

Original Paper

A Harmony in the Community Maintained by Diverse Characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to clarify the distinct meaning of harmony which Jane Austen created in one of her novels, *Pride and Prejudice*. Jane Austen is a writer who described the characters of her novels in great detail. In *Pride and Prejudice*, each character has his/her own unique characteristics, and several marriages are settled, including the heroine Elizabeth Bennet's marriage to Mr. Darcy. But what is important is not whether the heroine marries or not, but what the marriages mean for the characters in the novel, and above all, how each character accepts what they are and how they strive to live their own lives in the novel. Accordingly, Pemberley, Darcy's estate and the symbol of the harmony, is where Elizabeth and Darcy live on after the improvement of their inner lives.

1. Introduction

In *Pride and Prejudice*, when Mr. Darcy says to Elizabeth Bennet, who is lively and called "a studier of character"¹⁾ (47), that there are few subjects to study in the country, she answers that "people themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed in them for ever" (47). As she says in her letter to one of her nieces on September 9, 1814 that "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on"²⁾ (287) (sic), Jane Austen continues to elaborately describe her characters with great precision in her novels.

Tanner speaks of *Pride and Prejudice* as the story of a man who changed his behaviour and a woman who changed her way of thinking³⁾. It is sometimes necessary for the people who belong to a community to change their own behaviours or ways of thinking following the circumstances around them, the purpose of which is to secure the harmony inside the community or to maintain the community itself. Nevertheless, it is the members of the community who have the responsibilities to secure the harmony, and needless to say, there exist many kinds of human relationships inside the community even though the number of the families in the community is not more than three or four. As long as each person has a different character, it is natural that not only harmony but also a certain discord is produced in a community at all times.

In the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen shows us a harmony in the community maintained by different characters, both simple or intricate, by giving some comparisons or improvements. What would be the standard way of thinking at that time and what kind of harmony would Jane Austen intend to create

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in this novel? What would be expected of each character in the story in order to create or keep harmony? What would the symbol of the harmony bring about to some members of the community? The author of this paper attempts to find the answers to these questions.

2. Matrimony

2.1 *The marriage with prudence*

Matrimony is one of the important themes of *Pride and Prejudice*. In keeping with the opening line of the novel that "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (3) (sic), four couples marry in the novel: Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins, Lydia Bennet and Mr. Wickham, Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley, and the heroine Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. The marriages of Charlotte, Jane and Elizabeth are those with "a single man in possession of a good fortune," while the marriage of Lydia is an example of that without "a good fortune." The author of this paper will begin by examining what Jane Austen tried to represent through these four marriages.

The marriage of Charlotte and Mr. Collins is the first one to be held. But, in fact, Mr. Collins made an offer of marriage to Elizabeth first, though he was rejected immediately. Mr. Collins declared to Elizabeth his three reasons for marriage: first, "to set the example of matrimony in his parish," secondly, "it will add very greatly to my [his] happiness," and thirdly, "it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have [he has] the honour of calling patroness" (118). And he added as if he remembered suddenly that nothing remained "for me [him] but to assure you [Elizabeth] in the most animated language of the violence of my [his] affection" (119). This means that for him mutual affection between a man and a woman is not as important as the practical reasons to marry. Mr. Collins was not a sensible man by nature and neither education nor society could be useful to develop his character, and Austen as the narrator still adds as follows:

A fortunate chance had recommended him to Lady Catherine de Bourgh [Darcy's aunt] when the living of Hunsford was vacant; and the respect which he felt for her high rank, and his veneration for her as his patroness, mingling with a very good opinion of himself, of his authority as a clergyman, and his rights as a rector, made him altogether a mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance and humility. (78)

But he is also the heir to Longbourn estate. The fact that Mr. Collins is now a clergyman and at the death of Mr. Bennet is to inherit Longbourn with the yearly income of two thousand pounds means that he will be assured of the economic stability for his future wife and family, and that he has the adequate qualification to marry. So, Mrs. Bennet, who wishes to secure her daughters' lives by all means, was delighted at this offer and told Elizabeth to marry him. But Elizabeth rejected him, because she was "a studier of character" and could not approve of his disposition nor have any affection for him. Consequently, Mr. Collins made the second offer of marriage to Charlotte Lucas, only a few days after he was rejected by Elizabeth.

Charlotte, a woman 27 years of age, without beauty and with only a small fortune, knows herself well, and already made up her mind never to miss the opportunity to marry a respectable man. Jane Austen describes her reason to marry him thus:

Mr. Collins to be sure was neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome, and his attachment to her must be imaginary. But still he would be her husband.—Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want. This preservative she had now obtained; and at the age of twenty-seven, without having ever been handsome, she felt all the good luck of it. (138)

As Mr. Collins had his own reasons to propose to Elizabeth and Charlotte, Charlotte had her own practical

reasons to marry. The fact that her parents were satisfied with this marriage shows that Charlotte followed the standard of the prudence at that time. But Charlotte also knew that Elizabeth had a different idea about marriage: Elizabeth would not agree to a marriage without affection or respect. Indeed, she refused Mr. Collins with the words that he should "not consider her as an elegant female . . . but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart" (122). The prudence which Charlotte has as to marry Mr. Collins shows the standard way of thinking of the era of *Pride and Prejudice*, while Elizabeth, merely 20 years old, regards her own pride as a person more important than prudence. Therefore, Elizabeth needs some time to attain her ideal marriage.

As Tanner points out, the heroine Elizabeth and the hero Darcy show some improvement or development in the progress of the story, and this marriage of Charlotte plays an important role to the plot. A few months later, Elizabeth pays a visit and stays at Hunsford, Mr. Collins's rectory. The life of the Collinses at Hunsford is one example of the life with prudence without affection. Charlotte tries to share time and space with her husband as little as possible, and she even ignores what she does not want to see or hear concerning Mr. Collins. At the same time her words and behaviour prove her contentment with the life which she acquired with her prudence and force of character. However, Elizabeth at the moment does not have that realistic viewpoint.

2.2 *The marriage with affection*

In point of fact, the three daughters of the Bennet family, Jane, Elizabeth and Lydia, marry with affection toward their husbands. More than 20 years earlier, Mr. Bennet himself, who is now somewhat tired of his graceless wife and takes some pleasure in teasing her, was attracted by her beauty and married her. Therefore, Mr. Bennet accepts Elizabeth's refusal of Mr. Collins even when his wife insists her daughter marry Mr. Collins, and later he permits Elizabeth to marry Darcy when he is convinced of her affection and respect for Darcy. It is safe to say that although the author Jane Austen regarded financial stability as a necessary condition for a woman in rank to marry, she also thought that the marriage without affection or respect might not be sufficient enough if a woman wished to satisfy her inner life.

Concerning financial stability, both Bingley and Wickham do not have a house to inherit at hand. Bingley, the future husband of Jane, rented Netherfield when he first appeared in the novel. In addition, he has a gentle and considerate character, and so he is easily affected by the opinions of others. The fact that he does not have a settled estate should symbolize his instability of character. Nevertheless, he has a good fortune, and at the end of the story, after marrying Jane with mutual affection, he finally purchases an estate and settles in the county within thirty miles from Pemberley, Darcy's estate. In the meantime, Wickham has no fortune or estate nor stable social position himself, and his reason for elopement with Lydia is only to escape from his large debt. Therefore, Lydia and Wickham cannot easily settle down, and always need the support of their relations.

On the other hand, the hero Darcy had inherited Pemberley, which had been handed down for generations, years before he appeared in the story. And Mr. Collins now lives at the Hunsford rectory, but he is destined to inherit Longbourn estate when Mr. Bennet passes away. It is not too much to say of the marriages that in the case of Charlotte, she started her married life of financial stability without affection or respect, Lydia does not seem able to enjoy a stable married life with affection, while Jane will obtain both fortune and affection in her marriage. All three marriages have an influence on the marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy. At Hunsford, Elizabeth meets Darcy again and there she refuses his offer of marriage. But upon reading his letter the next day, she realizes her own pride and prejudice toward him, the awareness of which sets in motion her own inner development. At Darcy's Pemberley estate, Elizabeth chances to meet Darcy again. And just when their relationship seems to be moving into another phase, Lydia elopes with Wickham: Darcy manages to settle this somewhat scandalous marriage without the knowledge of Elizabeth. After Jane is engaged to Bingley, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, the aunt of Darcy, makes a visit to Longbourn and this leads Darcy to meet Elizabeth again, who is now deeply grateful to him and conscious of her own

affection for him, and she accepts his second proposal. Their marriage represents the harmony of fortune and affection with respect. And the outward symbol of this harmony is Pemberley, Darcy's estate.

2.3 The symbol of a harmony

Pemberley first appears in the novel when Elizabeth visits it with her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. The estate is there in front of Elizabeth as a majestic symbol of harmony between art and nature:

Elizabeth's mind was too full for conversation, but she saw and admired every remarkable spot and point of view. They gradually ascended for half a mile, and then found themselves at the top of a considerable eminence, where the wood ceased, and the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House, situated on the opposite side of a valley, into which the road with some abruptness wound. It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills;—and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something! (271)

In addition, Mrs. Reynolds, the housekeeper, is full of praise for Mr. Darcy, the proof of which Elizabeth sees with her own eyes in Pemberley House. The reason why Elizabeth is attracted by Pemberley is not that it appears splendidly gorgeous but that art and nature are existing together in harmony. What Elizabeth appreciates is not simply its genuine nature but its nature improved with minimal artificiality. She values not nature isolated from the society but nature harmoniously existing with the life of human beings. After examining Darcy's letter, Elizabeth reconsidered her own self and began to develop her inner self. She even has a fresh feeling toward him when she stands in front of his portrait. Austen as the narrator describes thus:

There was certainly at this moment, in Elizabeth's mind, a more gentle sensation towards the original [Darcy], than she had ever felt in the height of their acquaintance. . . . Every idea that had been brought forward by the housekeeper was favourable to his character, and as she stood before the canvas, on which he was represented, and fixed his eyes upon herself, she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression. (277)

It should be at this moment when she goes into Darcy's domain and it should be at Pemberley where Elizabeth reencounters Darcy, who also has experienced his own development after being refused by Elizabeth at Hunsford. Moreover, it should be Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner who step into Pemberley together with Elizabeth because they are the representatives of a harmony of financial stability and propriety, that is, social correctness with conscience, which Mr. and Mrs. Bennet were defined as wanting of. Darcy behaves with respect in an amiable way toward Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner even though Mr. Gardiner engages in business. There is a sensible reason for this.

3. Propriety

3.1 Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Gardiner

It is easy to find some comparisons in the novel between the propriety of the Bennets and that of the Gardiners, with the Gardiners in fact having noticeable roles in the novel. For instance, Elizabeth Bennet is a lively character and the favorite daughter of Mr. Bennet as he says his daughters "are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy [Elizabeth] has something more of quickness than her sisters" (5). And yet she sometimes becomes a shortsighted critic to judge others with her first impressions or too confident

in her own opinion. Besides, Elizabeth long maintained her initial intense dislike toward Caroline Bingley and Darcy. Mrs. Bennet has a similar disposition to Elizabeth. The important point is whether Elizabeth persists with her own fixed ideas in the community just like Mrs. Bennet, or whether she can make progress to acquire a new point of view to go into another phase of her life.

Although it is true that Elizabeth relies on Mrs. Bennet's motherliness, it is also true that Elizabeth has been reluctant to manage Mrs. Bennet's want of propriety long before Darcy points it out to her. It is Mrs. Gardiner who plays an important role of guiding Elizabeth in place of Mrs. Bennet. When she noticed that Elizabeth and Wickham had considerably friendly sentiments for each other, Mrs. Gardiner gave this advice to Elizabeth:

Seriously, I would have you be on your guard. Do not involve yourself, or endeavour to involve him in an affection which the want of fortune would make so very imprudent. I have nothing to say against *him*; he is a most interesting young man; and if he had the fortune he ought to have, I should think you could not do better. But as it is—you must not let your fancy run away with you. You have sense, and we all expect you to use it. Your father would depend on *your* resolution and good conduct, I am sure. You must not disappoint your father.
(163)

As Ross says that though "no respecter of rank, or fortune, she [Elizabeth] possesses true 'elegance' of mind and manners, and recognizes when society's codes should, or should not, be respected⁴⁾" (17) and so she promised Mrs. Gardiner that she would not be in a hurry.

Mrs. Gardiner is the wife of Mr. Gardiner, who is a brother of Mrs. Bennet but "a sensible, gentleman-like man, greatly superior to his sister as well by nature as education" (158) and engages in business in London. Mrs. Gardiner is described as "an amiable, intelligent, elegant woman" (158). Although they are considered in a rank lower than the gentry, they live in affluent circumstances and provide their nieces opportunities to stay with them in town. The journey to Derbyshire was settled by Mr. Gardiner's business activities and their visit to Pemberley was originally the wish of Mrs. Gardiner, both of which led to the accidental reunion of Elizabeth and Darcy. When Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner first met Darcy at Pemberley, they behaved with the socially acceptable manners, which made Elizabeth proud: Mrs. Gardiner was standing a little behind of Elizabeth and waited until Darcy asked Elizabeth to introduce them to him, and the conversation between Darcy and Mr. Gardiner made her "gloried in every expression, every sentence of her uncle, which marked his intelligence, his taste, or his good manners." (282) (Elizabeth was astonished when Mr. Collins introduced himself to Darcy uninvited at the Netherfield Ball). Darcy condemned in his letter that many of the Bennets lacked social correctness, and there is no description of either Mrs. Bennet developing her inner self or visiting Pemberley. But Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner keep on good terms with the Darcy couple and the novel ends with the description of this relationship. This verifies that Darcy respects the Gardiners' propriety.

3.2 *Mr. Bennet and Mr. Gardiner*

It is also true that Mr. Bennet appears to be an insufficient gentleman. Elizabeth, his favorite daughter, is proud of Mr. Bennet and shares a lot of common sense with him. But Darcy challenges her pride: Darcy confessed that one of his reasons for disturbing the marriage of Bingley and Jane was the want of propriety of the Bennets, with the exceptions of only Jane and Elizabeth. Elizabeth was very resentful of this indication at first, but there are several incidents in the story to be found verifying it. Mr. Bennet was late to realize that having no son he would have to secure his family's economic stability in preparation for his own death. He does not also appear to have sufficient leadership to guide his family to acquire propriety. Austen as the narrator says that Mr. Bennet is "so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice" (5), that his wife cannot understand him. Hirono says that "he is described as a spiritless person who wastes his innate talent⁵⁾" (147). Without adequate communication, they cannot acquire any common

knowledge of the world nor can they improve themselves.

It is a perfect example of his inadequacy when he can do nothing to thwart Lydia's elopement with Wickham. On the other hand, Darcy regained his sister Georgiana when she was about to elope with Wickham one year earlier, and even on Lydia's elopement, Darcy meets Lydia, negotiates with Wickham, and settles this matter in place of Mr. Bennet. Besides, it is very symbolic that Darcy shares the information concerning Lydia and Wickham not with Mr. Bennet but with Mr. Gardiner. Darcy is a landlord who acts after observing and judging by himself, and if he chooses to visit Mr. Gardiner after Mr. Bennet's leaving London for Longbourn, it means that a respectable landlord such as Mr. Darcy judges that Mr. Bennet lacks not only social correctness but also adequate ability to manage the elopement of Lydia, while he regards Mr. Gardiner as a desirable partner to solve the problem together. It is obvious that Darcy judged Mr. Gardiner to be a person with propriety and a respectable character when they met at Pemberley. Although regarded as a person in a lower rank than the gentry class as he is in business and lives in Cheapside in London, Darcy, whose mother was a daughter of an earl, never behaves disrespectfully toward Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. Though he wrote in his letter to Elizabeth that "want of propriety" (220) of the Bennet family was a most serious problem, Darcy shows flexibility in his principle in his behavior toward Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner who have propriety which he respects.

In fact, while there is a lot of high praise for Darcy by Mrs. Reynolds, Pemberley's housekeeper, and descriptions of Darcy's respectable behaviours as an ideal landlord of Pemberley, there can be found no description of that kind respecting Mr. Bennet. Darcy never allows Wickham, who has given troubles to Darcy, to visit Pemberley, while Mr. Bennet agrees to let Wickham enter Longbourn as Lydia's husband. This must be another example of Darcy, the landlord of Pemberley, as a symbol of harmony, and Mr. Bennet of Longbourn, as that of confusion.

4. Development

4.1 Darcy

Nevertheless, Darcy is not a character who can willingly associate with the people in the rank of Mr. Gardiner straight away. Darcy first appeared in the story at the dance party at Meryton as a person who belonged to a social circle higher than Meryton and felt no necessity to keep in harmony with the Meryton community. Unlike Bingley, he had no intention to talk or dance with ladies whom he did not know well. Even when Bingley recommended him to dance with Elizabeth, Darcy replied that she was "tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*" (12), and never talked nor danced with her. At another occasion when Sir William Lucas said to Darcy that he considered dancing "as one of the first refinements of polished societies" (28), Darcy replied that "it has the advantage also of being in vogue amongst the less polished societies of the world.—Every savage can dance" (28) (sic). Darcy undoubtedly had a sense of pride according to his high social standing. And that was the reason he began his first offer of marriage to Elizabeth, without imagining her refusal, in this way: "In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you" (211). Moreover, after he was certain that Elizabeth would never accept his offer of marriage, Darcy burst out his feelings:

But perhaps . . . these offences might have been overlooked, had not your pride been hurt by my honest confession of the scruples that had long prevented my forming any serious design. These bitter accusations might have been suppressed, had I with greater policy concealed my struggles, and flattered you into the belief of my being impelled by unqualified, unalloyed inclination; by reason, by reflection, by every thing. But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence. Nor am I ashamed of the feelings I related. They were natural and just. Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections? To congratulate myself on the hope of relations, whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath my own? (214-215)

There can be found in these words his struggle that he had been suffering in his love for Elizabeth and

the recognition of the lower social rank of her relations. At the same time, it shows his acute observation that Elizabeth had a pride that would never flatter him, and his sincerity of his dislike for disguise and his respect for justice. Elizabeth replied to his confession in this way: "You are mistaken, Mr. Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentleman-like manner" (215). Darcy later confesses that this statement of hers gave him a great shock and guided him into the process of self-improvement. Now, as he has completed his improvement, he is certain that marrying Elizabeth is not a disgrace, and his attitude toward Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner at Pemberley is one reliable evidence to support his self-development.

Truth to say, Darcy is a man with an observant eye and reason, and who can make an endeavor to improve himself at an early stage. During her stay at Netherfield to take care of her sister Jane with a cold, Elizabeth had some conversations with Darcy, during one of which she said that she laughed at "Follies, nonsense, whims and inconsistencies" (62) (sic) and that Darcy seemed not to have those defects sarcastically. Darcy replied that it had "been the study of my [his] life to avoid those weaknesses" (63). He also added:

I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding. My temper I dare not vouch for.—It is I believe too little yielding—certainly too little for the convenience of the world. I cannot forget the follies and vices of others so soon as I ought, nor their offences against myself. My feelings are not puffed about with every attempt to move them. My temper would perhaps be called resentful.—My good opinion once lost is lost for ever. (63)

If the truth must be confessed, the behaviour of Elizabeth toward Darcy was very similar to what he described above concerning himself, which she disclosed when she refused his first offer of marriage with her dislike of him. At the same time, Darcy believed that there "is . . . in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome" (63) (sic), which reminds us of Mr. Collins as we have already seen. Nonetheless, to put it the other way around, his words means that there are some faults that we can overcome by our own efforts. With this point of view, Darcy continued to improve himself and later behaves in a gentleman-like manner toward Elizabeth, and even toward Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner at Pemberley.

4.2 Elizabeth

On the other hand, Elizabeth is another character who can develop herself. In the same way as Elizabeth's refusal of his offer of marriage was an opportunity for Darcy's self-development, the letter that Elizabeth received from Darcy was an occasion for her development. Darcy said in his letter that the principal reasons he did not approve of Bingley marrying Jane was not the undesirable social rank of the Bennets' relations but the Bennets' "total want of propriety" (220) and Darcy's misjudgment of Jane's affection for Bingley, while also exposing the true disposition of Wickham. Elizabeth began reading it with curiosity, but gradually she was compelled to approve of what was written in the letter. The "total want of propriety" of her own family, except for Jane and herself, was an undeniable fact indeed, and she remembered that Charlotte told her months earlier that Jane should express much more of her affection for Bingley in order to acquire him. Elizabeth also realized the falseness of what Wickham had said to her, which had been the basis of most of her dislike of Darcy. Thus, reading this letter led to the opening of her eyes to the truth:

She grew absolutely ashamed of herself.—Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think without feeling that she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd.

"How despicably have I acted!" she cried.—"I, who have prided myself on my discernment!—I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my

vanity, in useless or blameable distrust.—How humiliating is this discovery!—Yet, how just a humiliation! . . . Pleased with the preference of one [Wickham], and offended by the neglect of the other [Darcy], on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself." (230)

As Butler says, Darcy and Elizabeth are, although "for different reasons, both are equally likely to be severe on others"⁶⁾ (205). However, both of them have the flexibility to accept the fact and face the truth, and never miss the chance to develop themselves. That is the reason why Tanner defines *Pride and Prejudice* as "a drama of recognition—re-recognition" (105), and Elizabeth as "a girl who learned to change her mind," (106) while Darcy's improvement is "that he comes to acknowledge the justness of much of what she [Elizabeth] has said about his behaviour and manner"³⁾ (113).

Tanner also makes a comment that for "Jane Austen . . . the individual needs to be *both* an experiencer *and* a reasoner: the former without the latter is error-prone, the latter without the former is useless if not impossible"³⁾ (110). Both Elizabeth and Darcy have passed through a variety of experiences which will be the foundation of their reason. That is how they acquire mutual understanding between and affection for each other, and they attain the second offer of marriage after all.

5. Conclusion

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy is a character who tends to control his own feelings. However, when he is with Elizabeth, his behaviour toward her is considerably natural, though maintaining propriety. Therefore, Caroline Bingley, who had affection for Darcy, Charlotte, who had an observant eye, and Mrs. Gardiner, who had a role to guide Elizabeth, noticed his affection for Elizabeth at an early stage. Notwithstanding, Elizabeth needs time and experience to be aware that Darcy is fascinated with her, and that she herself is attracted to him. Just as all three marriages taught her lessons of life, Elizabeth had learned that a happy marriage required a respectful and equal relationship by observing her parents, as Sakata says⁷⁾. Sakata also says⁷⁾ that it is ironic Mr. Bennet says these words to Elizabeth before he gives permission of marriage to her: "I know that you could be neither happy nor respectable, unless you truly esteemed your husband; unless you looked up to him as a superior" (418). Regarding Elizabeth's affection for Darcy, Austen as the narrator says, "gratitude and esteem are good foundations of affection" (308). Jane Austen also describes the value of their marriage as such:

She [Elizabeth] began now to comprehend that he was exactly the man, who, in disposition and talents, would most suit her. His understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would have answered all her wishes. It was an union that must have been to the advantage of both; by her ease and liveliness, his mind might have been softened, his manners improved, and from his judgment, information, and knowledge of the world, she must have received benefit of greater importance. (344)

Her affection for Darcy does not begin so passionately as that she once felt toward Wickham, but there exist some differences between these two affections: the former for Darcy is based on gratitude and respect which she has acquired after some experiences, while the latter for Wickham was based on the first impression which did not come to bear fruit.

In addition, when Lady Catherine de Bourgh visits Elizabeth to give her a warning not to marry Darcy, Elizabeth says to Lady Catherine: "In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal" (395). In fact, there is a big difference between the Darcy family, with aristocratic relations and ten thousand pounds a year, and the Bennet family, with an attorney and a tradesman for relations and only two thousand a year. Elizabeth is not likely to be so proud of her belonging to the gentry class, but we find in her words above that she really has a pride as a member of the gentry, and that may be one reason she acknowledges and shares

the harmony represented by Pemberley and gives value to Mrs. Reynolds's praise of Darcy. However, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, who belong to the business community, have propriety, and Sir William and the late father of Bingley built a fortune in trade and acquired a social status. It shows that Jane Austen valued the traditional social system, and at the same time recognized the importance of economic stability. The fact that Bingley is a close friend of Darcy and Darcy truly respects the acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner also shows that Jane Austen set a high value on propriety, or the social correctness of her day. Therefore, it is essential that Elizabeth and Darcy, both of whom have completed their inner improvement, should meet again at Pemberley, the symbol of harmony, with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, who have both propriety and fortune. Duckworth says:

here . . . excellent aesthetic taste denotes an excellence of moral character. Thus, when Elizabeth comes to exclaim to herself that "to be mistress of Pemberley might be something" (245), she has, we might conjecture, come to recognize not merely the money and the status of Pemberley, but its value as the setting of a traditional social and ethical orientation, its possibilities—seemingly now only hypothetical—as a context for her responsible social activity.⁸⁾ (124) (sic)

Such characters as Wickham (after he left Pemberley years earlier), Mrs. Bennet or Mr. Collins, never set foot on Pemberley in this novel. It appears that the persons who are allowed to enter Pemberley, the symbol of a certain ideal harmony, are the persons whom Jane Austen would estimate and trust to the future of the community. Nevertheless, all those characters are necessary to give Elizabeth and Darcy lessons of what is important in their lives and opportunities to improve themselves. Above all, every community consists of a variety of people and every one of them is indispensable in the community. If the intention of Jane Austen to write a novel is to give a good picture of the ordinary life, it is very natural that we should find both distinctive characters in her novels whom we can respect and whom we find it difficult to share our values with. In other words, the harmony of the community is maintained by all the existences of those who belong to the community. In this point, the words of Jane Austen that "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on," is proved correct in her novel *Pride and Prejudice*.

Notes

† 1) All quotes from *Pride and Prejudice* come from *Pride and Prejudice. The Cambridge edition of the works of Jane Austen*, written by Jane Austen and edited by Pat Rogers.

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