

# SYMBOLISM OF THE COLOR WHITE IN JANE AUSTEN'S WORKS

## BIỂU TƯỢNG MÀU TRẮNG TRONG CÁC TÁC PHẨM CỦA AUSTEN

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**Abstract** - The color white's symbolic meaning in Jane Austen's writings reflects a complex portrayal that goes beyond simple beauty. Austen purposefully uses white to represent innocence, purity, and social norms, especially when it comes to how women are portrayed as being morally upright. This study investigates the complex symbolism of white in Austen's stories, focusing on its connections to social norms and moral rectitude. Characters identified with morality and goodness are frequently adorned in white, yet Austen uses this symbolism to discreetly criticize societal conventions and show the contrast between appearances and underlying reality. This analysis reveals the intricate layers of meaning woven within Austen's use of white, providing insight into its symbolic significance within her literary world. The article does this by closely examining every case in which white appears in clothing descriptions, settings, and thematic aspects.

**Key words** - Symbolism; color white; Jane Austen; comparative literature analysis; analyzing literary language

### 1. Introduction

In Austen's era, white in literature was a color associated with societal conventions and expectations, particularly concerning women. It was commonly worn by brides to symbolize purity and virginity [1]. Austen adeptly employs this societal symbolism to convey themes and character traits throughout her novels.

Symbolism, a theory of symbols and sensory correspondences, cultivates refined sensitivity and emotions. It relies on suggestion and embraces solitude discreetly. Symbolism often prefers settings and landscapes, symbolizing emptiness, internal confusion, moral isolation, and the artist's damnation in society. It paves the way for artistic groups and trends [2].

Symbolism employs allusive speech, vaporous images, vagueness, inaccuracy, misty reverie, and a particular atmosphere. It can be understood as a European literary movement that seeks to rediscover the essence of poetry and literature [3]. The lyricism in symbolism aims not to express explicitly but to suggest through symbols and various euphonic lexical values, capturing the plastic equivalences of reality and the subtle nuances of thought, impressions, and emotions [4].

This article is based on the study of 11 basic colors in language by Berlin and Kay [5] with the objectives of pointing out Jane Austen's specific study of the color white and exploring more about symbolism.

The following research questions have been raised to achieve these objectives:

**Tóm tắt** - Biểu tượng màu trắng trong các tác phẩm của Jane Austen phản ánh những cung bậc phức tạp, vượt ra khỏi ý nghĩa về đẹp đơn thuần. Austen dùng màu trắng để biểu thị sự ngây thơ, thuần khiết, và các quy ước xã hội, đặc biệt khi biểu thị giá trị đạo đức về sự ngay thẳng của phụ nữ. Nghiên cứu này khảo sát biểu tượng màu trắng trong các tác phẩm của Austen, tập trung vào mối liên kết với các chuẩn mực xã hội. Các phẩm chất như cái tốt, sự đạo đức thường được minh họa bởi màu trắng. Austen còn dùng màu sắc này để biểu thị những quy tắc xã hội và thể hiện những đối lập giữa diện mạo và phẩm chất bên trong. Nghiên cứu đưa ra những lớp nghĩa phức tạp nhau trong các tác phẩm của Austen, và cũng đưa ra những vấn đề lý thuyết của biểu tượng trong thế giới văn học của tác giả. Kết quả nghiên cứu thực hiện thông qua khảo sát các trường hợp liên quan đến màu trắng thông qua áo quần, bối cảnh và các yếu tố chủ đề.

**Từ khóa** - Biểu tượng; màu trắng; Jane Austen; phân tích văn học so sánh; phân tích ngôn ngữ văn học

1. What societal norms and expectations does the color white symbolize in Austen's works?

2. What significance does the presence of white in settings, such as clothing, estates, or objects, hold within the context of the narrative?

3. What changes or continuities can be observed in the symbolic representation of white across Austen's different novels?

### 2. Theoretical background and previous studies

The use of color in literature has long been recognized as a powerful tool for conveying emotions, setting moods, and enhancing the overall aesthetic experience for readers. Throughout history, different periods of literature have showcased unique approaches to describing and utilizing colors within their narratives. In particular, the 19th century with Jane Austen's work stands out as a time when linguistic expressions denoting colors gained significant prominence in English literature.

The research of Durgan [6] shows how works of 19th-century English literature like Brontë, Collins, and Doyle used colors to enhance their work themes and engage readers. In addition, Pastakkaya [1] also explores the use of color as a symbolic device in Victorian literature, focusing on how different authors employed specific colors to convey meaning and evoke emotions.

Ribeyrol [7] identified the role and significance of color in Victorian literature, analyzing how authors used color symbolism and descriptions to convey meaning and emotions.

Additionally, Yu [8] suggests that colors often encompass a duality, representing both positive and negative connotations depending on the cultural context. For example, the color white can symbolize purity, innocence, simplicity, and peace in many cultures. However, in some contexts, it can also represent emptiness, coldness, and Mourning.

Moreover, based on the research of Hasan, Al-Sammerai, and Kadir [9], each color term can be understood in terms of three types of semantic meanings:

1. **Basic Meaning:** The basic meaning of a color term refers to its original and earliest meaning. For white and black, their basic meanings are likely to be associated with the physical appearance of the colors themselves. White would represent the absence or reflection of all colors, while black would represent the absence of light and the absorption of all colors.

2. **Extended Meaning:** The extended meaning of a color term develops through human experiences and associations. With white and black, this extended meaning would include metaphorical and symbolic associations that have been attached to these colors over time. For example, white may be associated with concepts such as purity, innocence, goodness, and spirituality. Black, on the other hand, may be associated with darkness, mystery, power, and even negativity.

3. **Additional Meaning:** The additional meaning of a color term is an abstracted and further extension of its extended meaning. This type of meaning may vary across cultures and contexts. For black color, the additional meaning could involve notions of perfection, transcendence, neutrality, or even cultural and social symbolism.

### 3. Research Methodology

Studying the symbolism of the color white in Jane Austen's works involves employing various research methods to analyze textual, contextual, and interpretative elements. First, data collection involves extracting sentences, phrases, and words with white expressions from Jane Austen's literature. Then, qualitative methodologies, such as thematic analysis, will be applied to delve into the symbolism and contextual nuances of the white expressions. Finally, quantitative methodologies, such as corpus linguistics, will provide a statistical breakdown of color-white usage, identifying frequencies and patterns.

The above methods will be implemented based on:

#### Literary Analysis

(a) Close Reading:

- Scrutinize passages where white is mentioned or described.

- Analyze the context, language, and surrounding narrative to interpret its symbolic significance.

(b) Thematic Analysis:

- Identify themes related to purity, innocence, societal norms, and female virtue associated with the color white across Austen's works.

#### Historical and Contextual Research

(a) Historical Context Examination: Study societal

norms, fashion trends, and cultural implications of the color white during Austen's era to understand its symbolic connotations better.

(b) Social History Investigation: Explore historical documents, letters, and societal customs of the Regency era to contextualize the symbolic use of white in Austen's time.

#### Comparative Studies

(a) Comparative Literature Analysis: Examine how Austen employed white symbolism compared with other writers, both recent and historical, to identify patterns, variances, and influences in symbolic representations.

(b) Cross-cultural Analysis: Examine how, in various cultural contexts or literary traditions, the symbolism of white changes or stays the same.

#### Visual Analysis

Visual Representation Examination: Analyze visual adaptations (films, illustrations, etc.) of Austen's works to explore how the use of white is visually represented and its impact on symbolism.

#### Content Analysis and Quantitative Approaches

(a) Textual Coding: Use software for text analysis to quantify and categorize instances of white in Austen's texts, enabling quantitative analysis of patterns and frequencies.

(b) Statistical Analysis: Link the occurrences of white with themes, character traits, or story arcs using statistical techniques.

The integration of several study methodologies facilitates a thorough comprehension of the symbolic role of the color white in Jane Austen's literary works, providing valuable perspectives on themes, characterizations, and social criticism.

### 4. Finding and discussion

#### 4.1. Unveiling societal norms and expectations through the color White Symbolism in Jane Austen's Works

White becomes a potent symbol in Jane Austen's complex literary universe, representing a range of connotations that go beyond its simple aesthetic appeal. Through her ingenious use of white symbolism, Austen offers a profound commentary on the complexity of her era while navigating character depictions, philosophical nuances, and societal expectations.

Central to the symbolism of white in Austen's works is its representation of societal norms and ideals. Traditionally associated with purity, innocence, and moral virtue, white becomes a visual embodiment of the societal pressures placed upon women, evident in the costume and conduct of her female characters. The use of white dresses, particularly in scenes such as weddings, subtly reinforces the societal ideals of purity, emphasizing the prescribed roles and expectations within Austen's society.

However, Austen's nuanced narrative writing goes beyond mere conformity to societal norms. The symbolism of white serves as a canvas upon which characters are painted with moral virtues and contrasts. Characters like Elizabeth Bennet and Jane Bennet, often

adorned in white or associated with its symbolism, stand as paragons of integrity, goodness, and moral purity. This intentional choice highlights their adherence to societal ideals, setting them apart from characters depicted in other colors and emphasizing societal deviation or moral complexities.

Moreover, the depth of Austen's symbolism lies in its thematic layers woven into settings and objects. White furnishings or decorations within her narratives subtly hint at themes such as social purity, the illusion of perfection, or the stark contrast between appearance and reality. The symbolism of white evolves across Austen's various works, reflecting shifts in societal ideals or thematic emphases, unveiling a narrative complexity that transcends the surface symbolism of purity.

Crucially, the symbolism of white in Austen's works is not confined to a singular interpretation. Its meaning varies across cultural contexts, inviting diverse reader perceptions and interpretations. What might signify purity and virtue in Western cultures might symbolize mourning or grief in Eastern contexts. This diversity of interpretation enriches the reader's engagement, fostering a deeper exploration of Austen's societal commentary and character nuances.

In essence, Austen's use of white symbolism epitomizes a multi-layered tapestry, intricately woven with societal expectations, character complexities, and thematic depth. Beyond its surface portrayal of purity, white serves as a subtle yet potent tool through which Austen critiques societal norms, constructs her characters, and invites readers into a nuanced exploration of human complexities within the constraints of her era. Through that, we have Table 1 showing the symbolism and Cultural Associations of white; Table 2 shows the statistics of the meaning of white in some of Jane Austen's works.

**Table 1.** *The symbolism and Cultural Associations of white*

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>White symbolism</b>       | White was often utilized to represent purity, innocence, and spirituality. It conveyed a sense of transcendence, divinity, and moral goodness. White could also evoke notions of emptiness, coldness, and sterility.   |
| <b>Cultural Associations</b> | White was connected to notions of virtue and chastity, often representing the idealized female protagonist. It was linked to weddings, religious ceremonies, and the concept of transcendence. For example, in "Sense and Sensibility" by Jane Austen [10] and "Mansfield Park" by Jane Austen [11], white is often mentioned to symbolize purity. |

**Table 2.** *Statistical table of the meaning of white in some of Jane Austen's work ([11-13])*

| Symbolism                            | n | %    |
|--------------------------------------|---|------|
| (1) Purity, innocence                | 2 | 33,3 |
| (2) Cleanliness                      | 1 | 16,6 |
| (3) Elegance, sophistication, luxury | 1 | 16,6 |
| (4) Fear                             | 1 | 16,6 |
| (5) Adornment, distinction           | 1 | 16,6 |

Note. N=6. Total of percentages is  $\cong 100$ .

(1) Purity, innocence: "...it is Marianne's. I am almost sure it is, for I saw him cut it off. Last night after tea, when you and mama went out of the room, they were whispering and talking together as fast as could be, and he seemed to be begging something of her, and presently he took up her scissors and cut off a long lock of her hair, for it was all tumbled down her back; and he kissed it, and folded it up in a piece of white paper..." [10, p. 65-66].

The piece of white paper in which the lock of hair is folded represents a cherished memento. It symbolizes the affection and romantic connection between Marianne and the person who cut off her hair, as well as the sentimental value attached to it. The use of white paper suggests the purity and preciousness of the lock of hair as a token of their relationship.

(1) Purity, innocence, and (2) Cleanliness: "I suppose, sister, you will put the child in the little white attic, near the old nurseries. It will be much the best place for her, so near Miss Lee, and not far from the girls, and close by the housemaids, who could either of them help to dress her, you know, and take care of her clothes, for I suppose you would not think..." [11, p. 16].

The mention of the "little white attic" suggests a small, neat, and pristine room. The speaker suggests placing the child in this room because it is conveniently located near Miss Lee and the other girls, as well as the housemaids who can assist in dressing her and taking care of her clothes.

(3) Elegance, sophistication, luxury: "'If you mean Darcy", cried her brother, "he may go to bed, if he chooses, before it begins; but as for the ball, it is quite a settled thing, and as soon as Nicholls has made white soup enough, I shall send round my cards'" [12, p. 85].

The mention of "white soup" implies a high-class, elaborate dish served at formal events, and the host's plan to send out cards after preparing enough white soup implies a grand affair attended by the upper class.

(4) Fear: "Oh! dear; I was so miserable! I am sure I must have been as white as my gown. I could not go away you know, because of the rain; but I did so wish myself anywhere in the world but there. - Oh! dear, Miss Woodhouse-well, at last, I fancy, he looked round and saw me" [13, p. 159].

The speaker describes being "as white as my gown," indicating a visibly pale complexion due to their overwhelming misery and fear, emphasizing the intensity of their distress and the physical manifestation of their distress as a paleness in their complexion.

(5) Adornment, distinction: "'Look at that young lady with the white beads round her head," whispered Catherine, detaching her friend from James. "It is Mr. Tilney's sister.'" [14, p. 57].

The use of the color white in this context highlights the visual contrast between the beads and the lady's hair, making the accessory stand out and draw attention.

The color white held a multitude of symbolic meanings. It encompassed a rich tapestry of meanings, each contributing its own significance and enhancing the

narrative. Let us delve into these symbolic meanings to unravel the layers of white's significance during this period.

First and foremost, white was closely linked to cleanliness and purity, symbolizing an untarnished and unblemished state. It represented innocence and a clear, pure mind. Characters adorned in white garments were often portrayed as virtuous and morally upright, with their attire reflecting their inner purity. However, white's symbolic associations were not solely positive. In certain contexts, white could evoke fear and terror. When an individual's face turned white due to fright, it became a symbolic representation of their extreme fear, adding a chilling element to the narrative and heightening emotional intensity.

Moreover, white was associated with elegance and luxury, representing sophistication and opulence. Characters adorned in white garments or surrounded by white objects were depicted as belonging to a higher social class or possessing refined taste.

Additionally, white held strong symbolic ties to peace, representing the end of conflict and the pursuit of harmony. A white flag, for example, universally recognized as a symbol of surrender and the desire for peace, was frequently employed in literature. White was often used to depict the resolution of conflicts or the restoration of balance and serenity. The association between white and weddings was another prominent symbol of the time. The white gown worn by the bride symbolized purity and innocence, reflecting the hopes for a happy and prosperous life for the newlywed couple. White objects, such as flowers or decorations, were also used to create an atmosphere of joy and celebration in marriage ceremonies.

Religious symbolism was deeply intertwined with the color white, representing purity, virtue, and innocence in a spiritual sense. White was frequently utilized in religious ceremonies and rituals, emphasizing the divine and transcendent aspects of life. It connected mortals to the sacred realm.

Furthermore, white drew symbolic connections to doves, regarded as messengers of good news and peace. The white color of the doves reinforced their association with purity and peace, adding a layer of transcendence and hope to the narrative, imbuing it with optimism and serenity. However, it is essential to acknowledge that white also had negative associations during this period. It was linked to death and mourning, often signifying the absence of life. The pallor of death, shrouds, ghosts, and spirits conveys the melancholy presence symbolized by white.

In addition to these specific symbolic meanings, white found its place in idiomatic expressions of the time. Phrases like "white hand," "white heart," "white face," "white hair," and "white day" highlighted the positive qualities associated with white. Generosity, kindness, honesty, wisdom, and good sense were traits often embodied by characters described using these expressions.

In conclusion, the symbolic meanings of the color white in 19th-century English literature were diverse and multifaceted. It embodied concepts of cleanliness, purity, elegance, peace, religious symbolism, weddings, and

mourning. The various associations with white added depth and complexity to the narratives of the time, engaging readers and inviting them to explore the intricate

#### **4.2. The significance of white in the works of Jane Austen**

In the literary realm of Jane Austen, the color white emerges as a potent symbol, carrying profound significance that transcends its visual representation. Austen's deliberate use of white within her works symbolizes an array of themes, societal norms, and character traits, enriching the narratives with layered meanings.

##### **a. Symbolism of Purity and Virtue**

White embodies purity, innocence, and moral virtue, particularly in the portrayal of female characters like Elizabeth Bennet or Jane Bennet.

The color's prominence, especially in wedding scenes, underscores societal expectations and the idealized notions of feminine purity prevalent in Austen's era.

In addition, some objects or scenes are used by the author to give symbolic meaning to the color white.

For example:

(6) "The little white attic, which had continued her sleeping-room ever since her first entering the family, proving incompetent to suggest any reply, she had recourse, as soon as she was dressed, to another apartment more spacious and more meet for walking about in and thinking, and of which she had now for some time been almost equally mistress" [11, p. 136].

Symbolism: The character Fanny is assigned the little white attic when she first arrives at the Mansfield home at the start of the book. The novel's fragment "White" represents Fanny's morality since white is frequently associated with goodness, innocence, and purity. It follows that Fanny's morally righteous and possibly even pure intentions and thoughts are connected to the "whiteness" of the attic.

(7) "The idea of Edward's being a clergyman, and living in a small parsonage-house, diverted him beyond measure; - and when to that was added the fanciful imagery of Edward reading prayers in a white surplice, and publishing the banns of marriage between John Smith and Mary Brown, he could conceive nothing more ridiculous" [10, p. 255].

Symbolism: The mention of Edward reading prayers on a white surplice carries symbolic significance. In many cultures, White is often associated with purity, innocence, and spirituality. In this context, the white surplice may symbolize the purity and solemnity of the clergyman's role, contrasting with the character's amusement and perception of absurdity.

##### **b. Societal Commentary and Expectations**

White costume serves as a societal emblem, reflecting the pressures and constraints faced by Austen's characters within their social environment.

It represents the facade of societal expectations, often contrasting with the complexities and flaws of characters, unveiling the dichotomy between appearance and reality.

For example:

(8) "If you mean Darcy, " cried her brother, "he may go to bed, if he chooses, before it begins; but as for the ball, it is quite a settled thing, and as soon as Nicholls has made white soup enough, I shall send round my cards" [12, p. 85].

Symbolism: Elegance, sophistication, and luxury: The mention of "white soup" implies a high-class, elaborate dish served at formal events, and the host's plan to send out cards after preparing enough white soup implies a grand affair attended by the upper class.

### c. Characterization and Moral Significance

Austen strategically associates characters with white to denote their moral integrity, goodness, and adherence to societal norms.

Contrastingly, deviations from this symbolic association might highlight moral complexities or societal nonconformity.

### d. Thematic Depth and Symbolic Context

White extends beyond clothing, permeating settings and objects to signify themes such as social purity, perfectionism, or the constraints imposed by societal conventions.

Austen employs the color's symbolism to craft subtle commentary on societal constructs and the human condition within her narratives.

In addition, it is also often used to express negative meanings such as mourning, illness, or fear.

For example:

(9) "Marianne, now looking dreadfully white, and unable to stand, sunk into her chair, and Elinor, expecting every moment to see her faint, tried to screen her from the observation of others, while reviving her with lavender water" [10, p. 150].

Symbolism: The fact that Marianne was described as "dreadfully white" raises questions about her health and could point to illness, shock, or severe emotional suffering. Here, white can stand for Marianne's frailty, susceptibility, and waning energy.

### e. Cultural Variance and Interpretative Nuances

Interpretations of white symbolism vary across cultures and historical contexts, inviting diverse reader perceptions and enriching the depth of analysis.

The color's symbolic implications differ, allowing for broader explorations of societal norms and character portrayals within Austen's works.

In essence, the significance of white in Jane Austen's works transcends its visual presence, acting as a conduit for societal commentary, character delineation, and thematic exploration. Its multifaceted symbolism intricately weaves together the tapestry of Austen's narratives, inviting readers into a nuanced understanding of the societal constructs and human complexities of her era.

### 4.3. The Continuity and Changing of the Color White Symbolism in Jane Austen's Literary

Examining how white is portrayed symbolically reveals a dynamic interaction between continuity and change,

providing a deep understanding of the changing social and thematic in Austen's stories.

White continues to be a consistent symbol of innocence, purity, and moral virtue in all of Austen's works. Women who wear white or are connected to the color white frequently represent the 19th-century ideals of feminine virtue that were held by society. For example, in "Pride and Prejudice," Elizabeth Bennet is associated with white in various instances, symbolizing her moral integrity and virtuous nature. Her clothes at the Netherfield Ball signifies her purity in societal expectations. Similarly, white or light-colored clothing is frequently used to represent Jane Bennet, who is well-known for her kind and gentle disposition and who personifies the ideal of feminine elegance and purity in society.

An important theme in Austen's books is the prominence of white in wedding scenes, which represents the cultural worship of purity in marital partnerships.

However, within this continuum lies change and evolution in the representation of white symbolism across Austen's works. Austen's later works reveal a departure from the simplistic portrayal of purity, introducing complexities and subversion. For instance, in "Mansfield Park," Fanny Price, often associated with white, represents a departure from the conventional portrayal of purity.

(10) "His countenance, as he entered the room, was not too happy, even for Elinor. His complexion was white with agitation, and he looked as if fearful of his reception, and conscious that he merited no kind one. Mrs. Dashwood, however, conforming, as she trusted, to the wishes of that daughter, by whom she then meant in the warmth of her heart to be guided in every thing, met him with a look of forced complacency, gave him her hand, and wished him joy" [10, p. 263].

Symbolism: Edward's complexion is described as "white with agitation," indicating that he is pale and visibly distressed. In this context, however, it represents agitation and fear, highlighting Edward's emotional chaos and inner conflict.

In addition, Austen's work uses a lot of while dressed in white during significant moments, her character embodies a moral complexity that challenges societal norms and expectations.

(11) "The wedding was very much like other weddings, where the parties have no taste for finery or parade; and Mrs. Elton, from the particulars detailed by her husband, thought it all extremely shabby, and very inferior to her own. - "Very little white satin, very few lace veils; a most pitiful business!" [13, p. 436].

Symbolism: White satin is a traditional element of bridal costume symbolizing purity, and new beginnings. They are associated with the bride's gown and veil, which are central to the wedding ceremony and represent the bride's transition into married life.

Characters associated with white attire or symbolism challenge societal norms, unveiling layers of moral complexities or critiquing the purity imposed by society. This evolution in characterization through the symbolic

use of white illustrates Austen's maturing exploration of societal constructs and individual agency within her narratives. White expands beyond its literal representation to signify the constraints imposed by societal expectations, the illusion of perfection, or the stark contrast between appearance and reality. Austen's later works intricately weave these themes into the symbolism of white, adding depth and complexity to her storytelling, such as "Emma", which introduces the nuanced thematic implications of white. While Emma Woodhouse's clothes may connote purity, her character showcases complexities beyond mere innocence, reflecting a departure from traditional associations of whites with simple virtue.

The variations in character associations with white symbolism further underscore the evolving nature of Austen's narratives. In certain cases, characters wearing white clothing may represent loyalty to social norms; in others, it may represent rebellion or resistance to social norms. The complex nature of Austen's characters and their interactions within the social structure of her day are highlighted by this detailed representation. The protagonist, Catherine Morland, in "Northanger Abbey," despite being painted white at the book's end, represents both her innocence and her development into a more mature comprehension of society's standards, demonstrating a subtle progression in character symbolism.

## 5. Conclusion

This article delves into the complexities of white symbolism in Jane Austen's narratives, revealing a dynamic interplay between societal expectations, character portrayals, and thematic nuances, facilitated by diverse research methods.

The examination of white symbolism in Austen's works unfolds a narrative that embodies both continuity and transformation. White consistently symbolizes purity, innocence, and societal virtues, depicting the societal ideals prevalent. However, within this consistent symbolism lies a tale of evolution. Austen's later works present a departure from simplistic representations of purity, introducing complexities and subversions within the symbolism of white. Characters associated with white

attire or symbolism challenge societal norms, unveiling layers of moral intricacies and critiquing the superficiality of societal expectations.

The methodology employed in uncovering the depth of white symbolism involves a multifaceted approach. Literary analysis through close readings and thematic explorations unveils the nuances of white symbolism in specific passages, delineating its associations with purity and societal norms.

In conclusion, the study of white symbolism in Jane Austen's works transcends its visual representation, unfolding a narrative intricately interwoven with societal norms, character complexities, and thematic depths. Through diverse research methods, Austen's symbolism of white emerges as a dynamic element, reflecting the evolution of societal ideals and offering a profound exploration of human complexities within the constrained societal framework of her era.

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