

# The Laughing Heroine in *Pride and Prejudice*

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The original form of *Pride and Prejudice* was called *First Impressions*. B. C. Southam suggests the possibility that this “was, like *Elinor and Marianne*, a novel in letters” (58-59). *Pride and Prejudice* is narrated by a third-person narrator; however, it contains several letters, probably deriving from its original epistolary form. While Elizabeth is mainly the reader of these letters, she herself makes a notable appearance as a correspondent near the end of the novel, addressed to Mrs. Gardiner after her engagement with Darcy. Her letter has one particularly striking statement, “I am happier even than Jane; she only smiles, I laugh” (424). Why is she “happier even than Jane”? And what does she mean by “she only smiles, I laugh”? What is the difference between “smile” and “laugh”? With these questions as a clue to go on, I would like to assess the image of the heroine and explore the processes by which her characterization is achieved.

## I

To begin with, I would like to probe the implications of Elizabeth’s statement, “she only smiles, I laugh” (424). It is interesting that there is no scene of Jane’s laughter. She only smiles: “Jane met her with a smile of such sweet complacency” (107); “Jane happened to look round, and happened to smile” (376). These gestures are polite and social. They are meant to promote an amicable and peaceful atmosphere in communication. They are well-intentioned.

One may notice that Darcy seems to regard Jane’s smile unfavorably. After the first ball scene, “Miss Bennet he [Darcy] acknowledged to be pretty, but she smiled too much” (18). What is wrong with Jane’s smile? It is likely that Darcy’s “too much” implies her behaviour is unnatural, defensive and

serving only to hide her true feelings. Charlotte has a similar opinion. As for Jane's "composure of temper and a uniform cheerfulness of manner" (23), Charlotte says, "it is sometimes a disadvantage to be so very guarded. If a woman conceals her affection with the same skill from the object of it, she may lose the opportunity of fixing him" (23-24). As she points out, Jane's social smile misleads Darcy into believing that "Her look and manners were open, cheerful and engaging as ever, but without any symptom of peculiar regard [for Mr. Bingley]" (219). Bingley seems to "enjoy her smiles" (12); nonetheless, they eventually make him yield to "a persuasion of *my* [Jane's] being indifferent" (387), resulting in their long separation and Jane's suffering from "a broken heart" (252). Thus, Jane's smiles are double-edged in their consequences.

As for Darcy, there is no scene of his laughter, either; however, he frequently smiles. Most of Darcy's smiles are directed solely to Elizabeth: "I am not afraid of you [Elizabeth]," said he [Darcy], smilingly" (196); "Darcy smiled and said [to Elizabeth], 'You are perfectly right'" (197). Thus, these gestures, which are chiefly directed towards Elizabeth, show pleasure or amusement. His frequent smiles towards her reveal his underlying regard for her despite his surface brusqueness.

Miss Bingley's smile and laugh are often spiteful: she talks about Elizabeth's uncles in Meryton and "somewhere near Cheapside" (40) with her sister and "they both laughed heartily" (40); when Mrs. Bennet says, "I know we dine with four and twenty families" (48), Miss Bingley "directed her eye towards Mr. Darcy with a very expressive smile" (48), implying disdain and derision with a sense of superiority. As for Mr. Bingley, there is no description of his smile.

However, Lydia repeatedly claims that "I was ready to die of laughter" (246); "I cannot help laughing myself at your surprise to-morrow morning. . . . I can hardly write for laughing" (321). Her mirth and amusement are involuntary and instinctive without any restraint. Laughter generally involves the sounds and movements of the face and body while smiling is only a facial expression. Therefore, the physicality of laughers is more conspicuous than that of those who smile. Lydia's loud laughs are a visible sign that she may be vulnerable to temptation.

In contrast to Lydia's laugh, Mr. Bennet, "contented with laughing at

them, would never exert himself to restrain their wild giddiness of his youngest daughters” (236). His laughs are negative and derisive. Patricia Meyer Spacks acutely remarks, “his [Mr. Bennet’s] suggestion that we live to laugh at our neighbors and to be laughed at by them makes us conscious of his moral insufficiency” (71).

How are laughs described in courtesy books in Austen’s period? According to Penelope Joan Fritzer, “*The Man of Manners* warns against ‘Loud Laughing and Drollery’ (Jones 18). *The Universal Mentor* says, ‘Every man ought to abstain from immoderate Laughter’ (139)” (qtd. in Fritzer 62). John Mason stated about the eighteenth-century attitude toward laughter in *Gentlefolk in the Making*, “the polite world desired to impose restraint of behavior. This restraint included the control of such natural actions as laughter. . . . While smiling was very right and proper at most times, laughter was connected with ‘low buffoonery or silly accidents’” (qtd. in Fritzer 62). Jane’s amicable and courteous smiles are in conformity with the ideals propounded by courtesy books. However, Lydia’s immoderate laughter everywhere shows impropriety; then, her “dishonourable elopement” (312) is not surprising. Indeed, “Lydia gaped as he [Mr. Collins] opened the volume [of Fordyce’s Sermons]” (76) and interrupts him with frivolous talk. Georgiana Darcy was also on the verge of elopement with Mr. Wickham; however, unlike Lydia, she relinquished the plan. Georgiana, whom we never see laughing, did not deviate from proprieties. Moreover, while Mr. Collins entertains the “strictest notions of what was due to seniority” (79), Lydia says to her elder sisters, “Lord! how I should like to be married before any of you” (244). After the marriage with Wickham, Lydia says, “Ah! Jane, I take your place now, and you must go lower” (350). It can be said that her laughter contains defiant and subversive powers.

Then, how are Elizabeth’s smiles and laughs represented? It is she who displays both these traits most among the characters. Her smiles are often ill-disposed. The information that Miss de Bourgh and Mr. Darcy “will unite the two estates” (93) “made Elizabeth smile, as she thought of poor Miss Bingley” (93). When Elizabeth smiles at Darcy, the gestures are not innocent and guileless like those of Jane, but they seem to disguise a hidden motive: when Sir William says, “though this gentleman dislikes the amusement in general, he can have no objection, I am sure, to oblige us for one half hour” (29), ““Mr.

Darcy is all politeness,' said Elizabeth, smiling" (29) and would not dance with him; when Mr. Darcy "stationed himself so as to command a full view of the fair performer's countenance" (195), Elizabeth "turned to him with an arch smile" (195). Elizabeth's smiles towards Darcy are voluntary. They appear to be elicited for the sake of ulterior ends rather than out of immediate pleasure. Elizabeth seems to use her "smile" as an artifice towards Darcy with some concealed underlying intentions.

As for Elizabeth's laugh, a noteworthy scene appears during her stay at Netherfield. Miss Bingley, hearing Darcy's motives for not walking together in the room, says to Elizabeth, "How shall we punish him for such a speech?" (62). Elizabeth replies, "Teaze him—laugh at him. . . . Mr. Darcy is not to be laughed at! . . . I dearly love a laugh. . . . Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies *do* divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can" (62-63). Audrey Bilger remarks, "Elizabeth stages her own assault on Darcy's authority" (73). As Elizabeth's laughs are aggressive, representing a potential threat, the escape from them can be represented as "You are safe from me [her]" (63). Her laughing at "follies and nonsense" is contrasted with Jane's being "so honestly blind to the follies and nonsense of others" (16). At the same time, there will be no doubt that Elizabeth's laughs serve to increase her charm as they must have brightened "her fine eyes" (39).

It is noticeable that Elizabeth does not seem to favor the idea of deference to seniority. Her remark that all of her younger sisters are out astonishes Lady Catherine: "Very odd! . . . The younger ones out before the elder are married!" (187). Elizabeth replies, "The last born has as good a right to the pleasures of youth, as the first" (187). Her laughs bear a similarity to those of Lydia in that both of them are defiant of the conventions of society and subversive of traditional values. John Wiltshire interestingly remarks, "Like Lydia, Elizabeth is a force, her energy capable, as the novel demonstrates, of altering the world. Both are forward and self confident. More disconcertingly, both enjoy a laugh" (54). As with Lydia, Elizabeth's laugh makes her physicality conspicuous, though Janet Todd notes that "Lydia's laughter is more sexy and disruptive" (*Cambridge Introduction* 67). The difference between Elizabeth's laugh and that of Mr. Bennet is that the former is outward and antisocial, while the latter is inward and asocial.

Elizabeth's defiant laughter seems to threaten social boundaries and cause

drastic changes of personal relationship. After the conversation at Netherfield, Darcy “began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention” (64). While Lydia’s laughs subvert only the sisterly order, those of Elizabeth defy and threaten the entire social hierarchy.

Moreover, it is interesting that Elizabeth dreads being laughed at as much as she loves laughing while Lydia does not mind being the object of amusement provided it implies attention: Elizabeth “tremble[s] lest her mother should be exposing herself again” (49) during their visit at Netherfield; “That his [Bingley’s] two sisters and Mr. Darcy, however, should have such an opportunity of ridiculing her relations was bad enough, and she could not determine whether the silent contempt of the gentleman, or the insolent smiles of the ladies, were more intolerable” (114). Her fear evinces that she is not without a sense of respectability, occasional wildness notwithstanding.

In a conversation between Jane and Elizabeth about Wickham’s slander on Mr. Darcy’s cruelty, Jane says to Elizabeth, “Laugh as much as you chuse, but you will not laugh me out of my opinion” (95). It is notable that Elizabeth’s laugh is powerless against Jane, who seems immune to its force, while it is effective towards Darcy.

During the sojourn at Netherfield, Elizabeth makes a notable statement. At Darcy’s offer to dance, she says, “You wanted me, I know, to say ‘Yes,’ that you might have the pleasure of despising my taste, but I always delight in overthrowing those kind of schemes, and cheating a person of their premeditated contempt” (56). Isn’t the delight in overthrowing ones’ “schemes”, and cheating their premeditation intimately connected with Elizabeth’s laugh? Isn’t her laugh enhanced in reversing their forethought by counterplot? In Rosings, Elizabeth, imagining the probable response of Lady Catherine, who anticipates a marriage between Darcy and her daughter, “could not see Lady Catherine without recollecting, that had she chosen it, she might by this time have been presented to her, as her future niece; nor could she think, without a smile, of what her ladyship’s indignation would have been. ‘What would she have said?—how would she have behaved?’ were questions with which she amused herself” (233).

Let us now return to Elizabeth’s statement, “she [Jane] only smiles, I laugh” (424). Jane’s smiles are affable; however, once she sinks into “disappointed hopes” (213), her smiles do not have the power to help her. Jane

must rely on Elizabeth and Darcy for the restoration of her relationship with Bingley. Elizabeth notifies Darcy of Jane's affection towards Bingley and Darcy eventually gives him "permission" (411). On the other hand, Elizabeth's laughs, which are aggressive and threatening, have the power to attract Darcy despite obstacles and lead to the marriage with him. Elizabeth's uttering "only" is suggestive of her superiority and triumph over Jane. Doesn't Elizabeth's laugh here include the delight in cheating other forms of premeditation? Elizabeth's family do not expect that she will marry better than Jane. In Mrs. Bennet's opinion, Mr. Collins is sufficient for Elizabeth. She considers that "though the man [Mr. Collins] and the match were quite good enough for *her*, the worth of each was eclipsed by Mr. Bingley and Netherfield" (116). Elizabeth's engagement with Darcy overthrows their assumptions. Mrs. Bennet says, "Oh! my sweetest Lizzy! how rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! Jane's is nothing to it—nothing at all" (419). Elizabeth's utterance, "The last born has as good a right . . . as the first" (187) as quoted earlier must contain the notion that "the second born" must also be regarded as equal to the first. It can be said that Elizabeth's laughs overturn the sibling order in terms of "how rich and how great one will be", while those of Lydia subvert it only in respect of the earliness of the marriage.

## II

Now, I will turn to the question how we should think about Elizabeth's writing, "I am happier even than Jane". This statement is contrasted with Jane's remark, "you will be as happy as myself" (415), which is uttered at the news of Elizabeth's engagement with Darcy. Jane uses the positive degree, while Elizabeth adopts the comparative evaluation. Before Jane makes that comment, she says to Elizabeth, "And do you really love him quite well enough? Oh, Lizzy! do any thing rather than marry without affection. Are you quite sure that you feel what you ought to do?" (414). Elizabeth "soon satisfied Jane by her solemn assurances of attachment. When convinced on that article, Miss Bennet had nothing farther to wish" (415). Then, Jane says, "Now I am quite happy . . . for you will be as happy as myself" (415). It appears that Jane regards affection as an issue of the highest priority in marriage. She thinks that

Elizabeth “will be as happy as herself” as long as she truly loves Darcy. There is no relativity of happiness as far as affection is assured; therefore, Jane’s opinion must be “you will be as happy as myself”. Statements such as “You will be happier than me” or “I will be happier than you” are impossible for her. It will not be correct to judge, however, that she is indifferent to the fortune and status. She says to Elizabeth about Charlotte’s marriage, “Remember that she is one of a large family; that as to fortune, it is a most eligible match” (153). She describes Lydia’s marriage with destitute Wickham as “So imprudent a match on both sides” (302). She appears to think that the fortune and status should not be neglected for a happy marriage. At the same time, she probably considers that lack of mutual affection will prevent a happy marriage no matter how rich and great a husband may be.

On the other hand, what does Elizabeth write before the sentence, “I am happier even than Jane”? She mentions Pemberley. She writes, “Your idea of the ponies is delightful. We will go round the Park every day” (424). Isn’t the happiness she envisages connected with Pemberley?

Although Elizabeth’s recognition of “the money and the status of Pemberley” (Duckworth 124) is not foregrounded, it is neither utterly contradicted. It is undeniable that Pemberley represents the fortune and status of the owner as well as his moral character and “aesthetic” (Page 104) value. According to Amanda Vickery, “The house was a demonstration of a would-be husband’s financial strength. . . . The house itself was the major part of the offer on which a young lady took a view. Consequently, women’s tours of young men’s houses were pregnant with possibility for the key players” (87).

It is needless to say that Pemberley is a large estate, which brings Darcy “ten thousand a year” (10). Michael Williams points out that, “Darcy is decidedly richer than every other major character in the six novels” (63). As for his status, he is “descended on the maternal side, from the . . . noble line; and, on the father’s, from respectable, honourable, and ancient, though untitled families” (394). Juliet McMaster comments that, “The long-established but untitled landowning family does seem to gather Austen’s deep respect, especially if its income comes from land and a rent-roll. . . . The landowning country gentleman is as close to a prince as her heroines approach” (113). On the other hand, Mr. Bingley’s fortune is said to be “four or five thousand a year” (4) and “acquired by trade” (16). He does not have “an estate of his

own” (17) and is “established only as a tenant” (17) at Netherfield. McMaster remarks, “We see him in the process of buying his way into the gentry” (120). Thus, Darcy’s fortune and status are much greater than those of Bingley.

When Elizabeth visits Pemberley with her aunt and uncle, she is guided by the housekeeper into the rooms and hears her high praise for her master. It is notable that Elizabeth thinks, “to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!” (271) at the first sight of the house before she hears the praise for Darcy and sees the interior, which reflects the owner’s taste and mind. The thought which hit upon Elizabeth first and foremost is “to be mistress of Pemberley” rather than Darcy himself.

On a visit to Hunsford, Elizabeth “could not help fancying that in displaying the good proportion of the room, its aspect and its furniture, he [Mr. Collins] addressed himself particularly to her, as if wishing to make her feel what she had lost in refusing him. But though every thing seemed neat and comfortable, she was not able to gratify him by any sigh of repentance” (177). In Pemberley, she thought:

“And of this place . . . I might have been mistress! With these rooms I might now have been familiarly acquainted! Instead of viewing them as a stranger, I might have rejoiced in them as my own, and welcomed to them as visitors my uncle and aunt.—But no,!”—recollecting herself,— “that could never be: my uncle and aunt would have been lost to me: I should not have been allowed to invite them.”

This was a lucky recollection—it saved her from something like regret. (272-273)

She seems to have much more difficulty in repelling the regret over “what she had lost in refusing” the proposal in Pemberley than in Hunsford. What disturbs her mind seems to be the desire for possession. She almost regrets not being “familiarly acquainted” with the rooms, which are “lofty and handsome” (272) and which contain “furniture suitable to the fortune of their proprietor” (272) and rejoicing in them “as my own”. Robert Miles sounds quite right in remarking, “It is part of Austen’s psychological realism that she never loses sight of base, material motivation . . . in having Elizabeth give the first inklings of her changing feeling by expressing regret, not for the man, but for his

house” (22).

Even before her visit, Pemberley seems to be a matter of Elizabeth’s concern. In the first evening at Netherfield, Elizabeth, “stay[ing] below with a book” (40), “was so much caught by what passed, as to leave her very little attention for her book; and soon laying it wholly aside” (42). “What passed” at that moment is a lively conversation about Pemberley, such as its “delightful library” and “the beauties of that noble place” (41).

Later, Elizabeth attributed the reason for Bingley sisters’ endeavor to promote the marriage between their brother and Miss Darcy to the possibility of their wish for “his increase of wealth and consequence” (155). It appears that Elizabeth can no more be acquitted of an ambition for her “increase of wealth and consequence” than the Bingley sisters can.

Then, how is Elizabeth’s affection towards Darcy depicted? After Lydia’s “patched-up” (396) marriage, Elizabeth thinks, “he was the person, to whom the whole family were indebted for the first of benefits, and whom she regarded herself with an interest, if not quite so tender, at least as reasonable and just, as what Jane felt for Bingley” (370). It is notable that Elizabeth’s feeling towards Darcy is “not quite so tender” as that of Jane for Bingley. Todd observes, “Elizabeth has investigated her own feelings and not found infatuation among them; rather she reflects on her self and sees her interest and interests. She comes to ‘affection’ but never falls deeply in love” (*Cambridge Introduction* 74). A remark in the last letter of this novel might convey an additional hint. Lydia writes to Elizabeth, “If you love Mr. Darcy half as well as I do my dear Wickham, you must be very happy” (428). We may be inclined to dismiss this comment as insignificant; however, Lydia may be right. Elizabeth might love Mr. Darcy only half as well as Lydia does Wickham, as she suggests.

When Lady Catherine tries to dissuade Elizabeth from accepting Darcy, Elizabeth retorts, “But the wife of Mr. Darcy must have such extraordinary sources of happiness necessarily attached to her situation, that she could, upon the whole, have no cause to repine” (394). It should be noted that her happiness is associated with the position of Mr. Darcy’s wife at Pemberley.

Let us return to the scene of Jane’s remarks, “you will be as happy as myself”. When Jane asks Elizabeth, “Will you tell me how long you have loved him?” (414), Elizabeth replies, “I believe I must date it from my first

seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley” (414). Jane entreats her to “be serious” (415). We are led to believe that Elizabeth is only joking; however, we may be deceived. She might be serious under the disguise of joking.

### III

The survey of laughter and smiles has raised the issue of Elizabeth’s hidden intentions. In this final section, I will take up the subject, exploring her initial relation with Darcy. Elizabeth’s engagement to Darcy surprises Jane and her parents largely because she did not tell them that “her deeply-rooted dislike” (211) for him had changed into affection. Did she have “deeply-rooted dislike” for him in the first place? Isn’t she interested in him as a possible partner?

As I mentioned earlier, there is no description of Mr. Bingley’s smile in the text, even though he is said to be “extremely agreeable” (9) and “amiable” (11). Does the lack of his smile in the text mean that he does not smile at all? It is very unlikely. For example, isn’t he likely to smile, when he says to Elizabeth, “In nursing your sister I am sure you have pleasure . . . and I hope it will soon be increased by seeing her quite well” (41)? Why are his possible smiles omitted from the text? It is important to note that the narrative is often given through Elizabeth’s perspective. As for Bingley’s laugh, his “half-laughing” is mentioned once, during his visit to Longbourn after his return to Netherfield: “his [Bingley’s] eyes likewise turned towards Mr. Darcy, with an expression of half-laughing alarm” (376). This description is made through Elizabeth’s viewpoint as she “eagerly watched to see whether Bingley would take the place, which, in all their former parties, had belonged to him, by her sister” (376). His “half-laughing” is recognized by Elizabeth as she closely observes him in order to confirm his attitude towards Jane. As mentioned earlier, most of Darcy’s smiles are directed to Elizabeth. Considering the fact that the narration is often given through Elizabeth, the lack of Bingley’s smile seems to indicate that she fails to register his gestures, while she acknowledges those of Darcy’s. Doesn’t it mean that Elizabeth is interested in Darcy’s facial expression and observes his face attentively while she pays little attention to that of Bingley’s? The difference between the many descriptions of Darcy’s smile and the lack of any reference to Bingley’s seems to reflect whom

Elizabeth is interested in and concerned about. It appears to divulge Elizabeth's true feelings under the disguise of a marked indifference to Darcy.

Indeed, Elizabeth is quick to notice Darcy's smiles. When Mr. Bingley says, "I declare I do not know a more awful object than Darcy, on particular occasions, and in particular places; at his own house especially, and of a Sunday evening when he has nothing to do" (55), Elizabeth notices that "Mr. Darcy smiled; but Elizabeth thought she could perceive that he was rather offended; and therefore checked her laugh" (55). Darcy's smile in this scene is a response to Mr. Bingley's "nonsense" (55). Although it is her policy to laugh "whenever I [she] can" (62-63), she abstains this time as a result of careful observation of Darcy's facial expression and emotion. It is notable that Elizabeth shows caring solicitousness towards Darcy lest she should aggravate his wounded feelings. In fact, she often takes great pains not to let Darcy be offended. At the Netherfield ball, Elizabeth says to her mother, "For heaven's sake, madam, speak lower.—What advantage can it be to you to offend Mr. Darcy?" (111). Thus, the alleged dislike of him does not seem to correspond with her conduct. In fact, Elizabeth describes Darcy as a man "whom one is determined to hate" (101). To put it the other way around, he is not the man whom one hates; instead, he is the man whom one "is determined to" act in this way.

At the party held by Sir William Lucas, he sees "Elizabeth at that instant moving towards them [Sir William Lucas and Mr. Darcy] . . . and called out to her, 'My dear Miss Eliza, why are not you dancing?—Mr. Darcy, you must allow me to present this young lady to you as a very desirable partner'" (28). Elizabeth says, "Indeed, Sir, I have not the least intention of dancing.—I entreat you not to suppose that I moved this way in order to beg for a partner" (29). Indeed, Elizabeth might not have approached them in order to beg for a partner as she had promised her mother "*never* to dance with him" (21). She might, however, have moved towards them in order to listen to their conversation, or she might have expected to be invited to join them by gallant Sir William. She was possibly encouraged by Darcy's paying attention to her just before this scene, when she had noticed that Mr. Darcy was "listening to my [her] conversation with Colonel Forster" (26).

In the Netherfield ball, Sir William, approaching Elizabeth and Darcy, compliments their dancing and says, "You will not thank me for detaining you

from the bewitching converse of that young lady, whose bright eyes are also upbraiding me” (104). We take it for granted that his last remark is merely a figure of speech. However, nor Elizabeth nor the narrator provide us with any literal contradiction concerning his statement. Then, how can we be sure that Elizabeth really does not reproach his interruption?

Elizabeth’s attitude toward Darcy is often described by the words, “arch” and “archly”. When Elizabeth is entreated to dance with Mr. Darcy by Sir William Lucas at Lucas Lodge, she “looked archly, and turned away” (29). Darcy is favorably impressed by her and says to Miss Bingley, “I have been meditating on the very great pleasure which a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow” (30). In Netherfield, Elizabeth declines Darcy’s offer to dance a reel with “a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner” (56-57). As a result, “Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her” and “Miss Bingley saw, or suspected enough to be jealous” (57). It is notable that Miss Bingley perceives that Elizabeth has succeeded in captivating Darcy and desires to turn her out.

John Hardy states, “Elizabeth’s spirited rallying of Darcy, accompanied, as it is, by ‘a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner’ (52), not merely excites his interest but has the potential for establishing something more like intimacy between them” (43). As he remarks, her “archness” serves to create intimacy and fascinate him. It is noticeable that Elizabeth shows such an attitude only toward Darcy. She never throws an arch smile towards Mr. Collins nor towards Mr. Wickham. Myra Stokes interestingly points out, “It will probably surprise no-one to learn that the most *arch* of Jane Austen’s characters are Mary Crawford, Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse” (61). Mary, who regards “matrimony” as “a manœuvring business” (53), directs “an arch smile” (109) to Edmund Bertram, who later describes her smile as “a saucy playful smile, seeming to invite, in order to subdue me” (530-531). Doesn’t Elizabeth also use a similar kind of smile “in order to subdue” Darcy?

Later, Lady Catherine says to Elizabeth, “*your* arts and allurements may, in a moment of infatuation, have made him [Mr. Darcy] forget what he owes to himself and to all his family. You may have drawn him in” (392-393). Elizabeth replies, “If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it” (393). It is notable that she does not attempt to refute this blame for her “arts and allurements”.

When Jane receives an invitation to dine at Netherfield and asks, “Can I have the carriage” (33), Mrs. Bennet says, “you had better go on horseback, because it seems likely to rain; and then you must stay all night” (34). Elizabeth says, “That would be a good scheme . . . if you were sure that they would not offer to send her home” and “did at last extort from her father an acknowledgment that the horses were engaged, Jane was therefore obliged to go on horseback” (34). It is noteworthy that Elizabeth supports her mother’s “scheme”. She, not only approves of her mother’s plan, but also prevails with her father so that it will be carried out. Shortly after Jane’s departure, it begins to rain and she cannot come back. It is Mrs. Bennet who is the target of Mr. Bennet’s sarcastic remark, “Well, my dear . . . if your daughter should have a dangerous fit of illness, if she should die, it would be a comfort to know that it was all in pursuit of Mr. Bingley, and under your orders” (35). We, however, should not overlook the fact that it is Elizabeth who collaborates with her mother and facilitates her “scheme”. Is it off the mark to attribute Elizabeth’s motive to the idea that “Jane’s marrying so greatly must throw them [her younger sisters] in the way of other rich men” (111), as expected by her mother? Or does it have something to do with “the notion that when there has been *one* intermarriage, she [one] may have less trouble in achieving a second” (133), as possibly harbored by Miss Bingley, who attempts to promote “*one* intermarriage” as a stepping-stone to her own marriage with Darcy?

The motive for Elizabeth’s attitude towards Darcy as well as her encouragement of Jane’s visit to Netherfield on horseback might be related to Charlotte’s following statement:

though Bingley and Jane meet tolerably often, it is never for many hours together; and as they always see each other in large mixed parties, it is impossible that every moment should be employed in conversing together. Jane should therefore make the most very half hour in which she can command his attention. When she is secure of him, there will be leisure for falling in love as much as she chuses. (24)

It will be unquestionable that Elizabeth attempts to urge Jane to meet Mr. Bingley “for many hours together”. As for her own conduct, she might intend to “make the most very half hour in which she can command his attention”.

Elizabeth jokingly replies, “Your plan is a good one . . . where nothing is in question but the desire of being well married; and if I were determined to get a rich husband, or any husband, I dare say I should adopt it” (24). Michael Williams comments, “while we might join Elizabeth in doubting the merits of Charlotte’s ‘plan’ for getting a husband, we have to notice that Elizabeth herself is prepared to use it in order to secure a desired attachment. When she prepares for the Netherfield ball, she is preoccupied with Wickham” (60). Indeed, Wickham could be “any husband” (24); however, doesn’t she first attempt to use the stratagem towards Darcy, who could be “a rich husband” (24)? In any case, it is probable that Elizabeth is prepared to use Charlotte’s plan despite her joking reply. Elizabeth’s captivating attitude spurs Darcy to get more attracted by her than before.

One might wonder, then, why Elizabeth rejected Darcy’s first proposal. As she tells Mrs. Gardiner later, “she had liked him better when they met in Kent than before” (285). However, just before his proposal, she hears from Colonel Fitzwilliam that Darcy has “lately saved a friend from the inconveniences of a most imprudent marriage” (207); consequently, “her heart [is] swelling with indignation” (208). In response to his proposal, Elizabeth says, “Had not my own feelings decided against you, had they been indifferent, or had they even been favourable, do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man, who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?” (213). Her discovery that he is primarily responsible for “the cause of all that Jane had suffered, and still continued to suffer” (208) makes her refuse him categorically. At the same time, she is deeply shaken and thinks, “That she should receive an offer of marriage from Mr. Darcy! . . . it was gratifying to have inspired unconsciously so strong an affection” (216). Her feeling seems to be ambivalent. She considers that his crushing Jane’s happiness is unpardonable; at the same time, she is flattered by his strong affection and pleased with it. It is noteworthy that she does not exclude the supposition that her feelings are favourable. It is questionable whether she would still reject him, if she had not been informed of his interference.

During Elizabeth’s sojourn at Mr. Collins’ parsonage in Kent, Charlotte “had once or twice suggested to Elizabeth the possibility of his [Darcy’s] being partial to her . . . Mrs. Collins did not think it right to press the subject, from

the danger of raising expectations which might only end in disappointment; for in her opinion it admitted not of a doubt, that all her friend's dislike would vanish, if she could suppose him to be in her power" (203). It is noteworthy that Charlotte considers that Elizabeth will return Darcy's affection, if asked. Charlotte seems to perceive that Elizabeth's dislike is only pretension.

Darcy had no doubt that Elizabeth would accept his proposal when it was made for the first time. He recollects it later and says to Elizabeth, "I believed you to be wishing, expecting my addresses" (410). Elizabeth replies, "My manners must have been in fault, but not intentionally I assure you. I never meant to deceive you, but my spirits might often lead me wrong" (410). She states that her encouragement was not intentional. Although it is rather doubtful, we cannot expect that she will admit it. Elizabeth will not confess the use of "arts and allurements" to Lady Catherine, still less to Darcy.

After the engagement with Darcy, Elizabeth says to him, "The fact is, that you were sick of civility, of deference, of officious attention. You were disgusted with the women who were always speaking and looking, and thinking for *your* approbation alone. I roused, and interested you, because I was so unlike *them*" (421). Doesn't she perceive the type of woman, who will interest him at an early stage and act accordingly? It must be easy for her to detect the type he is disgusted with as Miss Bingley is always with him, and serves as a good example of what not to do.

Elizabeth's subsequent remark, "To be sure, you knew no actual good of me—but nobody thinks of *that* when they fall in love" (422) reminds us of Charlotte's comment, "it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life" (25), which was made just after the first ball. She says, "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. If the dispositions of the parties are ever so well known to each other, or ever so similar beforehand, it does not advance their felicity in the least" (25). Although Elizabeth replies, "You make me laugh, Charlotte" (25), Charlotte's remark might not be so easily disregarded. It appears to be a bad omen for Elizabeth's marriage, as she and Darcy might "always contrive to grow sufficiently unlike afterwards to have their share of vexation" (25).

Charlotte's statements are not to be trifled with. Her comment that "he [Mr. Bingley] may never do more than like her [Jane], if she does not help him on" (24) turns out to be true. Her observation, "My dear Eliza he [Mr. Darcy]

must be in love with you” (202) is also fulfilled. We, the readers are led to believe that the marriage between Elizabeth and Darcy will be a happy one; however, we might be deceived by our own expectation of a happy marriage.

To sum up, the examination of smiles and laughs in the text reveals that Elizabeth’s laughs contain sufficient defiant force to threaten social decorum and induce a marked change of personal relationship, especially with Mr. Darcy. While mutual affection is necessary for happiness in marriage for Jane, Elizabeth’s ideal might be more closely related to the position of mistress at Pemberley. It appears that Elizabeth is interested in Darcy as a possible partner at an early stage and arouses his interest in her. It seems that her “playfulness” (26), which has a penchant for joking, serves to make her statements sound unserious and provide a cover for her true feeling. The characterization of a heroine, who uses some kind of artifice under cover, might have been handed down from Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela*. Elizabeth’s eventual marriage with Darcy leads us to believe that it will be a happy one; however, we might be taken in and laughed at, not by Elizabeth but by the author.

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