo. The threat is no longer simply an external father; it has become an internalized structure of prohibition.

Mrs. Edrisi can therefore be read as moving between moral and neurotic anxiety. Moral anxiety helps explain the original renunciation: desire becomes unacceptable because duty and family obedience have been internalized. Neurotic anxiety describes the later persistence of conflict, in which the repressed or renounced desire continues to exert pressure. The novel's political transformation gives this old conflict a new context: as the inherited social world collapses around her, the sacrifices made in the name of that world appear increasingly difficult to justify.

Leqa: Fear, Withdrawal, and Gradual Adaptation

Leqa initially appears as one of the most fearful characters in the novel. She has lived within the protected domestic environment of the Edrisi house and reacts strongly to strangers, men, spatial change, and unfamiliar activity. The arrival of the fire-workers intensifies these fears. She threatens suicide, fears male intruders, locks doors, sleeps poorly, experiences nightmares, and repeatedly reacts to the external world as dangerous (Alizadeh, 2023: 22, 37, 42, 78).

These responses most clearly resemble realistic anxiety because the revolution has genuinely transformed the household's safety. Yet the scale of Leqa's fear exceeds any single immediate threat. Her sheltered life has left

her with little experience of independent action. She is afraid not only of armed or politically empowered strangers but also of climbing a ladder, interacting with unfamiliar people, and entering situations that violate the habits of her previous existence.

The novel repeatedly renders this fear through concrete behavior. Even after locking her door, Leqa cannot sleep securely and wakes from disturbing dreams drenched in sweat (Alizadeh, 2023: 42, 78). When women among the fire-workers encounter her grieving over the exposed legs of decorative statues, she initially denies that she is afraid of them and redirects the emotion toward the statues themselves (Alizadeh, 2023: 82). Such episodes show a character whose fear is both situational and habitual: immediate danger activates a much older disposition toward withdrawal.

Her gradual contact with women and children among the newcomers is therefore structurally important. The unfamiliar group first represents invasion, but individual relationships begin to differentiate the threatening mass. What appears at the level of plot as adaptation can, in Freudian terms, be described as an increasing capacity of the ego to test reality rather than respond to every novelty through anticipatory fear.

Her encounter with the ladder provides one of the novel's clearest images of change. When Shokat asks her to climb in order to wash a high surface, Leqa insists that she is afraid of heights and has never climbed a ladder. Golrokh's concern about her hands and her memory of Leqa's piano playing then shifts the emotional meaning of the scene:

«گلرخ: «می‌ترسم بیفتید پایین، دست‌هایتان بشکند.»
لقا: «دست به جای خودش، استخوان‌هایم خرد می‌شود.»
گلرخ به پیانو نگاه کرد... «یادتان رفته چه آهنگ‌هایی می‌زدید؟ من با فکرشان می‌خوابم.» لقا بهت‌زده به انگشت‌های زبر و سرخ خود خیره شد.»

"Golrokh said, 'I'm afraid you'll fall and break your hands.'
Leqa answered, 'Forget my hands—my bones will be shattered.'
Golrokh looked at the piano... 'Have you forgotten what music you used to play? I fall asleep thinking about it.' Leqa stared in astonishment at her rough, reddened fingers."
(Alizadeh, 2023: 332)

When Leqa eventually climbs the ladder, her physical elevation is accompanied by a change in perspective. She remarks that everyone below looks small (Alizadeh, 2023: 334). The episode should not be treated as a clinical "cure," but it clearly symbolizes a reduction in fear and an expansion of agency. As the novel progresses, she learns to interact with women and children among the newcomers, plays the piano publicly, and develops forms of social participation that would have been unthinkable in her earlier enclosed life.

A second layer of Leqa's anxiety concerns deprivation and the longing to be seen. She has grown up in the shadow of her sister Rahila, whose birth seems to revive their mother and whose memory remains privileged even after death (Alizadeh, 2023: 80–81, 170, 275, 336). Leqa's need for maternal attention and recognition may be understood, in Freudian terms, as a frustrated desire that contributes to neurotic anxiety, provided that the formulation is treated as interpretive rather than diagnostic. Leqa's desire for affection and recognition is repeatedly inhibited, and her resulting

withdrawal, resentment, and self-doubt can be read as manifestations of an unresolved internal conflict.

Her later development suggests that anxiety diminishes when she acquires new forms of relation and competence. The piano becomes especially significant. It first belongs to the enclosed world of private identity, but eventually connects Leqa with children, strangers, and public performance. Her movement from domestic fear to public music dramatizes the ego's increasing capacity to negotiate desire and reality rather than retreat from both. In this sense, the novel represents anxiety not only as pathology but also as a condition that can be transformed through action, recognition, and social contact.

Vahab: Attachment, Substitution, and Neurotic Conflict

Vahab's attachment pattern also invites an Oedipal reading, although this framework requires particular caution. Freud's Oedipal model concerns early childhood desire, identification, rivalry, and the relation to parental figures. A literary text can evoke this framework without proving that a character possesses a clinically unresolved "complex."

Vahab's childhood is marked by emotional deprivation. The novel suggests that his mother resented the circumstances of her forced marriage and did not provide him with stable maternal affection; his father is described as intellectually limited and prone to irrational aggression (Alizadeh, 2023: 72). Vahab therefore develops an intense attachment to his aunt Rahila. His memories of her body, scent, habits, and presence are unusually detailed and sensuous, suggesting that the relationship carries emotional and erotic force beyond ordinary familial nostalgia (Alizadeh, 2023: 9–10).

The Freudian value of the episode lies less in declaring Vahab "Oedipal" than in recognizing substitution. A deprived attachment is redirected toward a woman who occupies a psychologically maternal position while also becoming an object of desire. Later, Vahab's relationship with Roxana reactivates this structure because Roxana is linked through memory and resemblance to women associated with Rahila's lost world.

Vahab's difficulty expressing attraction to Roxana is especially revealing. Instead of acknowledging desire directly, he becomes verbally aggressive and suspicious. Mrs. Edrisi herself identifies the reversal when she tells him that he likes Roxana but expresses the feeling in its opposite form:

«وهاب: «شما جاسوس آتشخانهٔ کل نیستید؟
اعتراف کنید! من که می‌دانم.»
رکسانا خشمگین بیرون رفت...
خانم ادریسی پرخاش کرد: «این چه طرز
حرف‌زدن با یک خانم متشخص است؟ ... بگذار
صریح بگویم، تو از او خوشت می‌آید؛ اما ...
می‌خواهی تمایلت را به عکس به او نشان
بدهی.»»

"Vahab said, 'Aren't you a spy for the central fire-house? Admit it! I know you are.'
Roxana left angrily...
Mrs. Edrisi snapped, 'What kind of way is that to speak to a respectable lady? ... Let me put it plainly: you like her, but you want to show your inclination in reverse.'"
(Alizadeh, 2023: 189)

This scene can be read as neurotic conflict: attraction is experienced as threatening and is displaced into accusation, hostility, and defensive distance. The anxiety does not arise

only from external danger or social prohibition. It is produced by the character's difficulty integrating desire with his self-conception and relational history.

The Oedipal framework remains one possible way to describe the deep structure of Vahab's attachments, but the article's argument does not depend on accepting it literally. What matters for the comparative study is that Vahab's anxiety is tied to a pattern in which intimacy activates fear, substitution, aggression, and retreat. His later attempts to repair the relationship with Roxana show the ego seeking a less defensive form of negotiation.

Roxana: Realistic, Moral, and Neurotic Anxiety

Roxana is the clearest example in The House of the Edrisis of a character whose experience can be read through all three categories of anxiety. Her life places her under real political and physical threat; her past generates guilt toward her parents; and her relationships reveal an internal conflict between the desire for attachment and the fear of dependence or abandonment.

Her realistic anxiety emerges from the political world. Roxana is a famous actress who has participated in revolutionary circles and is now caught between competing forces. She has experienced manipulation, sexualization, ideological pressure, and unstable power. She describes the destruction of her rootedness in bitter terms:

«ریشه‌هایم را خشک کردند، پیوندهایم را با زندگی بریدند، شناور شدم، هیچ کنج امنی نبوده. دوروبرم را کشیش‌ها گرفته بودند... اما هدفی جز گوش‌بری نداشتند. روشن‌فکرهای شیدای هنر، نوابغ دهر، طالب اندامم بودند.»

"They dried up my roots and cut my ties with life. I became adrift; there was never a safe corner. Priests surrounded me... yet they wanted nothing but obedience and mutilation. Intellectuals intoxicated with art, the supposed geniuses of the age, desired my body."

(Alizadeh, 2023: 311)

The passage represents danger as both social and bodily. Roxana's fear of enemies and political instability is therefore not merely symbolic. It corresponds to recognizable external threats and fits the logic of realistic anxiety.

Moral anxiety appears in her retrospective guilt toward her parents. Roxana once left home to pursue freedom and artistic or political ambitions. When she later returns to Tbilisi, she discovers that her mother has died and her father has been broken by loss and dispossession. She internalizes responsibility for what happened and repeatedly punishes herself through memory. Her father's bent body becomes a recurring image of guilt, and she describes him as a person she herself helped to create through abandonment. The memory returns in dreams:

«بعد از سفر تفلیس، تصویر پشت خم و چشم‌های بیگانه‌اش در کابوس‌هایم تکرار می‌شد. انتقام بهتری گرفت.»

"After the trip to Tbilisi, the image of his bent back and estranged eyes kept returning in my nightmares. He could not have taken a better revenge."

(Alizadeh, 2023: 355)

The language of "revenge" is important because the father does not need to punish her directly. The punishment has been internalized. Roxana's superego converts memory into self-accusation, making this

episode an especially persuasive example of moral anxiety.

Her neurotic anxiety is connected to identity and attachment. Roxana performs confidence and independence, yet repeatedly fears abandonment, exposure, and the discovery that her public persona does not correspond to a stable inner self. She describes the experience of looking in the mirror and failing to recognize herself because identities constructed by others have consumed her (Alizadeh, 2023: 311). She also explicitly names her fear of abandonment:

The contrast between performance and desire is central to Roxana's characterization. Publicly she presents herself as mobile, revolutionary, independent, and unattached; privately she longs for continuity, family, and a stable ground beneath her life. The novel repeatedly associates her profession as an actress with the problem of constructed identity. She has spent so long appearing before others that the boundary between chosen persona and imposed image becomes uncertain. Her anxiety therefore concerns not only whether another person will abandon her but also whether there remains a coherent self capable of being attached.

This tension makes her especially useful for the comparative argument. Unlike Mrs. Edrisi, whose conflict is organized around obedience, Roxana has acted against inherited constraints. Yet rebellion does not free her from psychic consequence. The novel refuses a simple opposition in which tradition produces anxiety and liberation removes it; both submission and radical severance can create forms of loss.

«ترس از رهاشدگی. دلم می‌خواهد به ریشه‌های اعماق زمین، هرچند پوسیده وصل باشم... اما تحمل من برای تو هم مشکل است.»

"Fear of abandonment. I want to remain connected to roots deep in the earth, even if they are rotten... but I know that enduring me is difficult for you too."
(Alizadeh, 2023: 311)

«هروقت خانواده‌ای را دور میز شام می‌بینم، افسوس می‌خورم و به زمین زیر پایم نگاه می‌کنم که همیشه لرزان بوده.»

"Whenever I see a family gathered around a dinner table, I feel regret and look at the ground beneath my feet, which has always been unsteady."
(Alizadeh, 2023: 199)

These passages expose the tension between Roxana's declared independence and her desire for stability and belonging. Her anxiety is neurotic not because independence itself is pathological, but because attachment has become internally threatening: she desires rootedness and simultaneously fears the vulnerability that rootedness requires. Her theatricality and concealment can therefore be read as defensive responses to this conflict.

By the final sections of the novel, Roxana also acknowledges fear of death despite her revolutionary and courageous self-presentation. The admission does not invalidate her courage; it complicates it. The novel repeatedly shows that ideological identities cannot eliminate bodily vulnerability. Roxana's three anxieties—realistic, moral, and neurotic—thus intersect: external danger activates guilt and attachment conflicts that were already present within her.

Anxiety in Pride and Prejudice

The anxieties represented in Pride and Prejudice are embedded in a less violent but highly regulated social world. Inheritance,

marriage, class, reputation, propriety, and family behavior create material consequences while also becoming internal standards. Austen's comic mode often makes these anxieties appear lighter than those in Alizadeh's novel, but the pressures are real: marriage can determine financial security, a family scandal can damage all sisters' prospects, and class hierarchy shapes who may be considered an acceptable partner.

Elizabeth Bennet: Social Pressure, Desire, and Moral Self-Correction

Elizabeth experiences several forms of anxiety across the novel. Her embarrassment at her mother's behavior in aristocratic company can be read partly as realistic anxiety because family conduct has direct social consequences. Elizabeth understands that Mrs. Bennet's impropriety and the recklessness of Lydia and Kitty may cause others to judge both her and Jane as socially inferior or motivated by economic ambition (Austen, 2022: 231). Her discomfort therefore concerns an external system of reputation rather than a purely internal fear.

The social stakes become especially visible because Elizabeth and Jane cannot detach themselves completely from the conduct of their relatives. Mrs. Bennet's public boasting, Lydia and Kitty's flirtation with officers, and Mr. Bennet's ironic detachment all contribute to how the family is assessed. Elizabeth's embarrassment therefore combines personal shame with a realistic awareness that reputation is collectively distributed. Darcy's objections to the Bennet connections later confirm that this fear is not imaginary.

At the same time, Elizabeth possesses an unusually strong capacity to resist external judgment. Her refusal of Collins shows that she can tolerate maternal anger and economic uncertainty in order to protect an internal standard of mutual respect. This is why a simple equation of desire with id and social prudence with superego would distort the scene: her decision involves reason, self-knowledge, and ethical judgment as well as feeling.

At the same time, Elizabeth repeatedly resists the very system that generates such pressure. Her refusal of Mr. Collins is the clearest example. A marriage to Collins would offer material security and protect the family's relation to Longbourn, yet she refuses because she does not believe such a marriage could make either party happy. In Austen's original wording, Elizabeth tells him:

"You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who could make you so."

(Austen, 2022: 130–131)

It would be too simple to describe this decision as the ego merely obeying the id because Elizabeth chooses personal conviction over a socially advantageous match. Elizabeth's refusal is not impulsive; it is a reasoned judgment that material advantage cannot compensate for emotional incompatibility. Psychoanalytically, the scene is better understood as a successful negotiation in which the ego refuses to subordinate personal desire entirely to external pressure. The possibility of moral anxiety remains because she violates her mother's expectations and a conventional model of prudence, yet Elizabeth's relatively strong ego allows her to tolerate that conflict without reversing her decision.

A different form of anxiety emerges in Elizabeth's relation to Darcy. Attraction, wounded pride, class resentment, Wickham's story, and Darcy's role in separating Jane and Bingley combine to produce a highly

defensive judgment. Yang (2023: 82) argues that Elizabeth's ego mediates between desire and rational awareness, and this formulation is useful if we understand her development as a process of revising both impulse and judgment.

Darcy's letter creates a crisis of self-perception. Elizabeth is forced to recognize that her confidence in her own discernment has helped sustain an unfair judgment. Her response is not merely intellectual; it is affectively charged with shame and self-reproach:

> "How despicably I have acted! ... I, who have prided myself on my discernment! ... Till this moment I never knew myself."

(Austen, 2022: 244–245)

This moment closely resembles moral anxiety because conscience becomes active. Elizabeth's internal standard of fairness turns against her previous behavior. Yet the anxiety is productive rather than merely punitive. It initiates self-correction. Austen thus shows how shame can become a stage in psychological development when it leads to more accurate judgment rather than defensive denial.

Elizabeth can therefore be read as experiencing all three categories at different moments: realistic anxiety through the social consequences of family behavior, moral anxiety when conscience confronts prejudice, and a more neurotic form of anxiety when attraction to Darcy is entangled with defensive hostility, wounded pride, and fear of misjudgment. The importance of her characterization lies in the way these conflicts are gradually integrated rather than simply eliminated.

Fitzwilliam Darcy: Class Superego and the Conflict of Desire

Darcy has been formed within a highly privileged social environment in which class hierarchy, family reputation, and standards of conduct have been deeply internalized. His attraction to Elizabeth therefore creates a conflict between desire and inherited social judgment. This conflict can be read as moral anxiety if "moral" is understood broadly as superego-based rather than as ethical in the ordinary sense. The prohibiting standard is not necessarily morally admirable; it is an internalized class code.

Darcy's first proposal makes the conflict explicit. He declares love while also emphasizing the inferiority of Elizabeth's connections and the obstacles created by her family. He later admits that family status and the behavior of Mrs. Bennet and the younger sisters influenced his judgment of the match (Austen, 2022: 233). Desire and social prohibition therefore coexist in the same speech.

The conflict also has a neurotic dimension because Darcy initially manages attraction through distance, silence, awkwardness, and controlled self-presentation. His reserve in unfamiliar company and his difficulty engaging socially may intensify the pressure produced by romantic attachment. The article does not claim that Darcy suffers from a clinical anxiety disorder. Rather, the Freudian model clarifies how desire becomes threatening when it contradicts an internalized ideal of appropriate marriage.

Darcy's development occurs when he revises the authority of that internal standard. His eventual willingness to marry Elizabeth does not abolish class consciousness, but it shows the ego renegotiating between desire, conscience, social reality, and a changed

understanding of Elizabeth's worth. In comparative terms, Darcy's struggle resembles Mrs. Edrisi's earlier conflict but reaches a different outcome: where she submits to family prohibition and lives with the consequences, Darcy ultimately modifies the prohibition.

Jane Bennet: Reserve, Self-Regulation, and the Risk of Invisibility

Jane Bennet is characterized by emotional reserve. She rarely displays strong feeling publicly and tries to interpret others generously. One possible reading connects this reserve to moral anxiety: Jane may have learned to avoid the kind of behavior her father criticizes in her mother and younger sisters. This remains tentative because Austen does not explicitly identify Jane's restraint as fear.

The family context helps explain why such reserve can appear adaptive. Mr. Bennet repeatedly mocks the intellectual limitations of his wife and younger daughters, while Elizabeth is praised for quickness of mind. Jane occupies a different position: she is admired for beauty and goodness but rarely competes verbally. Her composure may protect her from being assimilated to the family's noisier and more embarrassing forms of behavior. Austen does not state this causal history directly, so the interpretation remains inferential, but it is consistent with the novel's broader concern with the social management of feeling.

What the novel does establish is that Jane's emotional self-control has social consequences. Charlotte Lucas warns Elizabeth that excessive concealment may prevent Bingley from recognizing Jane's affection:

> "If a woman conceals her affection with the same skill from the object of it, she may lose the opportunity of fixing him; and it will then be but poor consolation to believe the world equally in the dark."

(Austen, 2022: 34)

Darcy later makes precisely this error, interpreting Jane's composure as indifference. Her reserve therefore becomes an example of how self-regulation can protect the subject from exposure while also obstructing communication.

In Freudian terms, Jane's restraint can be read as strong ego control shaped by internalized standards of propriety. If anxiety is present, it is less visibly dramatic than in other characters. She appears to manage attachment by minimizing its outward expression. The resulting conflict is not evidence of pathology, but it illustrates the costs of a social order in which female desire must be carefully regulated and legible only within acceptable forms.

Mrs. Bennet: Realistic Anxiety Beneath Comic Excess

Mrs. Bennet's obsession with marrying her daughters is one of Austen's major comic devices, but its material basis should not be ignored. The Longbourn estate is entailed away from the daughters, and after Mr. Bennet's death the family faces a genuine decline in security. Her repeated excitement over wealthy bachelors therefore has an identifiable external source. When she learns that Netherfield has been rented by a wealthy single man, she immediately interprets the event in relation to her daughters:

> "A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

(Austen, 2022: 12)

The comic exaggeration of Mrs. Bennet's behavior should not obscure the realistic anxiety that drives it. Her lack of tact often worsens the very social problem she is trying to solve, but the threat itself is real: without advantageous marriages, the daughters' financial future is uncertain.

Her response to Mr. Collins's proposal to Elizabeth makes this especially clear:

> "You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind and not have her."

(Austen, 2022: 134)

Mrs. Bennet interprets Elizabeth's refusal as a threat not only to a desirable marriage but also to the family's future relation to Longbourn. Her attempt to force the match is ethically troubling and psychologically intrusive, but it is grounded in realistic economic fear. Austen's comedy therefore produces an important contrast: the character most ridiculed for anxiety is also responding to one of the most concrete dangers in the novel.

Mrs. Bennet demonstrates that realistic anxiety can become maladaptive when it overwhelms judgment. The external danger is genuine, yet her behavior—public boasting, pressure, emotional escalation, and disregard for her daughters' preferences—often intensifies family vulnerability. The category of realistic anxiety therefore does not imply rational behavior; it identifies the source of the threat, not the quality of the response.

Comparative Discussion

The comparison reveals that Freud's three forms of anxiety appear in both novels but are distributed differently because the fictional worlds organize danger and authority in different ways.

In The House of the Edrisis, realistic anxiety is intensified by political instability and physical transformation. The revolutionary occupation of the house alters property, privacy, class hierarchy, and personal safety. Leqa fears strangers and unfamiliar spaces; Roxana faces political and bodily danger; and the Edrisi family must respond to a social order that has suddenly ceased to recognize its inherited privileges. External reality therefore enters the psyche with exceptional force.

Pride and Prejudice presents a more stable political environment, but the social order creates its own realistic pressures. Inheritance, marriage, reputation, and class are not merely symbolic concerns. They determine material security. Mrs. Bennet's fear of the entail, Elizabeth's awareness of family embarrassment, and Darcy's concern with social rank all emerge from structures that have concrete consequences.

Moral anxiety in both novels demonstrates how external systems become internalized. Mrs. Edrisi obeys family authority even at the cost of her central desire; Roxana punishes herself for the suffering of her parents; Elizabeth is ashamed by the discovery of her prejudice; Darcy initially experiences class hierarchy as an internal standard of appropriate marriage. The content of the superego differs from character to character. It may embody family duty, filial guilt, fairness, social class, or gendered propriety. Freud's model is useful precisely because it shows that the internalized standard need not be ethically correct in order to produce guilt or inhibition.

Neurotic anxiety is most visible when desire itself becomes threatening. Vahab's attraction to Roxana appears through accusation and reversal; Roxana desires rootedness but fears abandonment and dependence; Elizabeth's attraction to Darcy is entangled with defensive hostility; Darcy's desire conflicts with a class identity he initially cannot relinquish. These characters do not merely fear external consequences. They fear what their own desires require them to revise about themselves.

A second comparative pattern concerns change. In both novels anxiety can produce stagnation, but it can also accompany development. Mrs. Edrisi's long submission to prohibition leads to regret and psychic exhaustion. Leqa, by contrast, gradually reduces fear through action and social contact. Elizabeth transforms shame into self-knowledge. Darcy transforms conflict into a revision of class prejudice. Roxana's self-awareness remains more unstable, yet her explicit naming of abandonment fear marks a movement from performance toward recognition.

The novels also differ in their narrative tone. Austen frequently renders anxiety through irony and comedy. Mrs. Bennet's realistic fears become comic because of the extravagant manner in which she expresses them. Elizabeth's moral self-correction is painful but integrated into a plot of social and romantic resolution. Alizadeh's novel is darker. Political violence, historical rupture, failed attachments, death, and displacement make anxiety more closely associated with loss and fractured identity. The same theoretical vocabulary therefore produces different literary effects.

Finally, class difference operates differently in the two texts. In Pride and Prejudice, class hierarchy regulates courtship and reputation within a comparatively continuous system. In The House of the Edrisis, class hierarchy is being overturned by revolution. Anxiety in Austen often concerns crossing or negotiating class boundaries; anxiety in Alizadeh concerns the violent collapse and reversal of a class order. This distinction is essential. It prevents the comparative method from treating "class conflict" as the same phenomenon in both novels.

Conclusion

The House of the Edrisis and Pride and Prejudice offer fertile but distinct fictional environments for examining anxiety through Freud's psychoanalytic vocabulary. The comparison shows that anxiety is never generated by the psyche alone. It emerges where psychic conflict meets a social world: family authority, class hierarchy, inheritance, political violence, gendered expectation, reputation, memory, and desire all participate in its formation.

In Alizadeh's novel, Mrs. Edrisi's history illustrates the long afterlife of a desire sacrificed to internalized family authority. Leqa's fear begins in realistic danger but is magnified by a life of confinement and diminishes as she acquires new forms of agency. Vahab's attachment difficulties can be interpreted through a cautious Oedipal framework, but their most important feature is the conversion of desire into defensive hostility. Roxana combines all three forms of anxiety: political danger produces realistic anxiety; guilt toward her parents produces moral anxiety; and fear of abandonment and unstable identity produce a neurotic conflict around attachment.

In Austen's novel, Elizabeth experiences the social consequences of family reputation,

the conflict between desire and convention, and the moral shock of recognizing her own prejudice. Darcy's attraction to Elizabeth challenges a class-based superego and requires him to revise internalized standards. Jane's reserve illustrates the ambivalent effects of emotional self-regulation, while Mrs. Bennet's obsession with marriage reveals the realistic economic threat beneath comic behavior.

The analysis also demonstrates the limits of a mechanical application of psychoanalysis. Not every act of self-restraint is moral anxiety, not every romantic conflict proves neurotic pathology, and fictional evidence cannot establish a clinical diagnosis. Freud's categories become most productive when used as models of conflict rather than labels attached to characters. Such a method allows the critic to preserve the historical and cultural specificity of each novel while still identifying comparable structures of desire, prohibition, danger, guilt, and adaptation.

The most important common finding is that anxiety is represented as both restrictive and potentially transformative. It can immobilize Mrs. Edrisi, intensify Vahab's defensiveness, and distort Elizabeth's judgment; yet it can also propel Leqa toward new competence, force Elizabeth into self-recognition, and compel Darcy to renegotiate class prejudice. The two novels therefore suggest that anxiety is not merely a symptom to be eliminated. Within narrative, it is also a pressure through which characters encounter the limits of their inherited identities.

This comparative perspective clarifies the role of social environment in psychic conflict. The revolutionary world of The House of the Edrisis and the marriage-centered class order of Pride and Prejudice are historically unlike one another, but both reveal how external structures become internal voices. Freud's distinction among realistic, moral, and neurotic anxiety helps make those internalizations visible, provided that the categories remain subordinate to the literary evidence rather than replacing it.

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