

Chapter 5: Pride and Prejudice, love and recognition

Morality in the novel is the trembling instability of the balance.

D. H. Lawrence, 'Morality and the Novel'¹

The 'great subjects' of Pride and Prejudice, as Lilian Robinson put it, are 'class, love, money and marriage.'² The producer of the successful BBC television version of the novel first shown in 1995 declares too that 'though it's about many things, it's principally about sex, and it's about money: those are the driving motives of the plot.'³ This film, which I shall refer to later in this chapter, very convincingly represents the sexual attraction that impels Fitzwilliam Darcy towards Elizabeth Bennet, and also contrives to suggest that Elizabeth is unconsciously attracted towards him.⁴ The critical tradition has generally insisted however that there is another thread to the plot that is equally, if not more, crucial, a thread one might briefly call epistemology.⁵ The novel is 'most importantly', wrote Tony Tanner, for example, 'about prejudging and rejudging. It is a drama of recognition - recognition, that act by which the mind can look again at a thing and if necessary make revisions and amendments until it sees the thing as it really is.'⁶ Such readings, in which Elizabeth, in Marilyn Butler's words, arrives at 'true criticism of the self via correct, humbling assessment of another'⁷ are plentiful, but come uncomfortably close to the 'girl being taught a lesson' syndrome pilloried by Sedgwick, and risk suggesting that Elizabeth accepts Darcy the second time round solely because he is so kind to his servants and so decent to the Gardiners (or, on the other hand, because of the magnificent grounds of Pemberley!). Nevertheless the novel does rather insistently call the reader's attention to the difficulty and importance of 'knowing' another person's character. In this chapter I offer a reading of Pride and Prejudice that fuses the novel's undoubted interest in epistemology with its equally obvious appeal as a story about love. I've tried to recreate this familiar text in new terms. Reading the novel requires, I will argue, that we give both 'recognition' and 'love' enhanced, richer meanings.

As in the common English idiom 'I see!' meaning 'I understand!' knowing and the visual are interwoven in Pride and Prejudice. To understand someone by observing them closely plays an important part in the novel's plot, since it is by misreading Jane Bennet's countenance and demeanour that Darcy makes his worst error. Complementing the early action in which Darcy looks at Elizabeth and Elizabeth tries to gauge the meaning of his gaze is a series of exchanges in which the link is explicitly made between observing someone and possessing a knowledge of them. Often this is further figured as 'taking' a picture. A character is a portrait in which, for instance, 'implacable resentment is a shade.' (58) 'I have always seen a great similarity in the turn of our minds,' says Elizabeth, teasingly, at the Netherfield ball: to which Darcy responds that her comments offer no 'striking resemblance' of her own character. 'How near it may be to mine, I cannot pretend to say - You think it a faithful portrait undoubtedly,' he then remarks (91). 'I could wish, Miss Bennet, that you were not to sketch my character at the present moment', he soon decides: 'But if I do not take your likeness now, I may never have another opportunity' she replies (94). Attempting to 'illustrate' Darcy's character, she finds she does not get on at all.

Another twist is given to this thread of the novel when it becomes clear that 'taking a likeness' is very often indistinguishable from giving or making one. 'First impressions', the novel's original title, suggests this Janus-like quality: not only what you 'impress' upon me as your character or reality (you being the agent), but also what I impress upon you through my own prejudices and expectations. All too often what happens when people respond to others in this novel is more nearly akin to what psychologists as early as David Hume would call 'projection', not taking, but putting into, the attribution to others of what we feel or desire ourselves. This is specifically noted when the newly-married Lydia and Bingley are due to come on to Longbourn. 'Their arrival was dreaded by the elder Miss Bennets; and Jane especially, who gave Lydia the feelings which would have attended herself, had she

been the culprit, was wretched in the thought of what her sister must endure.' (315) Elizabeth earlier has imagined how 'miserable' Lydia will be 'when she first sees my aunt' (305): both projections amusingly at odds with Lydia's own aplomb when she eventually arrives on the scene. More critically, when Charlotte declares that 'Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance,' Elizabeth assumes that this is being put forward in the same spirit in which she herself delights in sometimes professing opinions she does not hold (23). And when Elizabeth says that Darcy 'has a very satirical eye' (22) her interpretation of the meaning of his gaze owes more, it becomes clear, to her own temperament and expectations than it does to his.

A more insidious form of projection consists not just in attributing one's own feelings to another, but giving them one's own desires. This comes closer to the heart of the novel's investigation of what it means to really know someone. 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.' This is the narrator assuming a voice in order to expose how widespread is the attribution to others of what we ourselves wish. The Mrs Bennets of this world bestow their own desires on the young men who are their object. 'Is that his design in settling here?'(4): Mr Bennet's reply crisply exposes the absurdity of what Rachel Brownstein calls this 'gossip's fantasy', but it is inveterate.⁸ Conflating another's interests with one's own desires is so endemic that Austen seems to feel it requires no complicated irony: Charlotte Lucas, for example, in her 'kind schemes for Elizabeth' at Hunsford lets her own ambitions for her husband's preferment displace her initial focus on her friend (181). When, in an unusual moment, Lady Catherine actually perceives that Darcy is low-spirited (after the rejection of his proposal by Elizabeth) she has no difficulty in attributing it to his unwillingness to leave Rosings, thus substituting her own desires for the marriage with Miss Anne, for his (210).⁹

Several figures exist at the extreme end of a spectrum in the novel, as if their presence were there merely to mark the point of inveterate projection. For Mr Collins, if one attractive and marriageable young woman is not available, then another will fit the bill

just as well ('it was soon done - done while Mrs Bennet was stirring the fire' (71)). The young women he courts have no real existence for him: what matters is how they suit his schemes. (Just as for Lydia, one redcoat is very much like another: 'her affections [were] continually fluctuating, but never without an object' (280)). Without reflection, Collins attributes to poor young women what Mrs Bennet attributes to rich young men: desire for what he wants. He has no inkling that others have lives and motives independent of himself (his attachment to her must be 'imaginary', as Elizabeth succinctly remarks), and his proposal turns on what Elizabeth will contribute to his happiness, not he to hers. And because neither she, nor anyone else, exists for him, he is incapable of change. Taking up the novel's own pictorial metaphor, it seems natural to say that he is both aesthetically and morally a 'caricature'.¹⁰

At the other end of the continuum is such a self-scrutinising figure as Darcy, and this aspect of his nature is examined through his friendship with Bingley. The relation of Elizabeth and Mrs Gardiner, as Claudia Johnson points out, is a model of 'rational friendship, where domination plays no part'.¹¹ On the other hand, Bingley's persuasibility and Darcy's intellectual superiority disturb the balance of their relationship, and make it possible for Darcy to treat Bingley as a surrogate, proxy, or experimental self. It is suggested that his plans for his sister and Bingley influence his endeavour to separate his friend from Miss Bennet 'without meaning' that they should (270). But one might go further: not all of Darcy's cautions about judging objectively can guard him from using Bingley as part of his own internal system of defence - making Bingley's separation from Jane Bennet do duty for his own wish to break free from Elizabeth. 'Towards him I have been kinder than towards myself' (191): the maladroitness of this remark in the proposal scene betrays the confusion into which he has been led. Hence, as he recognises, he finds himself seduced by 'unworthy' motives, since he obeys his unconscious wishes rather than his own principles in keeping the knowledge of Jane's being in London from Bingley.

Pride and Prejudice, then, is certainly about knowing, knowing oneself and other people, as well as about money and sex. 'Till this moment, I never knew myself!' (208): in the BBC film, the painful process through which Elizabeth Bennet comes to understand that she has been mistaken about Darcy is given very short shrift - thrown away in a bedroom scene in which Jane and Elizabeth pour into each other's bosoms the balm of sisterly consolation - but it fills a critical chapter in the novel, as everyone acknowledges. At the same time, it is only half the story. Accounts that represent Elizabeth merely as a thinking being, rather than as a selfhood, a locus of subjective experience, both conscious and unconscious, tend to leave out a whole dimension of the readerly experience of the novel - the perennial fascination of what is actually going on in those dialogues between Darcy and Elizabeth. Moreover, 'knowing' in the novel, I suggest, is very intimately bound up with its understanding of what it is to love someone. The novel is certainly about love, even if it is no more exclusively about the romantic love that consumes the other in its own yearnings than it is about 'sex' as an appetite. But the fundamental weakness of such readings is that their conception of what it is to 'know' another person is psychologically naive.

Such an account of Darcy's motives as I have given above would be open to the familiar criticism that one is 'psychoanalysing' the characters as if they were 'real' people. An objection like this rests upon rather unreflective notions about the reality of actual people. When one says that other people are 'real' one is not referring to their physical presence near or around one. Their 'reality' refers to the degree to which they are present to us, and thus must refer to the degree they become real in our thoughts and imaginations. The kind of novel Jane Austen writes depends upon the reader identifying in turn and sometimes virtually simultaneously with several characters. But the 'caricatures' in Pride and Prejudice - Collins, Mrs Bennet, Lady Catherine, Lydia - have no meaningful interaction with the outside world of others' feelings, and thus are stuck in a set of repetitive behavioural styles. They correspond, I suggest, to the presence of some 'real' people in our mental landscape. Such people (politicians, celebrities, for example, but also acquaintances) occupy a space in the inner theatre like that of the caricature, for in the economy of our

psychological lives we cannot spare the energy to lend them an inner being. Instead they serve as objects: objects onto which we may project, or into which we may invest, atavistic propensities of our own. We may think of them as wholly bad, or as buffoons, or admire them as heroes and heroines. We make do, in other words, with partial and stereotyped notions of others. The novel is populated with some figures who have only one gesture (Sir William Lucas) or a limited repertoire of personality traits (Bingley), who thus correspond to the far off and nearer figures in the inner world, and with others who come closer to that full, complex emotional life we usually ascribe to ourselves. It is one of its pleasures that Mr Bennet, whom we are in the habit of understanding in one mode, emerges, as when he speaks to Elizabeth about marriage, as a person in another.¹² But in ordinary life almost all of our internal representations of others are partial, prejudiced, incomplete. Few, very few, actual people, one ventures to assert, are present to us as 'real', their feelings and motives as fully and unequivocally known to us as those of the protagonist of a novel, as an Elizabeth Bennet.

The novel's representation of people then corresponds to modalities of the psychological life, in which others are present to us as what psychoanalysis calls 'internal objects'. Winnicott's last, and influential paper, 'The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications' which I have discussed in Chapter 2, turns on this, and looks at how we escape from this mode.¹³ 'The Use of an Object' describes how the analyst is present to the patient almost wholly as a partial being - as someone who can stand in for, or represent others. The analyst is 'related' to through 'identifications', those modes of being with others which throw, so to speak, the cloak of one's own desires and needs over the other person and respond to him or her in this psychological costume. Because the patient never makes contact with the analyst as a real other being, he or she operates in an 'omnipotent', self-enclosed, domain. However, Winnicott suggested, there are moments in the treatment when the analyst must withstand negative or hate-filled attacks from the patient, and when this happens something crucial can take place. In the intimacy of the psychoanalytic contact, as in the closeness of the family - 'Tease him - laugh at him. - Intimate as you are, you must

know how it is to be done' (57) - a patient learns what are the analyst's weak spots. Such attacks can be difficult to field (as Winnicott remarks in a characteristic footnote, 'when the analyst knows the patient carries a revolver, it seems to me, this work cannot be done!'¹⁴). But if the analyst survives this 'destruction', does not succumb to the patient's mood or retaliate, does not feel resentment or hatred, he or she becomes established as an independently existing being, both steadying and exhilarating because he or she truly exists.

The later analyst and social critic, Jessica Benjamin, develops these thoughts of Winnicott's, taking them beyond the consulting room to a general theory of human relations. Benjamin's work in Like Subjects, Love Objects (1995) and Shadow of the Other (1998) as with her earlier The Bonds of Love (1988),¹⁵ has been focused, perhaps more explicitly than any earlier psychoanalytic thinker, on the phenomena of human relations we call love. Winnicott saw 'relating through identifications' and the 'use of an object' as successive developmental stages in the drama of human affections: for Benjamin they are more like positions, simultaneous and intermittent potentialities of the psyche, and this perception enables her to extend his thinking more explicitly into the realm of ethics.

The traditional focus of psychoanalysis on the processes occurring within the individual psyche can certainly throw some light on Pride and Prejudice. Its understanding of projection, in which 'the subject attributes tendencies, desires etc., to others that he refuses to recognise in himself' is an example.¹⁶ This might suggest why Elizabeth makes no progress in her avowed design of understanding Darcy, of painting a portrait, or taking a sketch of his nature. Her declared aim is always being undercut and subverted by her unconscious wishes. One might say that Elizabeth denies Darcy's subjectivity at the same time as she professes to invite it to speak. Elizabeth disowns parts of herself and bestows them instead on Darcy. For it is plain that Elizabeth, who is 'determined to dislike' Darcy (as she tells Charlotte, in half-jest) herself enacts just that 'implacable resentment' she attributes to him - building on that first insult and making everything else she hears from or about him, feed into this original orientation. In a series of encounters Elizabeth attributes to

Darcy the very emotions that are driving her - pride and prejudice among them.¹⁷ Her anger at his words about her family's behaviour enables her to forget or displace her own sense of shame, or rather it converts that shame into anger against him. Her hatred of her mother, for example, which Darcy's presence makes her experience most keenly, is naturally projected onto him. Thus this 'Mr Darcy' is for Elizabeth not someone who is perceived in his own right (so to speak) but someone who plays a role in her psychological life, as receptacle of her own projections and needs.

And to an extent less illuminated by the text, it seems the same is true of Darcy's relation to Elizabeth. In a different way, he attributes his own desires to her, so that up to the proposal, as he later confesses, he believes that she wishes for, and is even 'expecting his addresses' (369). Just as it was taken for granted that a young man in possession of a fortune would seek a wife, Darcy assumes that a young lady in want of a fortune would accept a husband with one: but this is not all. As Elizabeth realises, listening to him in the proposal scene, she has no real presence to him: he is, in effect, though speaking in her company, conducting an inner dialogue with himself. His passion for her contains no element of perception of her as an independently existing being (hence, as in the formality of his proposal address, what Johnson calls its 'appalling resemblance'¹⁸ to Mr Collins's).

It is such processes - the way that selves make use of other selves, fantasising about them, incorporating them into their own psychic life - that psychoanalysis classically studied and illuminated. It is as if the self radiates out, and the phenomena of the external world, other people, were only visible in its own light. But through psychoanalysis's intense focus on the individual in whom they are enacted, the discourse itself tended to reproduce precisely that solecism - the focus on the operations of the monadic individual psyche - in its own theoretical writings. It seemed to suggest that this is all that need be said about normal human relations, that others exist for a human subject wholly as receptacles and vehicles for their psychic needs, or as 'objects' for their impulses. Jessica Benjamin argues that this concentration on 'object relations' very largely does reflect the nature of human

psychological life. But, she insists, there are moments when we get beyond this - when we see others as existing outside ourselves with their own 'equivalent centres of self' (a phrase from George Eliot she uses as an epigraph).¹⁹ Drawing on Hegel's concept of the master-slave relation, she argues that, most of the time, our relationships with others are relations of 'domination', in which we make psychological (ab)use of them. Darcy is using Elizabeth in this way in his first proposal - he addresses her not as an individual being but, as Rachel Brownstein puts it, as just another girl with an vulgar mother.²⁰ He is in 'the bonds of love', so overwhelmed by 'the utmost force of passion' (198) that he is in fact oblivious to the person he is addressing - a classic instance of love as domination.

This is the psychological state commonly called 'romantic' love. Romantic love is obsessed with the other person and idealises them, but does not perceive them as other to the self. On the contrary it merges self and other ('Nelly, I am Heathcliff!'²¹). It reproduces some aspects of the infant's earliest relation to the mother, in which the mother is only present to the infant, as a supplementary self, serving the immature ego's emotional needs. The patient in classical analysis makes use of the psychoanalyst in the same way, the analyst's neutral demeanour facilitating the patient's freedom to employ her for whatever psychological purposes he or she requires. But Benjamin argues, after Winnicott, that something beyond this must occur for the patient to truly develop. Benjamin calls this the moment of 'recognition.' This recognition that the other person is what she calls a 'like subject', just as much a fully human being as I am myself, this shift into the realm of the intersubjective, involves a momentous psychological, and epistemological, alteration. The 'love' of the 'outside other', as Benjamin puts it, 'is a continuation under more complex conditions of the infant's original fascination with and love of what is outside, her appreciation of difference and novelty.'²²

'Recognition' is an obviously helpful term in the context of Pride and Prejudice because it chimes in with the novel's emphasis on the visual. To recognise someone in this larger, deeper sense, though, is not just to see him or her clearly, as an object might be seen,

but simultaneously to love them and respect their own nature. Nor is it merely 'that act by which the mind can...make revisions and amendments until it sees the thing as it really is,' as Tanner describes it.²³ An act of the whole being, not just of the mind, it names that capacity to respond to the other person not merely as a repository for one's own desires, hopes, fears, anxieties and dreams, but as a wholly different (and equivalently human) other person, a 'like subject.' But, as Benjamin repeatedly emphasises, this can never be a permanent or continuous capacity of the psyche: the moments in which one sees the other in their own light fall constantly under siege to the inveterate human propensity to shadow that other with one's own inner needs and hidden purposes. Recognition is momentarily plucked out of the continual common traffic of reciprocal domination.

Benjamin's concept suggests that Jane Austen thinks through the category of 'knowing' - knowing someone else - as an emotional, even erotic, as well as an epistemological ideal. Such a notion of recognition, then, takes in more than knowledge, philosophically understood.²⁴ and on the other hand it is rather different from our usual conception of 'understanding' another person. Benjamin makes reference to the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas's concept of 'alterity', which clarifies the distinction. The two writers have in common a belief that acknowledgment of the other is at the heart of ethics. In Levinas's thinking an ethical relation to the other (the 'Altrui') is to their alterity, but this is not to be obtained through 'empathy' or the enveloping of others in our own sympathetic feeling, the route of 'understanding'.²⁵ Recognition of another in this sense is simply the dispersion of one's own self-understanding onto another. This mode is exemplified in the novel pre-eminently by Jane Bennet. But Jane's sympathy for others is not recognition of their difference from herself: on the contrary, it is guaranteed by her assimilation of everyone else to herself, qualified by her inability to acknowledge that others have radically different being from her own. If Elizabeth is to reach recognition of Darcy's otherness, and he of her's, it must be by a quite different path.

Jane Austen's comment that Pride and Prejudice is 'rather too light, and bright, and sparkling' has received more attention than her remark that she has 'lopt & cropt' the manuscript.²⁶ Yet the two comments complement each other. Pride and Prejudice is a novel in which much is not told. What is not commented upon, amplified, or contextualised, is crucially important, and interruptions, breaks, and what is withheld from our understanding, often contribute decisively to the novel's intellectual and emotional excitement. Early in Pride and Prejudice, when Charlotte Lucas expresses her cynical opinion of marriage, Elizabeth replies 'You make me laugh, Charlotte, but it is not sound. You know it is not sound, and that you would never act this way yourself.' (23) Their dialogue ceases at this point. How Charlotte responds to this - whether she replies, whether she smiles wryly, whether she raises her eyebrows - is unknown, since the next paragraph turns immediately to another topic, Mr Darcy's beginning to find Elizabeth 'an object of some interest.' The effect is that the reader is left to take up Elizabeth's opinion as his or her own, pockets as a piece of knowledge what has later to be painfully repaid.

The pruning away of material - the absence of many indications of facial expression, of guiding commentary from the narrator, even of scene setting (so that as is often remarked, Mr and Mrs Bennet's opening dialogue might be written for the stage) - has critical consequences for the reading of Elizabeth and Darcy's dialogues leading up to the proposal scene. In that scene, the changing expressions on Darcy's face play an important role in the reader's understanding of the drama. But in earlier exchanges almost the only facet of physical representation recorded is that Darcy 'smiles' quite commonly before speaking. Except for one instance at Hunsford (179) what is not recorded is whether Elizabeth notices these smiles, what effect they have on her, if and how they disturb her fixed idea of him. This means that when it comes to the interpretation of Mr Darcy, the reader is more or less on his or her own, or guided by Elizabeth's responses.

'What most satisfies us in reading the dialogue in Pride and Prejudice', wrote Reuben Brower, 'is Jane Austen's awareness that it is difficult to know any complex person, that knowledge of a man like Darcy is an interpretation and a construction, not a simple absolute'.²⁷ He was commenting on such dialogues as that in which Elizabeth expresses herself 'perfectly convinced that Mr Darcy has no defect. He owns it himself without disguise', a challenge he takes up:

'No' - said Darcy, 'I have made no such pretension. 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 as 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.' (58)

Disputing Marilyn Butler's description of Darcy's manner as 'though stiff, careful, scrupulous, truthful',²⁸ an acute recent critic, Mary Waldron, calls these remarks 'pretentious and intended to inhibit discussion which might put [Darcy] at a disadvantage.'²⁹ These readings are not mutually exclusive, however. It is Elizabeth's hostile reply, 'That is a failing indeed!...Implacable resentment is a shade in a character', that inhibits or shuts off the possibilities which are present in Darcy's speech. Darcy is here both self-important, and struggling towards self-understanding; he is both defensive and striving for an unpractised openness. As with many human confessions it is the way this one is received that determines its intent and meaning. In this instance what Elizabeth hears in Darcy's speech fits in with her 'premeditated' or previous notions about him, and the reader, whose dominant allegiance is to her, tends to 'hear' Darcy's speech as she does. Darcy at this point in the novel is understood from within Elizabeth's consciousness.³⁰

If Darcy's speech is claiming a confident and consistent self, it is at the same time made of repetitions and restressings that might suggest a much less integrated or sure person - an undertow Elizabeth is much too preoccupied to attend to. This is far from the only instance in which, one might argue, Darcy proffers more to Elizabeth than she is able to receive. It could be seen that he is continually offering possibilities of intimacy which she is too intent on her own performance of wit and vivacity, to pick up.³¹ The reader will register more in Darcy's tone and address than Elizabeth does, but these bits of information, this aura about him, do not yet cohere into an imaginative whole, unlike its representation of her psychological life. If Elizabeth later 'remembers' Darcy 'boasting, one day, at Netherfield, of the implacability of his resentments' (80) it is in what the neurologist Gerald Edelman calls the 'remembered present', by which he means the capacity of the mind, and specifically the memory, to reconfigure itself at the behest of immediate contingency.³² Elizabeth's 'memory' of Darcy when she is with Wickham comes into being in order to meet her present psychological needs. Incapable of contacting Darcy's mind when he originally spoke the words, she recalls not them, but her own responses, what she made of them at the time. Austen's presentation of her 'memories' as arising to meet present circumstances is one way in which the figure of Elizabeth, distinguished from Darcy in this respect, is endowed with psychological continuity and apparent historical depth. When, at a critical point of the novel, Elizabeth 'remembers' outside her own past emotions, this common mode of psychological life is momentarily transcended.

Darcy, then, is capable of being read in quite different ways. One might call this a hologrammic narrative, a hologram being a picture which, observed from a different direction, reveals itself to contain a quite different representation. (Looked at as one moves up the escalator, a poster shows a face smiling: as one moves past, it is transformed into a snarl. What the picture shows depends, literally, on one's point of view.) In this novel, the absence of anything but minimal guidance from the narrator (and in particular the minimisation of authorial irony towards Elizabeth) induces the reader to 'see' Darcy as she does. The reader's response to this dialogue is left in suspense because it is broken off:

"Do let us have a little music," cried Miss Bingley, tired of a conversation in which she had no share.'

The most intriguing exchange between Elizabeth and Darcy is at Rosings, over the piano. Once again the topic of conversation bears on what the novel itself is about: character and relations to others. Darcy declares that he is 'ill qualified to recommend' himself to strangers. Elizabeth draws Colonel Fitzwilliam into the dialogue and he declares that this is because Darcy 'will not give himself the trouble.'

'I certainly have not the talent which some people possess,' said Darcy, 'of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done.'

'My fingers,' said Elizabeth, do not move over this instrument in the masterly manner which I see so many women's do. They have not the same force or rapidity, and do not produce the same expression. But then I have always supposed it to be my own fault - because I would not take the trouble of practising. It is not that I do not believe my fingers as capable as any other woman's of superior execution.' (175)

That she is intending to teach Darcy a lesson is obvious. But it is entirely ignored in his non-sequitur of a reply: 'Darcy smiled and said, "You are perfectly right. You have employed your time much better. No one admitted to the privilege of hearing you, can think anything wanting. We neither of us perform to strangers.'" This extraordinary response remains unclarified because, once again, the dialogue is broken off: 'Here they were interrupted by Lady Catherine, who called out to know what they were talking of. Elizabeth immediately began playing again.' (176) We can never know, for instance, whether she understands the compliment as ironically intended.

It is an extraordinary response because it ignores the challenge in Elizabeth's words (perhaps the first time Darcy has not risen to Elizabeth's bait), because of the lack of apparent connection between the sentences in his speech and because of the leap or assumption of affinity made in his last assertion, especially the oddly contradictory word 'perform.' Once again the speech resembles a hologram. Reading it one way, sympathetic to Darcy, one hears a man who is now able (or feels he is able) to speak to the real person beneath her taunting conversational style. He is taking his time and, despite Fitzwilliam's presence, paying her a great compliment. He says in effect 'You and I are alike: what you say before Fitzwilliam does not reflect your real self, which I understand.' When he says 'We neither of us perform to strangers', he is commenting on her having an inner life or self which is not reflected in her banter, claiming to be in touch with that private life. And (this reading would continue) he is right: Elizabeth does have an inner self which she conceals from many people in the novel.³³

In the alternative reading, Darcy does not hear her comment as criticism because he is so much in love with her, and so full of himself. He hears in her words no irony, no satiric reference to himself, perhaps only an assertion of modesty. In ignoring both her and Fitzwilliam's criticisms he is once again demonstrating his standoffishness. When he says 'We neither of us perform to strangers', he is making a claim to affinity between them that is quite groundless, as must be perceived by all readers who know what Elizabeth in fact feels about him at this stage of the novel. He is simply articulating his desire, and his assumption emerges out of the present state of his psychological liason with her, which is 'relating through identifications.' The hostile and the sympathetic readings exist simultaneously and depend - roughly speaking - on whether one reads from Elizabeth's or from Darcy's position. There is simply no way of knowing which of these ways of interpreting the exchange is the more exact: and because it is 'lopt', by interruption, the enigma persists. Augmenting it is the persistent puzzle of Darcy's smile.

This hologrammic switch from one to another point of view corresponds to differing dispositions of the self. Perhaps more exactly, the reader does not so much choose between these two interpretations as hold them in some kind of balance, one side intermittently weighing down the other. Attending to these scenes thus causes a reader to experience a simulacrum of the shift between domination and recognition that is our psychological experience of others. It is pertinent to note that Benjamin insists that recognition is not a stable position or capacity. 'Alienated forms of complementarity...in the best of circumstances alternate with recognition.'³⁴ The moment of recognition of the other is always giving way to repudiation or to some form of narcissistic identification or idealisation. When we read from Elizabeth's position we are ensconced in the psychological state in which the other is negated. But we do catch glimpses of the possibility of reading from outside her position in which Darcy appears differently. On the other side, the novel allows the reader quite plainly to see that Darcy himself, broadly speaking, 'sees' Elizabeth from inside his own needs and desires - that indeed is the central irony of the text at this point. The alternation between one and the other reading is the formal equivalent of what Benjamin calls the 'other's liability not to survive, the inevitable failure of recognition'.³⁵ It is as if the reader's response to these dialogues offers a mimesis of this central aspect of human relationships, in which the other is part of the self, the vehicle of the self's needs, its projections and identifications, whilst it offers the intimation of the other as quite different, outside the self.

The question is how we shift from relating through identifications to the appropriate 'use' (not abuse) of the other. If one is to argue that Pride and Prejudice, besides being a great love story, is a great story about love, one is inevitably drawn to the moment of the first proposal and its aftermath, for it is here that the possibility of this crucial change is intimated. If Winnicott's and Benjamin's theory is correct, it is essential that the love of Elizabeth and

Darcy pass through the moment of 'destruction', dramatised in the proposal itself, in Darcy's subsequent letter and in Elizabeth's reaction to this. This occasion sees both participants treating the other as vehicles for their own inner needs - though one is governed by passion, the other by a more complex mixture of sexually-stimulated identification with Wickham, loyalty to her family and thwarted narcissism. Darcy's proposal is not addressed to Elizabeth as an 'outside other'; her angry response is fuelled by her stored up feelings. Elizabeth's reply to Darcy is an attack - an attack on him that vents her own anger and resentments. It is meant to destroy his love for her. Its effect, as might be expected, is temporarily to fill him with the anger and bitterness she herself feels. Darcy's practised self-control (treated with some humour earlier in the novel), enables him, under the impact of her assault, to resist retaliating, to express his feelings merely in a few curt departing words. When Elizabeth speaks her rejection of his offer Darcy is confronted with her undeniable, unassimilable otherness - she is a being quite different from the object he has been carrying around in his inner fantasies and projects. But ultimately only through her rejection of him is Elizabeth instantiated as real to him; only through his letter is Darcy perceived as real by her.

It is useful here to compare the BBC film's presentation of this scene. Elizabeth is sitting down and the camera looks up at Darcy from below, as if from her point of view, as he stands delivering his speech. This keeps continuity with the focus on Elizabeth in the previous sequence in which Colonel Fitzwilliam reveals Darcy's role in breaking off Jane and Bingley's relation. One small but critically important difference from the chapter in the novel, though, is that there the beginning of Darcy's speech is presented directly or dramatically, but nothing else in the proposal is.³⁶ The reader of the novel does not read, or 'hear' what Darcy says to Elizabeth; instead what he says is summarised in reported speech. What is directly represented is Elizabeth's reaction to the speech - her rising anger as he goes on - not the words themselves. This technical feature conveys an important psychological truth: if Elizabeth is hardly present as a feeling creature to Darcy's mind at this moment, Darcy is hardly present to Elizabeth either. He is an inside, not an 'outside other'. The representation of his speech as heard by her shows that Darcy is an actor in her own psychic theatre.

Darcy's letter is a formal turning point in Pride and Prejudice, because for the first time he comes forward in an independent voice, unconstrained by the social occasion, cut free from those responses of Elizabeth that have coloured the reader's attention to him so far. His letter forces Elizabeth to recognise that he exists outside her assumptions about him. Whilst his inner life has been given a kind of notional presence earlier in the novel through brief (and perhaps rather coy) acknowledgments of his sexual feelings, now he becomes established as an entity with depth and complexity. The film's visual representation of him, dishevelled, shirt collar loosened, whilst he writes his letter overnight, is appropriate, for Darcy is entrusting Elizabeth with intimate facts he has kept from everyone else but his fellow guardian, even Bingley. Elizabeth is now invited to see him as a being whose psychological and moral life is constituted largely by his family, as she keenly feels her own to have been. Forced to attend continuously to the other's thought processes, Elizabeth is overwhelmed. The shift from one convention, third person narrative, to the other, the novel in letters, enacts the abrupt change that takes place in the reader's consciousness. In one account, Darcy's letter 'seizes the female reader and turns her into the object of its force and her own hatred.'³⁷ Some may indeed feel that their response has been high-jacked, so decisive is the reversal of sympathy from Elizabeth to Darcy at this point. Relating through identifications now gives way, in mimicry, to something like incipient recognition.

Next day Darcy, after loitering in the park, hands Elizabeth the letter. The focus is on Elizabeth, as she reads his words, not being able to take them in: she reads the letter at first much as she has heard his proposal, in a mode of psychological refusal. Gradually, and painfully, she is forced to accept the plausibility, and then the likelihood, of what he says. The novelist, by presenting the letter without narrative framing in one chapter and then reviewing the letter through Elizabeth's consciousness the next, takes the reader through that travail of reading and re-reading, that cumulative assault on previous conviction that is Elizabeth's experience. Her chagrin and remorse culminate in an internal 'speech'. "How despicably have I acted!" she cried. - "I, who have prided myself on my discernment! - I

who have valued myself on my abilities!... How humiliating is this discovery! - Yet, how just a humiliation!" (etc: 208).

In the epistemological readings of the novel this moment, of course, occupies pride of place. At this point Elizabeth's education is felt to be essentially complete. But the insistent exclamation marks here (as in later passages at Pemberley) are perhaps Jane Austen's way of marking a phase of over-compensation, a certain unbalanced identification with Darcy. Elizabeth, overwhelmed for the moment by the facts Darcy has presented, capitulates entirely, and unreasonably, to his view of things, seeming even to enjoy her own humiliation.³⁸ It is plausible to suggest that she is reacting to him, accepting his view, dominated by his understanding, in a phase of what a psychoanalyst might call 'identificatory assimilation'. If this reading is tenable, then one is able to chart through the second half of the novel, not a uniform psychological state of receptiveness, but a succession of disparate phases of feeling, a dialectic of repair and breakdown in which Elizabeth experiences moments of chagrin, bouts of enthrallment to Darcy's views, and moments of rebellion.

A certain interpretive challenge persists through the novel's second half, which is whether Elizabeth's differing reactions are to be read as expressions of momentary feeling, or as settled developments, whether and how much they are to be regarded, in other words, with irony. For example, Jane Austen represents Elizabeth, a few days after receiving the letter, thinking of Darcy: 'His attachment excited gratitude, his general character respect; but she could not approve him; nor could she for a moment repent her refusal, or feel the slightest inclination ever to see him again'. (212) Is she deceiving herself, underestimating even at this point her own interest in him? What I have called an 'interpretive challenge' is, of course, in other words, the novel's fascination, and keeping the reader on tenterhooks is its design. But I do not think at this point we are meant to feel that Elizabeth is mistaken, nor do I think that Elizabeth is ever - here or earlier - unconsciously, in the normal sense of the words, 'in love with' Darcy.³⁹ What we can be sure of is that Elizabeth is now free from hating him, that is, freed from experiencing him as a focus of projective identifications. She

can now accord him justice, but the process by which this condition of respect for him turns into love is complex. Passage after passage charts Elizabeth's oscillating responses, gratitude towards, even identification with, him balancing self-recovery and consciousness of independence. Darcy's complementary self-analysis, however, is largely out of the picture.

'How you must have hated me after that evening?' (369): after the second proposal, Elizabeth is no doubt about the usual consequences of her unintentional deception. Similarly, when she tells Mrs Gardiner that Wickham has moved on to Miss King, she declares she now understands that she never was much in love with him, 'for had I really experienced that pure and elevating passion, I should at present detest his very name, and wish him all manner of evil' (150). This is just what might be expected, in fact, of Darcy's response to his rejection. Earlier Elizabeth has accepted Mrs Gardiner's suggestion that she avoid becoming too involved with Wickham, and the narrator has commented that this is 'a wonderful instance of advice being offered on such a point, without being resented' (145). Darcy's letter is a similarly 'wonderful' instance of an assault on the ego being sustained, not resented. Not only the material information in the letter, but the moderation of its tone, and the evidence of the writer's struggle towards impartiality, contribute to its power to convince Elizabeth. His letter contains no reproaches, nor does it make any attempt at reconciliation. Most importantly, except perhaps at the opening, it does not retaliate. Darcy is himself, as he later confesses, 'tortured' by her rebuke about his manner, but it is his pride, paradoxically, that saves him from detesting her very name.

Andrew Davies, the scriptwriter of the BBC film, has remarked that 'the central motor which drives the story forward is Darcy's sexual attraction to Elizabeth'.⁴⁰ This seems true enough; but Darcy's feelings are certainly more complex after Elizabeth's repudiation. The crucial 'motor' of the second half of the novel, even more hidden than the first, is not Darcy's passion, but his struggle to overcome his pride. 'Pride' in this context is shorthand for his self-image, his previously formed conception of his own coherent identity. To

recognise that the other really exists is to risk being destroyed by the other, and Darcy has to digest Elizabeth's rebukes, to allow them to alter his inner life. As we have seen, Winnicott thought the analyst's capacity to survive the patient's destructive attacks was crucially important. He or she takes the force of the patient's criticisms (which in the intimacy of analysis may well cut to the quick) and experiences them as true, but is not so overwhelmed by them that he or she succumbs to hatred of the patient. Similarly, it is Darcy's capacity to survive Elizabeth's attack - not in his abused, bruised and humiliated state to find relief in loathing - that marks the transition in the novel from one form of love relation to another. Darcy's survival of Elizabeth's destructiveness is made plain in his demeanour when they meet, and it is this in turn which enables Elizabeth herself to think of him freely. For the first time at Pemberley, she is able to imagine him, walking about the grounds, as a separately existing being.

All this has to be constructed retrospectively, and Darcy on his reappearance at Pemberley is scarcely less enigmatic than in the first volume. The text continues its focus on Elizabeth and on the evolution of her responses to Darcy, a process that calls forth some of Austen's most adroit and tactful writing. It is sometimes quite casually said that Elizabeth 'falls in love' with Darcy.⁴¹ But Elizabeth's emotions are presented carefully as a graduated set of adjustments, often interrupted and stimulated by outside events, which allow the reader to assume that she eventually 'loves' Darcy but which never explicitly declare this until after the second proposal, and then as reassurances, in Jane's own idiom, to her sister. Instead, Elizabeth is invested with the capacity to meditate her way through her emotions, to negotiate a series of complex psychological promptings which require simultaneously acknowledgment of feelings and evaluation of their character. After meeting Darcy again at Pemberley, Elizabeth cannot sleep:

She lay awake two whole hours, endeavouring to make [her feelings] out. She certainly did not hate him. No; hatred had vanished long ago, and she had almost as long been ashamed of ever feeling a dislike against him, that could be so called. The respect created by the conviction of his valuable qualities, though at first unwillingly admitted, had for some time ceased to be repugnant to her feelings;...Such a change in a man of so much pride, excited not only astonishment but gratitude - for to love, ardent love, it must be attributed; and as such its impression on her was of a sort to be encouraged, as by no means unpleasing, though it could not be exactly defined. She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him, she felt a real interest in his welfare; and she only wanted to know how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself, and how far it would be for the happiness of both that she should employ that power, which her fancy told her she still possessed, of bringing on the renewal of his addresses. (265-6)

This is a remarkable presentation of someone 'falling in love'. In contrast to the exclamatory excitement that has marked earlier phases of Elizabeth's psychological journey, it is slow-moving, temperate, indirect. But though indirect it is not arch, and Jane Austen nowhere hints at the presence of surreptitious motives or impulses, as she was to do with such skill in the Chawton novels. Instead narrator and character seem at one in the attempt to evoke velleities and obscurities of feeling and to give as much credit as possible to the conscious and rational processes by which Elizabeth gets in touch with them and reaches her conclusions. Elizabeth does not capitulate in any sense to Darcy, though gratitude towards him is an increasingly important facet of her response. What is most notable is that having worked out what these feelings are, moved herself along a continuum towards 'love', she still leaves that feeling, or any approach to it, in suspense, and still reserves judgement as to whether it would be 'for the happiness of both' that they should marry. Moreover - one might take note of the word - the passage comes to rest on a registration of her, rather than his, 'power.' This is very far from surrender of the self, of that identificatory assimilation of

the other which might have been presaged in Elizabeth's immediate reaction to Darcy's letter. The sentiment of gratitude is harvested into a more complex response.

'The object, if it is to be used, must necessarily be real in the sense of being part of shared reality, not a bundle of projections' Winnicott comments.⁴² Contemporary psychoanalysis however can offer little help with the shared vocabulary, the binding ideological system, which is crucially important in understanding what has occurred within Darcy to facilitate this change in Elizabeth. For what enables Darcy to convert his pain and anger into other emotions is in part the valency of the notion of the 'gentleman.' As she famously declares:

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.

(192)

So piercing is the criticism that it has an effect on the actual physical being of her listener. Elizabeth does 'see' Darcy start at this, but it is only later in the novel that the woundingness of her rebuke becomes apparent. 'Those were your words. You know not, you can scarcely conceive, how they have tortured me; - though it was some time, I confess, before I was reasonable enough to allow their justice' (367-8). The shock that Elizabeth's remark gives to Darcy presages his possible recuperation. It is as if this term, 'gentleman', summons up a whole intersubjective, non-personal realm to which both he and Elizabeth subscribe. When Elizabeth declares to Lady Catherine that she is a gentleman's daughter the term is being used as a designator of social status, but for both main characters the word resonates with values that are deeply held. The notion of the 'proper' is associated with a group of similar ideas which refer equally to the private self and to a person's reputation in the world, and are invested with similar mandatory force. 'You thought me then devoid of every proper feeling,' Darcy continues (368). 'By you, I was properly humbled', he insists. 'Indeed he

has no improper pride' (376) Elizabeth in turn tells her father. The concept of the 'proper', summoned up in such moments of the text, is clearly pivotal. Like 'gentleman', it signifies a field or domain in which these two figures can relate, regardless of their personal attributes. Thus the 'two person field' of intersubjectivity which in Benjamin's thought replaces psychoanalysis's original focus on the single psyche, is also too circumscribed: Pride and Prejudice would seem to insist that selves relate not just to other selves but within a historically situated matrix of communicative interaction that is not of their own making.

Darcy's public self is integral to himself: that is, his 'character' (his reputation in the world) is not a mask, or a role, intermittently enacted, but goes all the way down. To put this another way: the psychological relations that constitute Darcy's 'self' are with his family, understood both dynastically and privately, his servants, his tenants, and more broadly with the nation. That is why Mrs Reynolds' testimony at Pemberley is so important. This is the selfhood that he has articulated so clumsily and pompously at Longbourn and Netherfield. In her reproach about his lack of gentlemanliness Elizabeth makes herself the spokesperson, the embodiment of this assembly of internal presences. And - paradoxically - because Elizabeth's assault focuses on that, she throws him a life-line.

Recognition, Benjamin stresses, is 'a dimension of psychic capability' not a normative social ideal.⁴³ But in effect the notion of recognition can readily be applied to the understanding of political events, as she exemplifies.⁴⁴ Recognition can clearly evidence itself in social treatment and interaction. Darcy's internal 'recognition' of Elizabeth Bennet is thus manifested in or can be read off from, the transformed manners with which he greets her and her companions at Pemberley. He acknowledges them as social equals: he seeks to include them within the house and garden, this house and garden being both literally and metaphorically expressive of his selfhood. But such recognition when played out in the social sphere does not mean the adoption of the point of view of the other, or surrender to the other's whole reasoning - that is to reinscribe domination in another form. This is not a love wrought out of mutual sympathy or affinity (as with Jane and Bingley) but a much more

difficult and stronger love built out of awareness of the other's difference. An important component of this difference is public status and power.

This is where the novel's definition of love becomes further entangled with its invasive and shadowing alternative, domination, which for Benjamin, as for Hegel, is part of the human condition.⁴⁵ In his politically 'radical' reading of the novel, Edward Neill has recently argued indeed that the relation of Darcy and Elizabeth is conducted always within 'the master-slave dialectic'. 'We never leave the terms of the master-slave relationship (whichever way things happen to tilt)' he writes.⁴⁶ He understands Darcy as enjoying his power over Elizabeth, and 'succumbing to his desire to master her'.⁴⁷ Several acute contemporary feminist critics besides Neill also read the second half of the narrative as the story of Elizabeth's subjugation by or surrender to Darcy's wealth, authority and superior judgement. They see this, and the happy marriage with which the novel ends, as registering Austen's own, if temporary, capitulation to that patriarchal system which invests all males with more power than females. They see Elizabeth as dwindling into a wife.⁴⁸

Susan Fraiman, whose chapter on the novel is called 'The Humiliation of Elizabeth Bennet', argues that the figure, introduced as reliable, is re-presented, in the context of her marriageability, as prejudiced, 'her true identity' drowned out by the social world.⁴⁹ Maaja Stewart too suggests that its action shows Elizabeth making a transition from witty woman to sentimental and vulnerable one, bashful before Darcy like a Burney heroine. 'After Elizabeth reads Darcy's letter', she writes, 'she accepts his interpretation of their shared experience. When she visits Pemberley and understands Darcy's power, she looks at his portrait and directs his gaze - which she had earlier avoided - upon herself, thus subjecting not only their shared experience but herself to his interpretation.'⁵⁰ In her view the narrative is a 'failure',

because it does not 'maintain a balance between Elizabeth's energy and Darcy's power'.⁵¹ Similarly, Neill perceives 'an inner crumpling' in Elizabeth's attitude to Darcy.⁵² All three critics are hard on the character, who is presented as the very embodiment of autocracy, 'par excellence the "governor" type', enjoying his 'realm of raw power' with a faint touch of sadistic pleasure.⁵³ They have little but contempt for Darcy's actions in the second half of the novel, and accuse Austen of capitulation to hidebound conservative ideology as well as routine narrative contrivance in making him act so handsomely, and earning Elizabeth's hand in marriage.

These readings certainly upset the traditional critical emphasis on the novel's balance or reconciliation of discordant qualities. But they underestimate the novel's psychological and ethical insight. Back at Longbourn, Elizabeth has Darcy much in her thoughts. 'She began now to comprehend that he was exactly the man, who, in disposition and talents, would most suit her...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 benefits of greater importance' (312). Both Fraiman and Stewart quote this passage, assume this assessment has the text's concurrence and take 'greater importance' as paradigmatic of the gender imbalance of the novel.⁵⁴ But Austen goes on to remark that 'No such happy marriage could now teach the admiring multitude what connubial felicity really was' - one moment in the eventful and changing course of Elizabeth's attitudes towards Darcy in which irony, however muted, is certainly present. It is enough to suggest how little weight should be placed on Elizabeth's rhapsodising daydreaming at this moment, that her overvaluation of Darcy as against herself is a consequence of her present chagrin at apparently losing him forever.

No reading of Pride and Prejudice which is concerned avowedly with political and social power can afford to neglect Elizabeth's confrontation with Lady Catherine. This triumphant worsting of her enemy certainly restores Elizabeth to narrative authority. It is notable also that after she has sent Lady Catherine packing, Elizabeth Bennet is in a mood

to see off Darcy too, and the balance swings the other way. If he is swayed by his aunt, she thinks, let him 'be as happy, as dignity unblemished could make him' (361); she certainly won't be spending any time in regrets - a startling assertion so late in the romance, and an indication of how far, even at this stage, Austen is willing to go in highlighting her character's insouciance. (There is little here to suggest an ironic registering of this as a merely temporary, and self-deceiving, bout of rebellion, though Austen is certainly amused in this part of the novel by the volatility of her heroine's reactions (337)). But it is a mistake to devolve or reduce all issues of relationship in the novel to matters of political power. 'Against the broad chest of Darcy's logic, Elizabeth pounds the ineffectual fists of her own,' Fraiman writes with some feeling,⁵⁵ and indeed one senses something unavailing in this attempt of criticism to turn this novel into a 'failure'. By default, these critiques seem to suggest that Pride and Prejudice asks for a reading which understands 'power' to have different modalities. It cannot be disputed that the novel is, from one point of view, a conservative romance, but one should not confuse social 'domination' with psychological domination. The difficult, undemocratic fact is that the novel's ethical narrative is incommensurate with and may override and subsume these political readings.

Darcy's social and economic standing is a vital component of his masculine otherness. It is a premise of the novel's action that Darcy is an important figure, who occupies a sphere which is distinct from Elizabeth's as a country gentlewoman.⁵⁶ He is related to nobility, owns a large estate, with an income of ten thousand a year. Crucially, he has an intellectual and personal authority that certainly doesn't come inevitably with his property, as a comparison of other people with more money (Mr Rushworth in Mansfield Park, for instance) in Jane Austen's novels would suggest. It is part of her achievement in Pride and Prejudice to convince the reader of Darcy's 'aweful' qualities, which Bingley teases him about (50), but which are manifested alongside his more pompous side, in his dexterous handling of Miss Bingley's sycophancy, his self-restraining silences, perhaps most of all in his capacity always to transform bantering conversation into something significant - if only the reader would understand him. But Darcy is not a sensitive new age guy. When

Elizabeth thinks hard about him, as in the passage quoted above, the very deliberative nature of her thinking processes reflects her sense of Darcy as rather remote, substantive, compellingly distinct from herself.

Nor does Austen relinquish her grasp of Darcy as a formidable figure in the novel's concluding sequences. She never presents him as if he were now to be understood as wholly within the space of Elizabeth's psychology, as a lovably equal object. Whilst Elizabeth is amused, for example, at his assumptions about Bingley (and despite telling herself she mustn't yet tease him, comes very close to it) Darcy's inflexibly demanding superego (the 'I' in these sentences that instructs some other part of the self) is still being reinscribed: 'I was obliged to confess one thing, which for a time, and not unjustly, offended him. I could not allow myself to conceal that your sister had been in town three months last winter, that I had known it, and purposely kept it from him' (371). The contrast between Elizabeth's impulses to playfulness and mischief and Darcy's inflexible need to act rightly and to be square with his conscience is sustained. This is not a relationship in which each mirrors the other but of distinct subjectivities whose very alterity is the ground of their rapport. This means that, since the novel's point of view continues to be mostly Elizabeth's, Darcy remains out of reach, an enigma, other, to the end. This in turn may explain why for so many readers, he remains a focus of fantasy.

The novel's play on the visual, with treating the other as an object, and as other than an object, is most brilliantly articulated in the sequence at Pemberley in which Elizabeth Bennet contemplates Darcy's portrait. I shall round up this argument by commenting on this, for it is the apotheosis of the novel's complex understanding on the nature of recognition. Partly because it has been led up to by the novel's reiterated association of visuality and knowledge, this moment, as most readers and critics feel, has a significance out of

proportion to its duration. Miss Bingley's early attempts to tease Darcy about Elizabeth's low connections - 'Do let the portraits of your uncle and aunt Philips be placed in the gallery at Pemberley' (52-3) have followed from Darcy's assertion that an artist 'taking' a picture of Elizabeth would find it difficult to catch the expression of her eyes. A portrait, unlike a 'sketch', or 'picture' then has already been loaded with public, dynastic, implications. 'At last it arrested her - and she beheld a striking resemblance of Mr Darcy, with such a smile over the face, as she remembered to have sometimes seen, when he looked at her.' '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.' (350-1)

The BBC film's presentation of the whole Pemberley sequence is strikingly different.⁵⁷ The viewer sees the housekeeper leading Elizabeth and the Gardiners down a long gallery, the camera looking at them first from one direction and then from the other, increasing anticipation. Her ecstatic 'There!' on the soundtrack accompanies a shot of Elizabeth gazing upwards, and then the portrait itself. The film thus pays tribute to the significance of this moment in the novel. But because the picture is placed high on the wall, there is no possibility of Elizabeth 'fixing his eyes upon her', as in the text.⁵⁸ Nor does the portrait show Darcy smiling. Instead, its position, and the sombreness of Darcy's demeanour replicate the technique that the film has used in its previous presentations of the hero. Elizabeth's silent gaze upwards to the picture is intercut with a sequence in which Darcy is seen riding through the trees towards Pemberley, with plaintive, even tragic, woodwind themes on the soundtrack. Sitting by a pond, he takes off his jacket, unties his cravat, and plunges into the water. This shift from the public portrait - the landowner in his estates, whose eyes contemplate the viewer, not Elizabeth Bennet - to a graphic illustration of the young man seeking relief from responsibility (a modern rather than an eighteenth-century conception) effectively wrests the climactic force of the picture away from Elizabeth's and onto Darcy's psychological life, his semi-nakedness a figure for 'raw' emotions, supposedly transcending class and social boundaries. The novel's complex

figuration of recognition is replaced by a call to identify with him, and at the same time his body is re-presented as an object. At this crucial moment then, the film replaces the key episode of the novel with a key of its own, a male writer's redefinition of its centre. And despite several nominally feminist appreciations, one perceives that it is Darcy's drama, not Elizabeth's, that the viewer is seduced into sharing.⁵⁹

Elizabeth in gazing at Darcy's portrait is reminded of his smile, a smile which she had previously overlooked. The text's earlier notation of Darcy's smiling may have been picked up by the reader, or it may not. If he or she inhabits Elizabeth's psyche, perhaps it passes unnoticed; if he or she is aligned with Darcy, perhaps it sounds a warning or complicating note. But since identification is multiple, serial, or alternating, both these possibilities have been kept in play. What occurs now is literally a revision, by which what was previously registered in some form is now, stimulated by the present, recovered, remembered - another version of, rather than a parallel to, Elizabeth's earlier mistaken 'remembering' of his 'boasting' of his resentments, in which she rather recalled her own reactions than his words. Now, the complexity and plasticity of memory is reaffirmed, and rather than portraying, perhaps this opens a vista into, this character's psychology. Elizabeth recovers what she had earlier not registered consciously, and the word 'regard' is allowed to hover, felicitously, between gaze and esteem, so that she can retrospectively acknowledge both his desire and his respect for her individual being.

The moment when Elizabeth contemplates the portrait then is a textual representation of the psychic capacity Jessica Benjamin names 'recognition.' It is difficult to give graphic form, to convey to the reader in writing, the real presence of the unspoken psychological transactions which criss-cross the consulting room; hence 'recognition' in Benjamin's work, like 'use' in Winnicott's, remains a shade abstract, theoretic. But the portrait scene in the novel offers a kind of condensed, symbolic representation of the meaning of that insight into a rare capacity of human interaction when others are encountered as equals. It is an aesthetic rehearsal for that drama of recognition which the

following chapters of the novel will play out in detail, and it is followed, in one of the novel's more daring moments, a short paragraph later, by the reappearance of Darcy himself.

Softened by her thinking about him, Elizabeth is able to 'see' what she had previously not seen, to know something, it is suggested, about Darcy that she had not previously known. In a literally magical moment, the portrait becomes animated. And why - since a Reynolds has just placed Darcy in 'an aimiable light' (249) - should I not say too that this encounter with a surely very good painting is a metaphor for the power of art, a branch of which is practised by Jane Austen herself? For in the presence of art we become enchanted into the belief that the past is alive at the same moment as we are ourselves.⁶⁰ (Is not this true of Pride and Prejudice?) Elizabeth envisages Darcy as a real other being whose smile now becomes the living index of that otherness whose significance she had formerly disregarded. As Rachel Brownstein writes 'What she loves, and sees, is what goes on between them.'⁶¹ Submission, if it occurs, is rather a necessary tendering of self in return for the other's regard. Which of the two 'fixes' their eyes on the other? If Elizabeth allows herself to be looked at, puts herself momentarily in the position of the looked at, the object, she is simultaneously the subject of the action and the subject who is acting. It would be hard indeed to find a more compressed figuration of the interplay of alterity, submission and possession that makes up the drama of recognition. The gaze she now sees in the portrait, and the gaze she returns, is not one of domination, but of love.

¹ Edward D. McDonald, ed., Phoenix, The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, London, Heinemann (1936) 1961, p.528.

² Lilian S. Robinson, 'Why Marry Mr Collins?' in Sex, Class and Culture [1978] London: Methuen, 1986, pp.178- 199. p. 179.

³ Sue Birtwistle and Susie Conkin, The Making of Pride and Prejudice, London: Penguin Books, BBC Books, 1995, Introduction, p.v.

⁴ As in the added scene in which Elizabeth (not quite by accident) comes across Darcy playing billiards.

⁵ John Halperin, The Life of Jane Austen, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1984, p. 69; Martha Satz, 'An Epistemological Understanding of Pride and Prejudice: Humility and Objectivity', in Janet Todd, ed, Jane Austen: New Perspectives, pp. 171-86; Marcia McClintock Folsom, 'Taking Different Positions': knowing and feeling in Pride and Prejudice', in Marcia Folsom, ed., Approaches to Teaching Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, New York: Modern Language Association, 1993, pp 100-114, p. 100.

⁶ Tony Tanner, Jane Austen, London: Macmillan, 1986, p.105.

⁷ Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas, Oxford: Clarendon, 1975, p. 215.

⁸ Rachel M. Brownstein, 'Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice' in Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster, eds. The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 50.

⁹ Julian Wilmot Wynne argues that Elizabeth in effect projects her emotions onto her sister Jane; Jane Austen and Sigmund Freud; An Interpretation, London: Plume Publications, 1998, pp. 100-101.

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- ¹⁰ D. W. Harding, 'Character and caricature in Jane Austen,' in Monica Lawlor, ed., Regulated Hatred and Other Essays on Jane Austen, London: Athlone Press, 1998, pp. 80-105, pp. 84, 85.
- ¹¹ Claudia L. Johnson, Jane Austen, Women, Politics and the Novel, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, p 85.
- ¹² Robert M. Polhemus, 'The Fortunate Fall; Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice', in Erotic Faith, Being in Love from Jane Austen to D. H. Lawrence, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990, pp. 28-54. This is a fine commentary on the novel.
- ¹³ D. W. Winnicott, 'The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications', Playing and Reality, London and New York: Routledge [1971], 1982, pp. 86-94, p.87.
- ¹⁴ Winnicott, 'Use of an Object', p.92.
- ¹⁵ Jessica Benjamin, Bonds of Love, Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination, London: Virago, 1990; Like Subjects, Love Objects, Essays on recognition and sexual difference, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995; Shadow of the Other: intersubjectivity and gender in psychoanalysis, London and New York: Routledge, 1998. In this presentation I draw mostly on Chapter 3, 'The Shadow of the Other Subject: Intersubjectivity and feminist theory', Shadow of the Other, pp.79-108.
- ¹⁶ J. Laplanche and J-B. Pontalis, The Language of Psychoanalysis, London: Karnac, 1973, p. 351.
- ¹⁷ Similar observations are made by Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas, p. 105.
- ¹⁸ Johnson, Jane Austen, Women, Politics and the Novel, p. 82.
- ¹⁹ Jessica Benjamin, Like Subjects, Love Objects, essays on recognition and sexual difference, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995, p. 27.
- ²⁰ Rachel M. Brownstein, Becoming a Heroine, Reading about Women in Novels (1982), New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 116.
- ²¹ Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights, Chapter IX, (Penguin Classics edition, p. 82).
- ²² Benjamin, Like Subjects, p. 41

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- ²³ Tanner, Jane Austen, p. 105.
- ²⁴ Tanner, Jane Austen, pp.105-6, suggests the novel's affinity with Locke.
- ²⁵ 'The other is in no way another myself, participating with me in a common existence. The relationship with the other is not an idyllic and harmonious relationship of communion or a sympathy through which we put ourselves in the other's place, we recognise the other as resembling us, but exterior to us; the relationship with the other is a relationship with a Mystery.' Time and the Other, p.75, quoted in Colin Davis, Levinas, An Introduction, Notre Dame: University of Indiana Press, 1996, p.31. 'Sympathy' refers to Husserl's concept of Einförlung, in which the other is known because all others reflect the self.
- ²⁶ Letter of Friday 29 Jan 1813, Deidre Le Faye, ed., Jane Austen's Letters, Third Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, p.202.
- ²⁷ Reuben Brower, 'Light and Bright and Sparking: Irony and Fiction in Pride and Prejudice', The Fields of Light, An Experiment in Critical Reading, New York: Oxford University Press, 1951, pp.164-181, p. 172.
- ²⁸ Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas, p. 216.
- ²⁹ Mary Waldron, Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 51.
- ³⁰ An exemplary discussion of the dialogue in Chapter X is in Jan Fergus, Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel, London: Macmillan, 1983, pp.110-115.
- ³¹ Howard Babb, 'Dialogue with Feeling, A Note on Pride and Prejudice', Donald J. Gray, ed., Pride and Prejudice, Norton Critical Edition, 1966, p. 428.
- ³² Gerald Edelman, Bright Air, Brilliant Fire; on the matter of the mind, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994; Edelman, The Remembered Present, 1989.
- ³³ I am indebted in this paragraph to a discussion with Justin Kelly, S.J.
- ³⁴ Benjamin, Shadow of the Other, p. 97.
- ³⁵ Benjamin, Shadow of the Other, p. 93.

³⁶ This feature is observed by Susan Fraiman, Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993, p.77.

³⁷ Fraiman, Unbecoming Women, p. 85.

³⁸ Tanner, Jane Austen, p.113.

³⁹ I am grateful to Professor Elaine Bander for putting me right on this point.

⁴⁰ Birtwistle and Conkin, The Making of Pride and Prejudice, p. 3.

⁴¹ Elizabeth is 'wholly complicit with patriarchal evaluations when she falls in love with Darcy', Maaja A. Stewart, Domestic Realities and Imperial Fictions: Jane Austen's Novels in Eighteenth-Century Contexts, Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1993 p. 41.

⁴² Winnicott, Playing and Reality, p. 88

⁴³ Like Subjects, Love Objects. p 22.

⁴⁴ Shadow of the Other, pp. 94, 98-9.

⁴⁵ Alexander Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel [1947] Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989, p. 40.

⁴⁶ Edward Neill, The Politics of Jane Austen, London: Macmillan, 1999, p. 52. My argument is the converse of his.

⁴⁷ Neill, The Politics of Jane Austen, p. 58.

⁴⁸ Judith Lowder Newton, Women, Power and Subversion, Social Strategies in British Fiction, 1778-1860, New York, Methuen, 1985, quoted in Unbecoming Women (note 26 above) p. 62.

⁴⁹ Unbecoming Women p.82; See also Susan Fraiman, 'Peevish Accents in the Juvenilia: A Feminist Key to Pride and Prejudice' in Folsom, Approaches to Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* , pp.74-80.

⁵⁰ Stewart, Domestic Realities p. 71.

⁵¹ Stewart, Domestic Realities, p. 42.

⁵² Edward Neill, The Politics of Jane Austen, London: Macmillan, 1999, p.52

⁵³ Neill, The Politics of Jane Austen, p.62; Stewart, Domestic Realities, p.56;

Fraiman, Unbecoming Women, p.79.

⁵⁴ Fraiman, Unbecoming Women, p. 81.

⁵⁵ Fraiman, pp.78-9.

⁵⁶ 'Why Darcy would not have married Elizabeth Bennet' ran the headline in the London Review of Books on 3 September 1998. Austen, Linda Colley writes,

took it for granted that her contemporaries would appreciate (as late 20th-century readers sometimes do not) the extent to which Pride and Prejudice, say, is a deliberate essay in fantasy. An Eliza Bennet, fetching daughter of a small country gentleman, niece to a Cheapside attorney, might well be invited to a one-off county ball given by a Mr Bingley with a rented house and £5000 per annum. But a Mr Darcy with an inherited landed estate of £10,000 per annum would have been most unlikely to seek her hand for a dance, much less for marriage. Indeed, real-life Darcys would scarcely have wasted their precious bachelor youth on rural Hertfordshire. London, with its indulgences, its political life and its marriage market offering more eligible future wives even than Miss Bingley, would have been the automatic draw.

Did Austen's contemporary readers think the book's action a fantasy? Annabella Milbanke, the future Lady Byron's, comments in a letter to her mother in 1813 are well-known: 'I have just finished a novel called Pride and Prejudice...I really think it is the most probable fiction I have ever read.' M. Elwin, Lord Byron's Wife, London, 1962, p. 159 (quoted O. MacDonagh, Jane Austen: Real and Imagined Worlds, p. 136-7; Le Faye, Jane Austen, A Family Record, p. 175.) But Colley's insistence points to the great gulf that does exist between the two main figures.

⁵⁷ H. Elizabeth Ellington, "'A Correct Taste in Landscape': Pemberley as Fetish and Commodity', Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield, eds., Jane Austen in Hollywood, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998, pp. 90-110.

⁵⁸ The filming of these scenes replicates the earlier BBC adaptation (1979) with script by Fay Weldon. In this version, similarly, the housekeeper gestures towards the portrait, which is positioned high on the wall, Elizabeth looks up to it, and the Darcy is unsmiling. In voice-over Elizabeth says 'Brother, landlord, master - how many people's happiness are in your hands. I am very thankful for your regard for me. How stark you look in your portrait. But I remember your warmth and would soften that look.' Clumsy as this is, it seems that here too, the emphasis is on Darcy's lonely authority, and the film implicitly subordinates Elizabeth to it at this moment.

⁵⁹ Lisa Hopkins, 'Mr Darcy's Body: Privileging the Female Gaze' in Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield, eds., Jane Austen in Hollywood, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998, pp. 111-121; Esther Sonnet, 'From Emma to Clueless', in Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, eds, Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, p.58. And see Helen Fielding, Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason, London: Picador, 1999, p. 45.

⁶⁰ Compare Berenson's remarks on 'the aesthetic moment', Bernard Berenson, Aesthetics and History (1948), New York: Doubleday, 1965, p. 93.

⁶¹ Rachel M. Brownstein, Becoming a Heroine, p. 130.