Promotor   Prof. dr. Bart Keunen
              Vakgroep Letterkunde
Copromotor   Prof. dr. Gert Buelens
              Vakgroep Letterkunde

Decaan   Prof. dr. Marc Boone
Rector   Prof. dr. Anne De Paepe

UNIVERSITEIT
GENT

Faculteit Letteren & Wijsbegeerte

Veerle Van Steenhuyse

"Universally Acknowledged"

A Textual Analysis of Storyworld-Building Practices in Online Jane Austen Fan Fiction

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Acknowledgements

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet attempts to make her fiancé, Mr. Darcy, focus on the positive side of their early, troublesome encounters, since these eventually resulted in a happy engagement. In doing so, she encourages him to think "only of the past as its remembrance gives [him] pleasure." I mention this pearl of wisdom here, because it gives me great pleasure to think of the institutions, colleagues, and friends who helped to make this dissertation into what it is today. I would never have been able to begin this PhD without the generous financial support of the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO-Vlaanderen), as well as the material and administrative support of Ghent University. Over the past four years, I have incurred a huge debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Bart Keunen. I would like to thank him for bringing secondary literature to my attention, reading drafts, pointing out obscurities, and encouraging me to believe in myself. I also want to thank my cosupervisor, Gert Buelens, for his support and feedback. Gunther Martens, Jan Baetens, and Sandro Jung deserve a special mention too, for serving on my Doctoral Guidance Committee. I would also like to thank Kristina Busse for giving me access to her collection of academic texts on fan fiction. I am similarly grateful to Marco Caracciolo, Lars Bernaerts, Marianne Van Remoortel, and Michel De Dobbeleer, because they took the time to proofread drafts of my dissertation chapters. Finally, I want to mention Frederic Lamsens, who used his IT skills to take a backup of the message board archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, and Emmanuel Sabbe and Benedikt Laloo, who helped create the cover.

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List of Figures

Table of Contents

General Introduction

> *"I cannot fix on the hour, or the spot, or the look, or the words, which laid the foundation. It is too long ago. I was in the middle before I knew that I had begun."*
>
> — Mr. Darcy on his love for Elizabeth (Austen, *Pride* 359*)*

I do not know when I became an Austen fan. Like Mr. Darcy, I was in love with *Pride and Prejudice* before I knew I had begun to lose my heart to it. I remember watching the 1995 BBC/A&E miniseries for the first time on VHS tapes I borrowed from the mother of a friend, and buying a complete Penguin edition of Austen's novels with Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle on the cover. I remember reading and rereading the novel, and getting excited about the smallest details, such as the memorable moment when Mr. Darcy brings back his coffee cup. I know that many of my academic interests at university, not in the least this dissertation, were fuelled by my enthusiasm for all things Austen. This enthusiasm resulted in what I now affectionately call the "Jane Austen shrine"—two bookshelves and a drawer crammed with critical and not-so-critical editions of Austen's writings, secondary literature on Austen and her novels, books about the Regency period, DVDs of screen adaptations, and Austen-related merchandise. Still, my "shrine" pales in comparison with the treasure trove of stories and discussions I found on websites like the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, *Austen Interlude*, the *Republic of Pemberley*, and many others. Even though I was never brave enough to post stories and comments of my own, these online voices made me feel a sense of like-mindedness in terms of interests, expectations, and norms. They shaped, in other words, my idea of what it means to be an Austen fan.

This sense of like-mindedness is hinted at in the first part of the title of this dissertation, *"Universally Acknowledged."* I have taken this phrase from the famous opening lines of *Pride and Prejudice*:

> It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. (5)

Austen's narrator asserts this "universal truth" right before Mrs. Bennet informs her husband that Mr. Bingley—a single, wealthy man—is moving to the area. In Austen studies, these lines are often used to illustrate the irony for which Austen's narrators are famous (see, for example, Nelles 120). After all, the reader cannot simply accept this statement (because Mr. Bingley does not have the intention of finding a wife in Hertfordshire), but she or he also cannot dismiss it as false (because, in the end, Mr. Bingley marries Jane Bennet, inadvertently confirming the narrator's assertion). Most importantly, the narrator's "universal truth" is shown to be an instance of "relativistic worldly wisdom"—that is, something everybody knows (Nelles 120). The claim of Austen's narrator is not really "universally" true, in other words, but it is distilled from the wisdom of many thinkers, namely from "the minds of the surrounding families" in which this truth is fixed. I refer to this passage in my title, because this dissertation is focused on "truths" that are widely accepted in fan communities. In what follows, I examine a wide range of texts produced by the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, an online fan community of Jane Austen, in order to delineate the "truths," or widely accepted preferences, that shape them.

More specifically, this dissertation is focused on the "storyworlds" that are evoked by a corpus of online fan fiction texts posted on *Dwiggie.com* between 2008 and 2011, and which are discussed in reader comments and related discussions.[1] "Fan fiction texts" are fictional narratives written by and for fans that are based on the characters, settings, concepts, or events of other narratives. "Janeites," as fans of Jane Austen are commonly known, have been posting such stories online since the late 1990s, recounting what happened after Elizabeth Bennet's wedding, for example, or what might have happened after Mr. Bennet's death. In this dissertation, I argue that these texts are shaped by preferred ways of storytelling. I focus particularly on textual strategies that have their greatest impact on the level of the storyworlds that are evoked by fan fiction texts, such as the selection of specific story content or the use of particular storyworld-building techniques. Because I consider this corpus of fan fiction texts as a whole, I am able to trace some of the "practices," or commonly used ways of storyworld-building, that are constantly being developed, adopted, and negotiated by the fan writers and fan readers of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. I will relate this multitude of preferences to frames of value that make some storytelling practices "acceptable," "right," or "fitting" and others "unacceptable," "wrong," or "odd." Following David Herman, I will refer to this complex of textual strategies, socially situated writing

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[1] David Herman defines storyworlds as "mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what fashion in the world to which recipients relocate—or make a deictic shift . . .—as they work to comprehend a narrative" (*Story* 5).

and reading practices, and value systems as the "discourse domain" of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* (see Section 1.3.3.3). In what follows, I will only describe a part of this domain, which is far from homogeneous or coherent. I do not claim, in other words, that the trends I describe here are generalisable to every fan fiction text in the archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, let alone every instance of Jane Austen fan fiction. Rather, I group fan fiction texts that seem to share the same preferences. Using comparative close readings of these fan fiction texts, I discuss how those preferences shed light on a highly particular part of the discourse domain of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. This focus makes my research different from many sociological, psychological, or cultural studies of fan fiction (see Section 1.2.2).

Since this is a literary study of Jane Austen fan fiction, I primarily discuss preferences that hint at shared expectations about the "storyworlds" of Jane Austen fan fiction. However, I believe these preferences also point towards accepted uses of *Pride and Prejudice*, and perhaps even towards shared ways of understanding the world, more generally. Although Austen fans wrote and distributed fan fiction before the advent of the internet, the number of Jan Austen "fics" has boomed in the last few decades. This is mainly due to "Austenmania" or "Darcymania"—a surge in the popularity of Austen and her work that began around 1995 (Wells 28; Brownstein 47, 50). In the arts, culture, and society pages of magazines, this sudden interest in Austen tends to be ascribed to nostalgia. Journalist Lianne George, for instance, believes that Austen appeals to a twenty-first-century audience because her worlds revolve around "a functional, grown-up kind of romance" that contrasts with modern-day relationships, with their lack of "rules" and binding commitments (35). She argues that Austen's worlds relieve a modern "yearning for predictability and a social template" because her stories are set in an uncomplicated, slow-paced world, in which emotion "always gives way to rationality, propriety and social norms" (35). This slowness and certainty speaks to many readers, even though few of them would actually want to live in the Regency period (35). While nostalgia certainly figures into the equation, explanations such as these barely scrape the surface. In *Why Jane Austen?*, Rachel M. Brownstein argues that the "Austen craze" of the last few decades

> has been fed by multiple complicated forces of history and social change, the
> ambitions of entrepreneurs and the fluctuations of business, new technologies, the
> new media, the information revolution, and ways of apprehending a world being
> reshaped by all those phenomena (6).

This suggests that online Austen fan fiction is emblematic of a historical moment, in all its complexity.

In what follows, I will compare a corpus of fan fiction texts with Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) rather than, say, a contemporary adaptation such as BBC and A&E's 1995 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, because such a comparison is particularly well-suited to reveal the distinctive impact of the "historical moment" of Jane Austen fan fiction.

After all, the historical distance between the fan fiction texts of the *Derbyshire Writers'*
Guild and Austen's novel makes it easier to distinguish what is particular about the
contemporary moment that spawned these texts (and the adaptations for that matter). In
what follows, I will characterise Jane Austen's storyworlds as "realistic," because her
novels display the "accuracy of social behaviour and dialogue," "moral realism," and
"ingenuity of plot" that is typical of the novel of manners (Alexander 241). That is, her
novels "promise or pretend to some kind of truth to life," for instance by using plausible
"motives and customs, ceremonies, and domestic details" (Brownstein 20). Yet while Jane
Austen uses some of the techniques that are also used by the novelists of "high realism,"
she is not a "realist" author herself. In histories of English literature, Austen is sometimes
characterised as an Augustan author because of "her wit, workmanship and background"
(Alexander 240). Austen's use of irony, in particular, sometimes makes it difficult to
describe the storyworlds of her novels. Since the interwar era, many Austen critics have
stressed the witty, ironical, and satirical aspects of Austen's writing (Lynch, "At Home"
184). Anthony Mandal, for instance, remarks that Austen's juvenilia parody the sentimental
novel, the Gothic novel, and prudential fiction (43, 49; cf. Southam 3; Waldron 16). Indeed,
he believes that Austen's writing between 1788 and 1793 may have been triggered by a
surge in the production of such "popular" genres in 1788 (7, 43). Austen is also not a
"realist" author because her storyworlds are not entirely free from moral idealism or from
a Romantic emphasis on subjective experience (Alexander 241-3). Modern rewritings of
Austen's novels, by professional authors or by fans, are notorious for enlarging this final
aspect. In recent years, Austen scholars have been quick to point out that many Austen
rewrites bear a striking resemblance to the genres that Austen burlesques in her own work.
Austen rewrites are said to resemble such "popular" novels because they foreground
"melodrama" and "sensationalism" (Lynch, "Sequels" 164-5), the "sexually aberrant" and
"instability" (Simons 36), or "romantic speculations" (Wagner, "Rewriting" 214). I take a
more holistic approach in this dissertation. I demonstrate that, in the case of the fan fiction
in the archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, these seemingly random textual features,
as well as a number of other preferences, can be related to one specific part of the
community's "discourse domain."

In accordance with Brownstein's claim, I believe that this discourse domain is shaped by
the historical moment in which the archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* were
compiled. However, I only focus on one of the aspects Brownstein mentions. I do not home
in on the impact of new technologies and media, such as the internet, or on the business
models that shaped mass culture. Instead, I discuss the discourse domain of the *Derbyshire*
Writers' Guild against the background of a fundamental difference between the "ways of
apprehending" the world that are implied by Austen's novel, on the one hand, and Jane
Austen fan fiction, on the other. Austen wrote her novels in the late eighteenth and early
nineteenth century, before the advent of what Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim
call the "second modernity" (Lash vii-xii). It would take me too far to describe every

historical process that is implied by this term. Instead, I will discuss one aspect that is particularly relevant for my comparison of *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Austen fan fiction. In what follows, I relate the most fundamental differences in aesthetic "preferences" to what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim call "individualisation."[2]

Individualisation occurs when traditional social categories, such as "class and social status," "gender roles," and "family" begin to disintegrate (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, "Losing" 2). A host of "matters taken for granted" are broken down into "a cloud of possibilities to be thought about and negotiated" by individuals (6). Traditions do not disappear entirely, but they must be "chosen and often invented, and they have force only through the decisions and experience of individuals" (Beck, Vossenkuhl, and Ziegler 25-6; cf. 27). Individuals "find themselves bereft of unquestionable assumptions, beliefs or values and are nevertheless faced with the tangle of institutional controls and constraints which make up the fibre of modern life" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, "On the Way" 88). They are faced, in other words, with a "network of regulations, conditions, provisos," for instance through "the job market, the welfare state and institutions" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, "Losing" 2).[3] They are no longer born into a "traditional society and its preconditions," but must actively work for "social advantages," by selecting regulations and guidelines from a wide range of—often conflicting—possibilities, importing them "into their biographies through their own actions" ("Losing" 2-4; cf. Beck, Vossenkuhl, and Ziegler 23). Ulrich Beck refers to this "processing of contradictory information, dialogue, negotiation, compromise" as "social reflexion" (Beck, Vossenkuhl, and Ziegler 26). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim conclude:

> The human being becomes (in a radicalization of Sartre's meaning) a choice among possibilities, *homo optionis*. Life, death, gender, corporeality, identity, religion, marriage, parenthood, social ties – all are becoming decidable down to the small print; once fragmented into options, everything must be decided . . . . ("Losing" 5)

Ulrich Beck stresses that phases of individualisation occurred throughout history (Beck 202-3). However, in the second half of the twentieth century—that is, in the age of the "second modernity"—it became more widespread and more institutionalised than ever. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim note that what is "new and specific" about the individualisation processes of the late twentieth century is their "democratization" and "the fact that basic conditions in society favour or enforce individualization (the job market, the need for

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[2] This concept was developed on the basis of sociological research conducted in Germany in the late twentieth century, but I believe it helps to describe the differences between Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Austen fan fiction I will discuss in the following chapters.

[3] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim note, for instance, that most of "the rights and entitlements to support by the welfare state are designed for individuals rather than families" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, "Losing" 3). As a consequence, individuals are "peremptorily invited" to "constitute themselves as individuals: to plan, understand, design themselves and act as individuals – or, should they fail, to lie as individuals on the bed they have made for themselves" (3-4).

mobility and training, labour and social legislation, pension provisions etc.)" ("Losing" 8). The "logic of individually designed lives" becomes much more pervasive (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, "On the Way" 89-90). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's discussion provides an interesting point of entry for my discussion because they delineate one way in which the historical moment of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* seems to be different from the historical moment of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. Yet I only use this hypothesis as a source of inspiration. The sociological research of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim is not based on the specific historical context of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, nor on the context in which Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is embedded. In addition, they do not use their hypothesis in a literary study of specific texts. I simply use their hypothesis to give my comparative analysis a clear focus: I examine how the relation between the individual and the traditional social order is represented in Austen's novel and in fan fiction texts.

In conclusion, I want to give a brief overview of the chapters of this dissertation.[4] In Chapter 1, I provide the background information that is needed to fully understand the corpus and the heuristic concepts I will use in the other four chapters. I give a definition of fan fiction[5] and a brief overview of the history of Jane Austen fan fiction, which ends with a discussion of the online fan fiction of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. I then discuss how the Austen fandom and Jane Austen fan fiction have been used in fan fiction studies. Most importantly, I demonstrate that close readings of fan fiction are still very rare, and I position my own research with regards to the few scholars who do use a similar approach. I study textual features in the light of findings from fan fiction studies, borrow analytical concepts from cognitive narratology, compare Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* with a corpus of fan fiction, reader comments and other metatexts, and relate these texts to "discourses" about individualisation and social responsibility. I then provide a context for the analytical concepts I use in Chapters 2 to 5 by pointing out that a number of key concepts from fan fiction studies, such as the notion of "fan object," have a cognitive dimension. Within this context, I introduce a number of notions that are fundamental to cognitive narratology, such as "storyworld," "narrative comprehension," "immersion," and "experientiality." I also define more general concepts, such as "discourse domain," "ideology," and "implied reader." Most importantly, this context explains why I choose to focus on characters, spaces, and events in the remainder of the dissertation. Finally, I devote some space to my methodology and the ethical dimension of my research. In Chapter 2, I home in on the representation of characters. The heuristic toolbox I use for this analysis is based on Philippe Hamon's theory of evaluation, which I confront with Alan Palmer's theory on "fictional minds." This "lens" brings textual points into focus where evaluation, "mind reading," and

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[4] Some of the ideas developed in these chapters are also mentioned in publications elsewhere. See Van Steenhuyse, "Writing," "Jane Austen," "Fan Fiction Studies," "Wordplay," "Angst," and "Cyberspace."

[5] For a definition of this term and other concepts from fandom and fan fiction studies, I also refer the reader to the appended glossary.

character overlap. I use it to examine how Elizabeth Bennet's evaluations, and evaluations of Elizabeth, are represented in *Pride and Prejudice* and two fan fiction texts: Jack C.'s *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth."[6] In addition, I examine instances of evaluation in the reader comments to those texts. Chapter 3 is focused on "manners" and can be regarded as a companion chapter to the second chapter. I discuss the relation between Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy and groups of characters. To discuss this aspect of character, I extend my theoretical framework with Alan Palmer's discussion of the "social mind." The comparative analysis of this chapter focuses on *Pride and Prejudice*, Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears*, GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and hele's *Not Every Gentleman*. In Chapter 4, I deal with the representation of space. I discuss the representation of Pemberley, as a physical and social space, with the help of Marco Caracciolo's discussion of "sense of place" in narrative. I compare Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to JessicaS's "So Gradually," Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*, and a number of other fan fiction texts. In Chapter 5, finally, I home in on the representation of plot. To do so, I extend my heuristic toolbox with the concepts of Hilary P. Dannenberg. This analysis is focused on *Pride and Prejudice*, on the one hand, and Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* and Jan H's *The Child* on the other.

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[6] I use italics and quotation marks to distinguish between longer fan fiction texts and shorter fan fiction texts. In this dissertation, titles in italics are 50,000 words or more; titles in quotation marks are shorter than 50,000 words.

Chapter 1
Fan Fiction Studies and Postclassical Narratology

1.1 Introduction

Let me begin with a story. A gentleman is sitting in his library, thinking about a pair of fine eyes and the conversations he could have had if "she" had been there to dine with him. He is much older than he used to be, and his face is worn with care. Mrs. Reynolds, his retired housekeeper, brings him a letter from a private investigator and leaves. He reflects with bitter satisfaction on the fact that "her" life has been as miserable as his. Her youngest sister eloped and her father died trying to find his wayward daughter. The remaining sisters were forced to find employment. The gentleman then opens the letter, and finds out that Elizabeth Bennet has died. Overcome with emotion, he realises that he has let his anger and resentment take root in his being while he should have been humbled by Elizabeth's reproofs. He should have acted on the principles he was taught as a child, and tried to win her. He dies… and wakes up, screaming, in his bed. Rattled by his nightmare, Mr. Darcy is determined to become a man Elizabeth would be proud of. He hopes that she will be able to love him one day. This is a summary of Wendi's "A Lesson Hard Learned," a short story that was posted on the online message boards of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* on 26 February 2011. Wendi's text is a prototypical instance of "fan fiction" because it makes use of characters, settings, events, and other storyworld constituents of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and because it was written by an Austen fan for Austen fans. Over the past few decades, fan fiction scholars have approached stories such as Wendi's in several ways and, much like the lenses of a microscope, each of these approaches has brought a different set of research topics and questions into focus. I could, for instance, examine Wendi's fic through the lenses of cultural studies (fan fiction as a subcultural artefact), sociology (fan fiction as a window on the social relationships and practices of a fan community), media studies (fan fiction as an artefact that is shaped by media, including a particular relationship

between producers and consumers), psychology and psychoanalysis (fan fiction as a window on the motivations and emotions of fans), law (fan fiction as a challenge to copyright laws), and, finally, television studies, film studies, and other specialised disciplines (fan fiction as an interpretation of specific television shows, films, and other texts). In doing so, however, I would lose focus of Wendi's narrative, or rather research questions that relate to it. What is the relationship between Wendi's "A Lesson Hard Learned" and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, for example? Which narrative devices are used in Wendi's text, and how can we make sense of those devices? Is her text shaped by the same "aesthetic" as other fan fiction texts? Is Wendi's story shaped by conventions that are specific to Jane Austen fan fiction? Does it have formal features that are typical of fan fiction? And what do these narrative devices and conventional elements add to the meaning of Wendi's text? This dissertation addresses questions such as these.

I approach fan fiction from the perspective of literary studies, aiming to gain a better understanding of fan fiction texts *as texts*. This approach is still rare in fan fiction studies, which, as a field, is heavily indebted to cultural studies, sociology, media studies, and psychology and psychoanalysis.[1] As I will demonstrate, literary studies of fan fiction tend to focus on the object that inspires fans to write fan fiction, on the aesthetic evaluation of fan fiction, and on the "canonisation" of source texts. Only a few scholars have delineated textual characteristics that are typical of fan fiction. These discussions tend to be illustrated with excerpts from and summaries of fan fiction texts (e.g., Pugh, Stasi), with blurbs (e.g., Grandi) or with general discussions of such fan fiction phenomena as "Mary Sues" (e.g., Turk, B. Jenkins). Only a handful of scholars base their findings on extensive close readings of fan fiction texts.[2] According to Bronwen Thomas, this is the case because many scholars

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[1] This has been noted by several scholars. See, for example, Pugh 7, 11; Kaplan, "Construction" 134-5; Stasi 116; B. Thomas, "What" 2; and Leavenworth and Isaksson 8-9. On the fact that there are few close readings of fan fiction, see B. Thomas, "What" 2-3 and Hellekson and Busse, "Fan Fiction" 24. I use the word "fan fiction studies" because, even though the study of fan fiction has always been closely related to the study of fans and fan cultures, it seems reductive to characterise the field as a subdiscipline of fan studies. Fan fiction has been studied from a wide range of theoretical perspectives, and it is no longer uncommon for discussions of fan fiction to appear at conferences and in journals which are not devoted to research into fandom (such as the *European Narratology Network* conference of 2013). What is more, Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson have recently compiled a *Fan Fiction Studies Reader* (2014). This suggests that fan fiction is gradually becoming a field of study in its own right. Nevertheless, it will always have very strong ties with fan studies.

[2] See Kaplan, "Construction"; B. Thomas, "What"; Leavenworth and Isaksson; Kustritz, "Painful." I discuss these texts in greater detail below. Another example is Ika Willis's "Keeping Promises to Queer Children." Like the scholars I will discuss in depth, Willis examines "the interrelationship between fan/reader/writer, canon, and world, which structures fan fiction as a written reading of a text-in-the-world" (154). She aims to "account in detail for the *ways* in which fan readings orient a canonical text around a specific set of concerns and desires" (154). More specifically, she argues that "reading," and particularly queer reading, "involves the negotiation of painful gaps between the desiring subjectivity of the reader and the ability of the text to sustain that subjectivity and those desires" (155). Using Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's queer theory and Roland Barthes's notion of doxa as a point of departure, she performs close readings of her own fan fiction (156-68). Since Willis's analysis is closely focused

believe that "the identities and practices of fans cannot be abstracted from the sorts of texts they write, but must be analyzed as socially situated practices and activities" ("What" 2-3). In this chapter, I argue that it is worthwhile to perform close readings of fan fiction texts, because these texts help to create, sustain, and change the climate that is required for certain "socially situated practices and activities" to develop. Building on literary studies of fan fiction by Deborah Kaplan, Bronwen Thomas, Maria Lindgren Leavenworth and Malin Isaksson, and Anne Kustritz, I lay the foundations of a conceptual toolbox that makes it possible to analyse textual strategies that influence the way fan readers construct the "worlds" evoked by fan fiction texts. I bring this toolbox to bear on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, a fan community based around *Dwiggie.com*—a website that archives Jane Austen fan fiction, reader comments, and related metatexts. In this dissertation, I examine how the members of this community represent and reinterpret the "world" of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. However, I also examine how these representations resonate with writing practices, reading practices, and frames for conduct that make this fan community, and perhaps even the Austen fandom as a whole, different from Austen's other readerships.

To achieve this, I enrich findings from fan fiction studies with "postclassical" narrative theories, and theories based on the cognitive sciences in particular. Following David Herman, I distinguish between "postclassical" and "classical," structuralist theories of narrative (Herman, *Basic* 26-36). Structuralist narratologists, such as the early Roland Barthes and Tzvetan Todorov, were the first to argue that there is such a thing as "narrative." These scholars modelled their theoretical paradigm on the work of structuralist linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), who famously argued that the object of linguistics is language (*langue*) rather than speaking (*parole*). Whenever a community of speakers uses speech to express unique ideas, in what Saussure calls *parole* (Saussure 11-3), "impressions that are perceptibly the same for all are made on the minds of the speakers" (13). *Langue* is the product of this process of "social crystallization" (13). It is a system of constituents and rules of combination that is accepted by a community of speakers, and cannot be created, used, or modified without the cooperation of other members (13-4, 71). Structuralist narratologists argue that narratives are underpinned by an analogous system, even though every narrative seems to be distinctive and unique (Herman, "Structuralist" 571).[3] "Postclassical" narratologists still study narrative in general, but they no longer use structuralist linguistics as a pilot science. Postclassical narratologists have refined "classical" concepts by looking at them from other theoretical perspectives, and they have

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on her own "desiring subjectivity," and because the other scholars I will discuss cover similar ground with different approaches, I will not discuss this study in depth.

[3] Roland Barthes formulates this research question as follows:

> either narrative is a random assemblage of events, in which case one can only speak of it in terms of the narrator's (the author's) art, talent, or genius . . . or else it shares with other narratives a common structure, open to analysis, however delicate it is to formulate. ("Introduction" 238)

looked beyond literary texts to graphic novels, oral stories, and other corpora (Herman, *Basic* 31). In addition, they have explored the affordances and constraints of various storytelling media, and used findings from other disciplines to delineate and explore research topics that have not been studied by structuralist narratologists (Herman, *Basic* 31). I focus on narrative theories that, however extensively, use artificial intelligence research, psychology, and other cognitive sciences to refine "classical" concepts, such as setting or plot, and to explore new areas of investigation, such as the construction and experience of storyworlds.

At first sight, it may seem pointless to analyse fan fiction texts with these "cognitive" narrative theories. After all, fan fiction revolves around the characters (Elizabeth Bennet, Fitzwilliam Darcy), objects (barouches, white soup), events (Mr. Darcy's first proposal, Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley), locations (Longbourn, Rosings Park), and other referents that make Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* different from, say, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Narratology, in contrast, typically looks beyond the referents of individual texts to develop theoretical concepts that capture something that is true for all narratives.[4] Scholars like Catherine Emmott and Marco Caracciolo, for example, make claims about "narrative comprehension" in general, rather than one reader's interpretation of a specific text (e.g., Emmott, *Narrative*; Caracciolo, "Virtual"). I believe, however, that fans and fan fiction scholars have already begun to develop what might be called a "sociocultural" narratology, because they look beyond individual fan fiction texts to capture something that is true for all fan fiction texts. I say a "sociocultural" narratology, because this approach is built on the assumption that fan fiction is a distinctive type of narrative in that it is embedded in a distinctive sociocultural context. Consider, for instance, the concepts of "canon" and "fanon." In fandom and fan fiction studies alike, the term "canon" is used to refer to the specific source texts about which a fan writes, and primarily to "the events presented in the media source that provide the universe, setting, and characters" of a fan fiction text (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 9). The term "fanon" refers to fan-made details, tropes, plot points, and other elements that are so widely accepted and used in fan fiction that fans who are new to the fandom may confuse them with canon (Pugh 41; B. Thomas, "Canons"; *Fanlore.org*, "Fanon"). These particular concepts describe something about fan fiction in general—about the rules of the game of fan fiction, if you

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[4] This is as true for classical narratology as it is for postclassical narratology. In a structuralist plot analysis like Roland Barthes's ("Introduction"), for instance, Mr. Darcy's proposal and Frodo Baggins's decision to spare Gollum's life are not defined as unique actions undertaken by unique fictional people. They are "cardinal functions" first: actions that are indispensable to the plot because they directly affect "the continuation of the story" ("Introduction" 248). This premise also underpins narrative theories in which structuralist models of narrative are enriched with ideas from analytical philosophy, discourse analysis, cognitive psychology, and other fields. "Postclassical" scholars like Marie-Laure Ryan and David Herman, for instance, have tried to describe the "referent" of narrative texts with the help of possible-worlds theory (Ryan, *Possible*) and the cognitive sciences (Herman, *Story*). Although they no longer use structuralist linguistics as a pilot science, they still look beyond the referent of individual narratives to develop theoretical models that are applicable to all narratives.

like. Whether fans write a story in which Mr. Darcy turns out to be a vampire, or in which Elizabeth Bennet is forced to take up a position as governess, they will always adhere to and deviate from the canon and the fanon of a particular community. The less they follow this rule, the more their stories will resemble regular fiction, rather than fan fiction. In this chapter, I home in on concepts such as these. First, I give a brief definition and history of Jane Austen fan fiction. I also detail how Jane Austen fan fiction has been used in fan fiction studies, and I briefly introduce the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. Second, I demonstrate that several concepts from fan fiction studies have a cognitive dimension. Using Deborah Kaplan's notion of "interpretive space" as a point of departure, I first sketch a general framework. I argue that Kaplan's notion draws attention to the cognitive process of fan fiction reading, and I describe this process with recent narrative theories about storyworlds, or the worlds evoked by narratives. I also keep in mind the collective dimension of Kaplan's idea, however, and relate it to David Herman's notion of "discourse domain." I then look at the canon and the fanon from this perspective, redefining them as knowledge structures that the fan reader uses to make sense of fan fiction texts. I believe that this integration draws attention to the points where fan fiction texts and the canon tend to overlap, making it easier to compare the two. In addition, it throws textual features of fan fiction into relief that are not highlighted by other fan fiction studies. This integrated theoretical framework serves as a context for the chapters that follow, in which I use narratological concepts that are grounded in this framework in close readings of specific fan fiction texts.

1.2   Jane Austen Fan Fiction: Definition, History, and Research

1.2.1   Definition and History

1.2.1.1   Definition and Early History

The members of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* are not the first to admire Austen's novels. They are the latest in a long line of readerships, which includes Victorian devotees, early-twentieth-century literati, and, indeed, several generations of Austen scholars.[5] Naturally, these readerships did not all produce "fan fiction." This begs the question: when was the

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[5] In recent years, these audiences and the texts they have left behind have received a lot of attention in Austen studies. See, for example, such reception studies as Deidre Lynch's "At Home with Jane Austen" (1996) and her edited collection *Janeites: Austen's Disciples and Devotees* (2000), Laurence W. Mazzeno's *Jane Austen: Two Centuries of Literary Criticism* (2011), and Claudia L. Johnson's *Jane Austen's Cults and Cultures* (2012).

first instance of Jane Austen fan fiction written? The answer to this question depends on how you define "fan fiction." Up to now, I have defined fan fiction as narrative fiction, written by and for fan communities, that is founded on the storyworld constituents of antecedent texts (such as characters, settings, concepts, or events). This definition excludes some texts that share a family resemblance with fan fiction, and which may be covered by definitions of fan fiction that prioritise other criteria.[6] In *The Fan Fiction Studies Reader,* Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse note that "[a]nyone who has ever fantasized about an alternate ending to a favorite book or imagined the back story of a minor character in a favourite film has engaged in creating a form of fan fiction" ("Reader" 1).[7] By this definition, Jane Austen herself engaged in "a form of fan fiction." *Pride and Prejudice* was published by Thomas Egerton in January 1813, and the novel quickly proved to be a success (Spence 186-7). In May of the same year, Jane Austen visited her brother Henry in London, who had recently lost his wife to a prolonged illness (189-90). During her stay, she went to see an art exhibition in Spring Gardens (Le Faye 212, 416-7). On 24 May 1813, she wrote home to her sister Cassandra:

> It is not thought a good collection, but I was very well pleased—particularly (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs Bingley, . . . excessively like her. I went in hopes of seeing one of her Sister, but there was no Mrs Darcy; . . . Mrs Bingley's is exactly herself, size, shaped face, features & sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. She is dressed in a white gown, with green ornaments, which convinces me of what I had always supposed, that green was a favourite colour with her. I dare say Mrs D. will be in Yellow. (212)

Later in the letter, Austen returns to the subject of Mrs. Darcy's portrait:

> I can only imagine that Mr D. prizes any Picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye.—I can imagine he w^{d} have that sort [of *omitted*] feeling— that mixture of Love, Pride & Delicacy. (213, addition Le Faye's)

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[6] Sheenagh Pugh, for instance, defines fan fiction as "writing, whether official or unofficial, paid or unpaid, which makes use of an accepted canon of characters, settings and plots generated by another writer or writers" (25). This definition is so broad that it includes stories about Robin Hood, King Arthur, and "the characters of ancient myth" (9). Other scholars use a narrower definition. In "Writing Bodies in Space: Media Fan Fiction as Theatrical Performance," for instance, Francesca Coppa defines fan fiction "as creative material featuring characters that have previously appeared in works whose copyright is held by others" (226). My definition falls somewhere in between these two extremes.

[7] Hellekson and Busse later give a narrower definition, arguing that "fan fiction proper" has its earliest roots in the "zine culture" of science fiction fandom, but only truly came into its own in the form of "media fan fiction" written in the fandoms of 1960s television series ("Reader" 6). As I will demonstrate in a moment, my definition shares this emphasis on fan culture.

Here, Jane Austen engages in a "form of fan fiction" because she speculates about and describes the appearance, preferences, and disposition of her own characters.[8] Yet I—and many scholars with me, including Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson ("Reader" 6)—would not call the result of Austen's musings "fan fiction." After all, they are not written by a "fan" and are brief descriptions rather than fully fledged narrative texts.

So what does it mean to say that fan fiction is written by "fans"? Like many other scholars, I believe that "fan fiction should be understood as a product of fan cultures" (Derecho 62). This context is not present, for instance, when a text is written as an in-joke between two family members, such as Jane Austen and her niece Fanny Knight. In the letter of 24 May 1813, Fanny's name crops up once more:

> I am very much obliged to Fanny for her Letter;—it made me laugh heartily; but I cannot pretend to answer it. Even had I more time, I should not feel at all sure . . . of the sort of Letter that Miss D. would write. (Le Faye 213)

If Fanny wrote a letter addressed to Georgiana Darcy, in which she pretended to be an acquaintance of Austen's character,[9] this text would definitely resemble fan fiction. However, it would not be shaped by the norms, goals, and conventions of a fan community. This is also true for texts that were written by professional authors and edited by a publishing house, for a general audience. This is the case, for instance, for the earliest texts that are based on Jane Austen's novels. As early as 1850, Catherine Anne Hubback published *The Younger Sister*, a Victorian completion of *The Watsons* (one of Austen's unfinished manuscripts, to which Hubback used to have access because she was Jane Austen's niece) (Wagner, "Hubback"). The first text that was based on the published, canonical novels was written in 1913 by Sybil G. Brinton, and was entitled *Old Friends and New Fancies: An Imaginary Sequel to the Novels of Jane Austen.* As the subtitle suggests, this narrative brings together the characters from Austen's six novels. Because these two

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[8] According to Austen's nephew, James Edward Austen-Leigh, these were not the only characters who held Austen's interest after "she had finished her last chapter":

> She would, if asked, tell us many little particulars about the subsequent career of some of her people. In this traditionary way we learned that Miss Steele never succeeded in catching the Doctor; that Kitty Bennet was satisfactorily married to a clergymen near Pemberley, while Mary obtained nothing higher than one of her uncle Phillip's clerks, and was content to be considered a star in the society of Meriton; that the 'considerable sum' given by Mrs. Norris to William Price was one pound; that Mr. Woodhouse survived his daughter's marriage, and kept her and Mr. Knightley from settling at Donwell, about two years; and that the letters placed by Frank Churchill before Jane Fairfax, which she swept away unread, contained the word 'pardon.' (sic) (157-8)

For a theoretical discussion of the place of such extensions in the transfictional "system" of certain texts, see Saint-Gelais, *Fictions* 367-8.

[9] Since Fanny's letter is lost, it is impossible to say if she actually wrote such a letter, or merely asked her aunt to reply as Georgiana Darcy.

novels are not embedded in a wider fan culture, however, they do not qualify as fan fiction by my definition.

As Abigail Derecho notes, many scholars believe that the first fan cultures originated "either in the late 1960s, with *Star Trek* fanzines, or, at the earliest, in the 1920s, with Austen and Holmes societies" (62). This phrasing is slightly misleading. The first Jane Austen Society was founded in the United Kingdom in 1940 to protect Chawton Cottage (C. Johnson, *Cults* 138). However, it is true that, already in the 1920s, groups of "Janeites" displayed the passion and reading practices that closely resemble those that lie at the heart of today's fan cultures. The term "Janeitism" is used to refer to the "self-consciously idolatrous enthusiasm for 'Jane' and every detail relative to her" (C. Johnson "Cults" 232). It first appeared in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and by the early twentieth century it was widespread among the day's "publishers, professors and literati" (232, 234). Austen's champions included Caroline Spurgeon, E. M. Forster, A. C. Bradley, Walter Raleigh, R. W. Chapman, Montague Summers, and Lord David Cecil (234). Assembled in reading communities like the Royal Society of Literature (Lynch, "Cult" 115; C. Johnson, "Cults" 234-5), these enthusiasts developed very distinctive reading practices. As Claudia L. Johnson notes:

> Janeites constituted a reading community whose practices transgress the dogmas later instituted by professional academics presiding over the emergent field of novel studies—dogmas holding, for example, that it is inappropriate to talk about characters as if they were real people or in any way to speculate upon their lives before, after or outside the text itself; that biographical information about an author is irrelevant at best and heretical . . . at worst; that the business of studying is serious indeed, requiring analytic skills and specialist knowledges available through courses of study at colleges and universities; that Austen's novels are essentially about marriage, and that the courtship plot . . . is the major event in her fiction. ("Cults" 235).

Today, these undogmatic practices are very much associated with fandom rather than literary studies.[10] Even though Janeites are now predominantly female rather than male,

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[10] These reading practices are no longer felt to be "academic" because Janeitism fell into disrepute as novel studies became institutionalised from the late 1940s onwards. To be a Janeite slowly became synonymous with being a fan—a term that has, from the first, carried similar connotations of enthusiasm, but in a negative sense (H. Jenkins, *Poachers* 12). This split Austen's readership into a popular and an academic audience (Johnson, "Cults" 244; Lynch, "Cult" 113). Because novels initially "lacked the cultural prestige of poetry and drama," Austen scholars felt the need to distinguish themselves from non-academic, Janeite readers (Johnson, "Cults" 242, 240). After all, "so long as novels were believed to be about characters, novel studies could seem to be a species of gossip of precisely the sort in which Janeites delight" (Johnson, "Cults" 242). To "consolidate" their authority, this "new professerate" began to develop a different way of reading Austen, creating some of the dogmas still in use today (234). Since then, many "professional scholars, whose claim to prestige is validated by their vocation's protocols of dispassion and objectivity," have been bothered by "amateur cultures of Austenian appreciation—because they are associated with, variously, unbecoming levity, sentimentality, a determination to integrate fiction into life or a conservative nostalgia" (Lynch, "Cult" 118).

they still "read" Jane Austen and her works in a similar way (Lynch, "Cult" 115; C. Johnson, "Cults" 243-4). As Deidre Lynch has noted, Austen still "fosters in her readers, as most other literary giants do not, the devotion and fantasies of personal access" we now associate with "the *fan*" ("Cult" 111). Claudia L. Johnson points out, for instance, that Janeites still want to know as much as possible about "Janean" artefacts, ranging from "balls" and "picnics" to "Addison's disease" and "petty theft" ("Cults" 244). Similarly, it is still a "common Janeite game" to imagine "how a character in one novel might behave towards a character in another," or to speculate "how the novels might continue *after* the wedding" (244). This is probably why some fan fiction scholars trace the rise of fan culture back to Austen enthusiasts of the early twentieth century.

While it can definitely be argued that early-twentieth-century Janeitism shaped some aspects of fan culture, it is difficult to say when Janeites actually began to write "fan fiction." After all, there is a difference between the activities Claudia L. Johnson describes and the creation of fully fledged narrative texts based on the storyworlds of Austen's novels for a community of fans. There is some reason to believe, however, that there were "Janeite" communities outside of the Royal Society of Literature that produced fan fiction as early as the 1940s. In 2008, an Austen fan posted the following on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*:

> In the late 1950's early 1960's, I belonged to a group of people that mimeographed and mailed to each other 'Bonanza' 'Perry Mason' and other TV show Fan Fiction.(my friend and I were the youngest in the group) One of the adults I believe was connected in some way to screenwriting, so he was probably getting free ideas from us. *wink* My mom at the time told us that she had done the same as a teenager with Gone With the Wind and P&P(Sir Larry) and a lot of Errol Flynn movies! (qtd. on *Fanlore.org*, "Jane Austen")[11]

"P&P(Sir Larry)" refers to the 1940 MGM adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, which starred Sir Laurence Olivier as Mr. Darcy. If this post is accurate, and refers both to the writing and the distribution of fan fiction, "Janeite" communities were already writing and sharing narrative texts based on Jane Austen's storyworld in the early 1940s.

It is interesting that this piece of oral history relates to fan fiction about an Austen adaptation, rather than Austen's novel. Francesca Coppa dates the origins of "media" fandom back to early-twentieth-century science fiction enthusiasts, because they developed "much of the fannish infrastructure, jargon, and language still in use today" ("Brief History"

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[11] As this quotation suggests, I have chosen to reproduce the comments of fans exactly as they appear on the online message boards, even if they contain irregularities in terms of punctuation, spelling, grammar, or other conventions. In what follows, I do not explicitly indicate such mistakes, but I do amend quotations (using square brackets) whenever omissions or other obscurities make them difficult to understand. Similarly, I have chosen to respect the spelling of user names, even when they contain irregulaties. This explains why some user names are followed by a full stop (Jack C., Barbara A.) and others are not (Marie A, Jan H), or why some names contain a space and others do not (GraceCS, JessicaS). The only exception is the user name "hele," which I have capitalised when it appears at the beginning of a sentence.

42). They were the first to organise conventions and to publish "fan art" in fanzines and other amateur publications, to compensate "for deficiencies and gaps in the marketplace" (42). Similarly, Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse argue that "media fan fiction" really came into its own in the late 1960s ("Reader" 6). This coincides with the rise of the first media fandoms, which sprang up around TV shows such as *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (1964-8) and *Star Trek* (1966-9) (6). Hellekson and Busse argue that "*Spocknalia* (1967), the very first *Star Trek* fanzine, contained the first creative piece, Dorothy Jones's 'The Territory of Rigel' . . . " (6). It seems that Jane Austen fan fiction originated in a similar way.

1.2.1.2   From Offline Fandom to Online Fandom

As this brief history suggests, the Austen fandom was initially a very personal affair. To get hold of fan fiction, you needed to get in touch with other fans who had the means, the time, and the commitment to collect, mimeograph, and mail fan fiction texts to the community. According to Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, this had a profound impact on the demographics and nature of fandom. For one thing, being a fan meant being active in a community, with its own processes of "enculturation" and with physical "fan artifacts" that did not often cross "geographical boundaries" (Busse and Hellekson "Introduction" 13; Karpovich 178). In the 1990s, however, more and more fans began to move their activities online. This changed the size and diversity of fandom drastically, as more and more "individuals who may not have been, or considered themselves to be, fans found their way to fan activity through the internet" (Parrish 25). This has made fandom more anonymous. Fan writers can now post stories online not knowing "that they are part of a wider community," while so-called "lurkers" can "consume fannish artifacts without interacting with other fans" (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 13). Because texts are electronic, moreover, they are much more "transient" and harder to control (13). As such, online communities have a harder time "enculturating" their members, and have dropped many rules that seemed fundamental in the past (13).[12] This has made it harder—but, as I will demonstrate, not impossible—to delineate widely accepted, communal preferences.

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[12] Naturally, the advent of the internet also created important opportunities. Keeping in touch with other fans became easier thanks to online mailing lists and other technologies, even across "national boundaries and time zones" (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 13). Even though some fans, especially women, were initially reluctant to invest in computers, modems, and software, moreover, the advent of the internet eventually made limited financial resources less of an issue (Clerc 219; Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 13).

In the case of the Austen fandom, the first surge of online fan fiction occurred around 1997. This is suggested by the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index*, a database of links to online Jane Austen fan fiction created by Austen fans for Austen fans (*Jaffindex.com*). Founded in 2006, the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* contains links to fan fiction posted on more than a hundred boards. These boards range from very general websites (such as *Amazon*, *Barnes and Noble*, the *Internet Archive*, or *Dreamwidth*) to general fan fiction sites (such as *Fanfiction.net* or *Archive of Our Own*), general Austen-related websites (such as the *Regency Encyclopedia*), large Austen fan fiction sites (such as the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, *A Happy Assembly*, or *Mrs. Darcy's Story Site*), sites that no longer exist (such as *Hyacinth Gardens* and *Firthness*), and a selection of webpages of individual authors. The index also includes published books that were originally posted online as fan fiction, with links to their pages on *Amazon* and other bookshops. According to Victoria Cl, the administrator of the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index*, the index includes most of the fan fiction texts posted on "the mainstream boards from about 1997 onwards–which is when the online phenomenon of Austen fanfic really took root" (Victoria Cl). The index does not include everything. It does not list fan fiction texts that were abandoned by authors after 2000 words or three to four chapters (Victoria Cl). Although the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* uses the *Internet Archive*'s "Wayback Machine," moreover, it can be assumed that some older stories are irretrievable. Despite these flaws, however, I believe that the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* gives a good indication of general trends in the fandom.
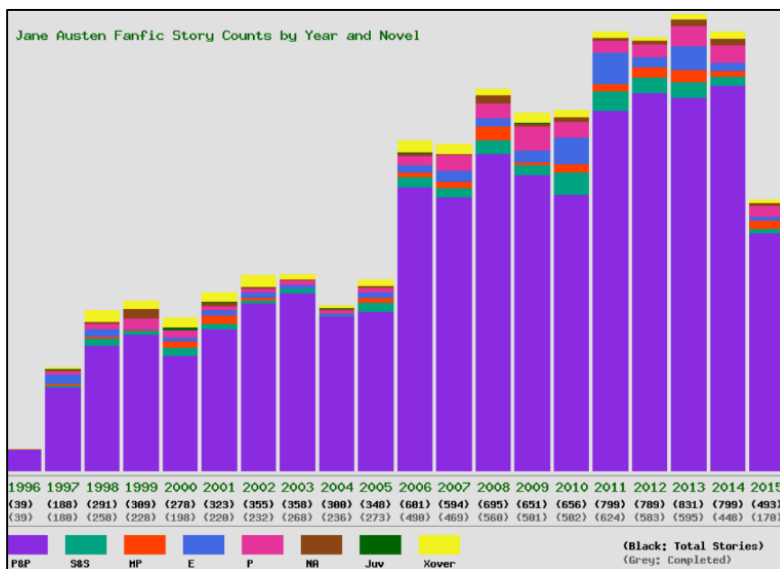
Figure 1: Jane Austen Fan Fiction Texts by Year and Novel

Figure 1[13] suggests, first, that the majority of online Jane Austen fan fiction is based on *Pride and Prejudice*. In addition, it shows that the fandom went through two major growth spurts in its history: one between 1996 and 1997, and one between 2005 and 2006. This is no coincidence. Austen's novels have a long and rich history of adaptation. *Pride and Prejudice* alone inspired at least fifty adaptations for theatre, musical theatre, television, radio, and film between 1895 and 1994 (Breuer). Two recent adaptations, however, outstrip all of these in terms of popularity and distribution. The first is a television miniseries that

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[13] All figures referenced here were generated by the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* (see *Jaffindex.com* for details). All statistics and graphs are reproduced with the permission of Victoria Cl.

appeared in September 1995 in Britain and in January 1996 in the US, and starred Jennifer Ehle as Elizabeth Bennet and Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy. This series attracted at least ten million viewers when it was first broadcast in Britain, and was eventually distributed in more than forty other countries (Kaplan, "Pride"). This had a considerable impact on the book market, with Penguin selling "430,000 copies of *Pride and Prejudice* in the year after the serial was first broadcast" (Kaplan, "Pride"). In the Austen fandom, this adaptation is referred to as "P&P2" (*Fanlore.org*, "Glossary").[14] The second is a large-scale film production from 2005, featuring Keira Knightley as Elizabeth Bennet and Matthew Macfadyen as Mr. Darcy. This film grossed $38.5 million in the US alone, and reached millions of viewers all over the world (Sadoff 87). In the fandom, this adaptation is known as "P&P3" (*Fanlore.org*, "Glossary"). The data of the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* suggests that the success of these two adaptations also resulted in an increase in *Pride and Prejudice* fan fiction. This is why I will refer to these two adaptations, in particular, when I discuss the influence of adaptations.

Allison Thompson has argued that the appearance of these adaptations resulted in a "great divide" among Austen fans, which is

> very apparent in the fanfic and paraliterature, between those fans who are primarily inspired by Messrs. Firth and Macfadyen and those who, while enjoying the movies, focus principally on the books and claim, justly or not, some intellectual superiority over the first group. (Thompson)

I do not believe that this divide is as great as Thompson claims, or at least not anymore. Few of today's online communities are purist, and many have strong ties to the adaptations. As I will explain in Section 1.2.3, the 1995 BBC/A&E adaptation led to the foundation of the oldest online Austen community and direct ancestor of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*: the *Republic of Pemberley*. The founding members of this community first contributed to AUSTEN-L—an email discussion list run on the servers of McGill University (*Pemberley.com*, "FAQ," "AUSTEN-L"). In 1996, one list member founded a small web bulletin board called P&P2BB to discuss BBC/A&E's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (*Pemberley.com*, "FAQ"). This bulletin board evolved into *Pemberley.com*, an internet forum where members of the *Republic of Pemberley* can discuss a wide range of topics on a number of boards. Between 1997 and 2008, fans could post fan fiction on the Bits of Ivory board, if they respected the *Republic*'s contributor guidelines. Amongst other things, the *Republic* prohibited "profanity, violence or 'adult' content" in its fan fiction, expected writers to set their stories in "the same historical era as Jane Austen's novels," and asked them to represent the characters "in a manner faithful to their original conception" (*Pemberley.com*, qtd. in Pugh 37-8). Sheenagh Pugh feels that, as a consequence, the

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[14] "P&P0" and "P&P1" refer to less well-known screen adaptations, namely the 1940 MGM adaptation with Laurence Olivier and Greer Garson, and the 1980 BBC television miniseries with Elizabeth Garvie and David Rintoul (*Fanlore.org*, "Glossary").

community all but forced its authors to write missing scenes and sequels in Austen's voice (37-40; cf. B. Thomas, "Canons"). Even so, the community has always honoured its "gushing roots, and the Austen-for-the-masses feel that a demonstrative love of the adaptations brings to the site" (*Pemberley.com*, "FAQ"). The 1995 adaptation also led to the foundation of smaller sites, which tended to be more tolerant of transgressive readings. *Firthness*, for example, accepted adult fan fiction before it became defunct (Pugh 38, 246). In recent years, Austen fans have also embraced more modern technologies, such as blogs and *Facebook* pages, to create fan sites devoted to the 2005 adaptation, to the long Regency period, and to other aspects of Austen's world. The fiercest debates I have come across on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* were between adaptations fans over who the "best" Mr. Darcy is, Colin Firth or Matthew Macfadyen (see Section 1.3.3.2). It seems, in short, that the purists mentioned by Thompson have become a minority in the age of the internet.

Although Austen fans use many classifications of fan fiction that are also used in other fandoms, its main categories are unique. Austen fans distinguish between "Regency" fan fiction and "modern" fan fiction. As Roberta Grandi notes,

> Modern retellings transfer the characters and the main plots of the novels into the present time (or alternative historical periods) and different geographical environments. Regency stories, instead, are set in Regency England and try to reproduce the language and dialogues of the original works. (27)

Roberta Grandi analyses these two categories into subgenres, quoting blurbs from a wide range of fan fiction websites to illustrate her point. Some categories, such as "sequel" and "prequel," are commonly used to describe "transfictional" texts.[15] Sequels recount what happened after the endings of Austen's novels; prequels show what happened before the start (Grandi 27-9; cf. Saint-Gelais, *Fictions* 76-7, 77-84). Other terms, such as "point of view" stories and "missing scenes," are less commonly used. "POV" stories "repeat the traditional plot, employ the canonical characters and preserve, as much as possible, the original dialogues and settings, but 'refocalize' everything from a different perspective" (Grandi 29). Grandi does not give a definition of "missing scenes," but she seems to follow Pugh, who defines them as stories that recount "incidents, conversations, interactions, that take place within the timescale of canon and are compatible with canon, that might have happened and in some cases must have happened, but which are not seen on the page or the screen" (Pugh 57; cf. Saint-Gelais, *Fictions* 84-5). Still other terms, such as "alternate universe," "metafic," "movieverse," and "cross-over" are widely used in fandoms. Indeed, this creates some problems in the case of "alternate universe," which has become a "blurred and imprecise" concept (Grandi 32). In fandom, this term is used to describe a wide range

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[15] Two texts exist in a "transfictional" relation when they "share elements such as characters, imaginary locations, or fictional worlds" (Saint-Gelais, "Transfictionality" 612).This implies that fan fiction is a specific type of "transfictional" text. By my definition, a transfictional text is also a fan fiction text when it is embedded in a fan culture.

of stories that feature source characters but take place in a different "world" to the canonical one. This world may be entirely different (for example, when characters are dropped into a different time period) or practically identical to canon (for instance, when a character's life takes a different course than in canon). Pugh has argued that a missing scene becomes an alternate universe story the moment it seems illogical that later canonical action follows from it (63). In this view, a story in which Elizabeth believes a warning about Wickham earlier in the story, and changes her behaviour toward Darcy, is an alternate universe story, while a story in which she dismisses such a warning is a missing scene (63-4). Grandi reserves the term "what if" for this type of story, and uses the term "elseworld" to refer to stories that are set in an entirely new world (32). I will follow her lead. Metafics are easier to pin down. Like other fans, Janeites use this term to refer to "narratives that consider the process of writing itself" (Grandi 35). As in other fandoms, "movieverse" fictions are fan fiction texts that are based on the adaptations rather than the novels (36). "Cross-overs," finally, are stories in which the storyworlds of two different sources are merged, so characters from the one can interact with characters of the other (37). Grandi also introduces a new term, however, to describe a phenomenon that may be unique to the Austen fandom. She uses the term "non-standard" stories to refer to fics in which the storyworlds of Austen's novels—and only those—are crossed over (34). It is against this background that the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, and the fan fiction in its archives, needs to be understood. Before I introduce this community, however, I will first discuss how Jane Austen fan fiction has been studied in fan fiction studies, and how this has informed my own approach.

1.2.2   On the Textual Analysis of Jane Austen Fan Fiction

1.2.2.1   Fan Fiction, Literary Studies, and the Austen Fandom

I have noted that literary studies of fan fiction in which the analysis of fan fiction texts is an end in itself are relatively rare in fan fiction studies. This is due to the history of the field. The first seminal discussions of fan fiction appeared in studies of fans and fan cultures, such as Henry Jenkins's *Textual Poachers* (1992), Camille Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women* (1992), and Constance Penley's *NASA/Trek* (1997). Although these studies discuss fan fiction in some detail, they ultimately draw conclusions about the fan communities who wrote them. In *Textual Poachers*, for instance, Jenkins famously characterises film and television fans as "poachers." Building on Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), he typifies them as "readers who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests" (23). He believes that "De Certeau is wrong to deny the possibility of readers 'writing in the margins' of the television text" (155). It is in this context that he discusses fan fiction, and especially "slash"—a type of fan fiction in which two male characters have a romantic relationship, even though they are heterosexual according to (mainstream readings of) the source text. Jenkins is interested, in other words,

in the reading practices of fan communities and the "assumptions" and "desires" that shape them, rather than the fan fiction texts themselves (155).[16] Constance Penley develops a feminist version of this argument in *NASA/Trek*. She argues, amongst other things, that the writers of *Star Trek* slash are actually rewriting patriarchal discourses about masculinity, by feminising the body and mind of Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock and by emphasising their equality (127-31). Penley believes that slash fans imagine a society that is better adapted to the needs of women, and, in doing so, try to change the sociopolitical context in which they are embedded (134-5, 145). Camille Bacon-Smith, finally, makes a similar point about "hurt-comfort" slash – stories in which one of the male partners is suffering because of a third party, and the other male partner nurses and comforts him. Bacon-Smith argues that this plot allows female fans to cope with the ambivalent emotions women experience with regards to their oppressors: with their rage (by identifying with the third party), with their fear (through the victim), and with their love (through the caretaker) (271). This allows them to challenge a system that pressures women into becoming caretakers and encourages men to sacrifice themselves in a heroic way (271-2, 273-7). This approach, in which a sociopolitical argument about the reading practices, frustrations, and motivations of fans is the true object of study, is still "among the most common in fan fiction studies, often underlying and supplementing others" (Hellekson and Busse, "Reader" 9).[17]

Very few of these "sociopolitical" studies use Jane Austen fan fiction, and the exceptions only confirm the rule. In "Archontic Literature," Abigail Derecho develops a similar,

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[16] At one point, for instance, Henry Jenkins gives a "survey of some of the dominant approaches employed by fan writers" because such a survey "indicates the community's characteristic strategies of interpretation, appropriation, and reconstruction" (*Poachers* 162). He then discusses one fan fiction text in depth because it "may illustrate the systematic reworking of broadcast texts characteristic of this mode of cultural production" (177). These priorities also underpin his discussion of "slash" fiction (185-222).

[17] Two more recent and more critical examples of this approach are Sara Gwenllian-Jones's "The Sex Lives of Cult Television Characters" (2002) and Christine Scodari's "Resistance Re-examined" (2003). These two studies of fan fiction resonate with what Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington call the second wave of fan studies. Scholars such as Henry Jenkins, Constance Penley, and Camille Bacon-Smith assume that there is a dichotomy between fans, who are structurally powerless, and "the powers that be," who are structurally powerful (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, "Introduction" 3, 6). Scholars of the second wave no longer assume that fan fiction is a revolt against powerlessness, or that it is subversive (6). In "Sex Lives," Sara Gwenllian-Jones argues that slash fiction about cult series, such as *The X-Files* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, do not *resist* the source text, but that they are the natural result of it (81). She believes that the exotic and adventure-packed worlds of cult series are incompatible with heterosexuality. After all, the "social practice" of heterosexuality is closely related to unexciting story elements, such as marriage, domesticity, childbirth, and providing for a family (87). This is why the relationship between protagonists of cult series, such as Mulder and Scully or Buffy and Angel, has to stay platonic (88). Relationships between two protagonists of the same sex, such as Kirk and Spock, can be a lot more intense, because they do not threaten what is key to the cult series (88-9). Gwenllian-Jones concludes that slash fans simply push the boat out a little farther, into the homo-erotic (89). Scodari's study highlights the fact that slash fans also maintain social and cultural hierarchies. In "Resistance Re-examined," she demonstrates that some slash fans reject "progressive" elements from the source text, taking the perspective that is traditionally associated with "oppressing" forces like patriarchy (125-7).

"corrective" argument in theoretical terms, and she uses Jane Austen fan fiction to illustrate her concepts. Building on Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever*, Derecho argues that fan writers make a contribution to an "archive," by which she means a "virtual construct" that surrounds the source text and ultimately contains "all texts related to it" (64-5).[18] An author can withdraw "artifacts" such as characters or plotlines from the archive, give them new meaning by recontextualising them, and re-place them, thus creating tension with the original artefacts (65, 70). As a text only becomes "archontic" when it generates "variations that explicitly announce themselves as variations" (65), the act of rewriting implies a willingness to actualise the "archontic" potential of the text—or, to put this differently, to see it as alterable and in need of correction. Derecho demonstrates that "archontic" texts have traditionally been used by "minority groups and women as a technique for making social and cultural criticisms," fitting them into "ethical projects that oppose outdated notions of hierarchy and property" (61, 66-7). She illustrates the first part of her argument with the archive of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, but she does not specify how writers such as Linda Berdoll and Pamela Aidan resist ideas of "hierarchy and property" (65). This is not surprising, because Austen fan fiction sometimes jars with "corrective" paradigms such as Henry Jenkins's "poaching" metaphor and Abigail Derecho's "archive" image. Austen fans know very well that Jane Austen's work "is out of copyright," for example, and, as a consequence, "fair game" (*Dwiggie.com*, "Contributor"). Because Austen is not "a multinational media corporation with corporate lawyers swinging to her defense" (Bowles 19), it is more difficult to characterise Austen fans as poachers or rebellious archivers. In addition, there are relatively few slash texts in the Austen fandom, or texts in which Austen's world shown through the eyes of servants, tradesmen, or other silenced, potentially subversive perspectives (Pugh 104, 195). This may explain why Jane Austen fan fiction is rarely used to make a sociopolitical argument.

Fan fiction has also been used to explore other objects of study, however, and it is in this context that Austen fan fiction usually appears. Generally speaking, fan fiction has been used as a springboard to learn more about the psychological motivations, emotional investments, and identity constructions of fans (Hellekson and Busse, "Reader" 9), about their "audience response" (9), or even to develop models for the ethics of internet research.[19]

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[18] This is why Derecho approaches fan fiction as a type of "archontic" literature. Unlike "derivative" and "appropriative," "archontic" implies that canonical and fan-produced texts "are impelled by the same archontic principle: that tendency toward enlargement and accretion that all archives possess" (Derecho 64).

[19] Over the past few years, several scholars have discussed the methodological and ethical aspects of fan fiction research. Some of these debates have their roots in fan studies. With *Textual Poachers*, Henry Jenkins was one of the first to identify himself as an academic and a fan, because he believed that his engagement with the fan community could enrich his academic work (*Poachers* 5-6). Several academics have followed his lead, for instance with autoethnographic studies (Busse en Hellekson, "Introduction" 24-25). Still, there is some debate about the position and added value of the "aca-fan" and the "fan-academic" (see, for instance, Hills 1-21). Another point of contention is the ethical dimension of fan fiction research, especially when online fics, Author's Notes, and

Austen fan fiction, however, has been used as a means to discuss four other issues. Firstly, several Austen scholars have discussed professional Austen rewrites and online Austen fan fiction. These discussions tend to appear in collections or book sections about Jane Austen's afterlives in "popular culture."[20] This ties in with a more general trend, in which fan fiction is used to shed light on specific source texts (Hellekson and Busse, "Reader" 8). Such studies rarely take the communal dimension of Austen fan fiction into account. When they refer to online communities, moreover, they tend to focus on the *Republic of Pemberley* (see, for example, Munford 62-3; Bowles 17-8; Simons 34-5).[21] Seen from the perspective of fan fiction studies, in short, most of these studies barely scrape the surface of the online Austen fandom. Secondly, several scholars have used Jane Austen fan fiction to learn more about the organisation and "internal relationships" of Austen fan communities (cf. Hellekson and Busse, "Reader" 8).[22] Two recent examples are Jens Kirk's "'No, You've Not Lost Your Way'" (2011) and Deborah Yaffe's popularising study *Among the Janeites* (2013). Kirk discusses a metafic (a fan fiction text about fandom) to illustrate that Austen fans make sense of what they do on the internet, and particularly the way they use literary texts, in terms of "traffic" (261-2). Yaffe discusses the "Austen spinoff" as part of a more general study of the Austen fandom, recounting how Austen-lovers like Pamela Aidan came to write their fiction, or talking about the people behind Austen-related websites (67-92, 179-200). Thirdly, Jane Austen fan fiction has been used to explore the benefits of using fan fiction in courses about literature.[23] In "Our Austen: Fan Fiction in the Classroom," Amanda Gilroy discusses how she used Jane Austen fan fiction in a course about Jane Austen. By describing her "experiment," she "aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the 'customization' and teaching of Austen that has been taking place recently in Austen Studies" (Gilroy). Finally, at least one scholar has used Jane Austen fan fiction to discuss the impact of different media, and especially the internet, on fan culture.[24]

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comments are involved. This is partly due to the interdisciplinary nature of the field (since sociological approaches and humanities approaches take a different stand on the matter), and the fact that the internet is a grey area between the public and the private domain. A good example of this is Amy Bruckman's "Studying the Amateur Artist: A Perspective on Disguising Data Collected in Human Subjects Research on the Internet," which I discuss in depth in Section 1.4.2.

[20] See, for example, Lynch, "Sequels"; Wagner, "Sentimental"; Francus, "Therapy"; Munford; Bowles; Simons; Svensson.

[21] Anette Svensson's "Pleasure and Profit" is an exception to this rule, because she mentions the *Republic of Pemberley* but also briefly discusses two stories from *Fanfiction.net* and the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, including some reader comments (205-6, 210-1).

[22] A good example of this approach is Roberta Pearson's " 'It's Always 1895': Sherlock Holmes in Cyberspace."

[23] For an example that uses variations on *Moby Dick*, see H. Jenkins and Kelley, *Reading*. This, too, ties in with a more general trend, in which fan fiction is used to explore the benefits of fan reading and writing for the acquisition of literacy, second languages, and writing skills (Hellekson and Busse, "Reader" 9-10).

[24] As I have noted, the shift from publication in "fanzines" to publication on the internet did not just change the way in which fan fiction was published and distributed, but it also affected the demographics of fan communities and the way in which fans interact with each other and with their work (Busse en Hellekson, "Introduction" 13).

Kylie Mirmohamadi examines the online Austen fandom from this medium-conscious perspective in *The Digital Afterlives of Jane Austen: Janeites at the Keyboard.* Mirmohamadi aims to

> situate Austen fandom on the Internet within intersecting streams of literary and fan cultures, and also in the history (and present) of publishing. They [the chapters of this study] outline how online Austen fandom produces and participates in new as well as continuing modes of literacy and ways of reading and writing. This study recognises that online literary activity, for all its application of new technology and reliance on a sector that imagines itself ever on a shifting frontier of innovation, takes place within an historical continuum. (sic) (2)

In each of these studies, Jane Austen fan fiction is not used to analyse the texts for their own sake, but to develop an argument about a related object of study.

Over the past decade, however, a few scholars have argued that it is worthwhile to examine fan culture through the lens of literary studies. These studies draw attention to a different set of research questions and tend to explore these issues using concepts from literary theory (B. Thomas, "What" 10-3). First, there are a number of studies that use concepts drawn from literary theory to discuss, not fan fiction *per se*, but the "fan object." By this, I mean the complex of texts that inspires fans to write texts that belong to the genre of fan fiction, but also to make fan vids, to participate in cosplay, or to join in other fan activities. I briefly mention such studies here, because fan fiction in general and Jane Austen fan fiction in particular needs to be understood against the background of the fan object. In "The Death of the Reader?," Cornel Sandvoss points out that the text concept of fan studies is not closed and authored, as it tends to be in literary studies and film studies, but open and constructed at the point of consumption (20-3). If we illustrate Sandvoss's theory with *Pride and Prejudice*, this implies that *Pride and Prejudice* is not delimited by the words Jane Austen committed to paper; its boundaries are actively constructed by Austen fans

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Over the past few years, several scholars have tried to chart that impact. For one thing, they have tried to describe the ways in which fans use technologies such as MySpace, LiveJournal, and Twitter to tell stories about their favourite characters (see, for instance, Stein, "Dratted"; B. Thomas, "Gains," "Update"; A. Thomas). Other scholars have examined how the internet changed the context in which fan fiction is produced. In "Interactive Audiences? The 'Collective Intelligence' of Media Fans," Henry Jenkins discusses the ways in which the interaction between media consumers, media consumers and media texts, and media consumers and media producers has changed (136). He argues that we now have a "participatory culture," thanks to the advent of new technologies, subcultural DIY, and an economic situation that encourages the development of projects in which consumers are allowed to participate through various media (135-6). The rise of the internet has also put new research questions on the agenda. It is now easier for source texts and cultural artifacts to migrate across geographical and cultural boundaries (Hellekson and Busse, "Introduction" 13). This raises questions about the impact of national and cultural differences on fandom. In "James Loves Severus, but only in Japan," for instance, Nele Noppe develops a methodology to examine how English-language fan fiction about *Harry Potter* differs from *doujinshi*, or Japanese manga, based on the same canon (Noppe).

whenever they read Austen's novel, have a look at the explanatory notes of a critical edition, consult websites about the Regency period, or read similar texts (cf. 23-4). Cornel Sandvoss draws on literary theory to conceptualise this "fan text." Most importantly, he remarks that the text concept he associates with fan studies is prefigured in the approach of structuralism, as well as in Roland Barthes's poststructuralist essay "The Death of the Author" (25, 26-7).[25] Jonathan Gray has developed a similar argument. In "New Audiences, New Textualities," Gray applies Gérard Genette's concept of the "paratext" to other media, such as television programmes. In this context, the paratexts are "introductory sequences, 'spoilers' and ads, newspaper, magazine or web articles, merchandise and the very buzz or media talk that surrounds any given programme" (72; cf. Gray and Mittell 18). Like Sandvoss, he defines the text from the perspective of the reader, arguing that it is ultimately characterised by

> the feelings, thoughts and experiences it evokes, by the memories of the text, and yet also by its future potential and the individual's relationship to its past, present and future. The text is an expansive unit that grows with time and, moreover, that is seen as at its best when it outgrows itself, opening up more room, possibilities, diegesis and questions or possible answers than any one incarnation is able to exhaust. (Gray, "Scanning" 122)

Other scholars describe this "open" text with concepts from postclassical narratology and related literary theories. This is the case, for instance, in Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson's discussion of the fan object (which they characterise as a "writerly text" in Roland Barthes's sense of the word) ("Introduction" 6); Matt Hills's "hyperdiegesis" (which is inspired by Janet Murray's notion of "encyclopedic" narrative) (137-8, 196); and Sara Gwenllian-Jones's "deterritorialised" fiction (which she develops with the narrative theories of Marie-Laure Ryan, Lubomír Doležel, Janet Murray and theories from other fields) ("Virtual" 84, 92). Even though these theories do not focus exclusively on fan fiction, let alone on Jane Austen fan fiction, they provide a valuable framework for my discussion (see Sections 1.3.4 and 1.3.5).

Other scholars focus more exclusively on fan fiction, and particularly on the matter of its aesthetic value, canon formation, and formal characteristics. Notably, these issues are often explored with the help of Jane Austen fan fiction. In "What is Fanfiction and Why Are People Saying Such Nice Things About It?," for instance, Bronwen Thomas discusses "debates about the quality and aesthetic value of stories emerging from communities"

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[25] As my discussion suggests, Sandvoss believes that Barthes's text concept is an exception to the rule in literary studies. Sandvoss notes that it was Barthes' earlier work, and structuralism more generally, that made it possible for cultural studies "to extend the study of interpretation and meaning beyond literary texts" (25). Sandvoss argues that structuralism, with its disregard for the distinction between "high" and "low" culture, originated as "a reaction to changing forms of textuality that much of literary theory had been unable to address, continuing the study of literary texts as if they existed in splendid isolation" (26).

("What" 2). She notes that there is a tendency in studies of fan fiction to "steer clear of any attempt to evaluate fanfiction based on the quality of the writing, the plotting, or the characterization," because fan scholars do not want to be accused of being "outside or 'above' the object of study" (3; cf. 13). Following Cornel Sandvoss,[26] Thomas proposes that scholars base their evaluations, not on a ready-made "set of values," but

> on what makes this kind of narrative practice distinctive—for example, by exploring
> how it provides different perspectives on a familiar fictional world or set of events or
> allows fans happily to move in and out of various storyworlds and also between the
> storyworld and the 'real' world of their day-to-day existence. (15)

She chooses to illustrate her discussion with fan fiction that is based on Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, precisely because they "bring into the foreground issues of aesthetic value or quality as well as issues arising from the relationship of the fan text to its source" (by which Thomas means "the modes of engagement that fans display and . . . how they participate in processes of creation and reception") (6). Jane Austen fan fiction lends itself to discussions about aesthetic value because there is a tension in the Austen fandom between mainstream and fannish "canon formations" of the source text. By this, I mean the process by which fan communities, on the one hand, and mainstream institutions, on the other, select source texts and invest them with authority.[27] Bronwen Thomas explores this tension in "Canons and Fanons: Literary Fanfiction Online." There, she supports her discussion of canon formation with a study of the *Republic of Pemberley* (B. Thomas, "Canons"). Thomas notes that even though the *Republic*'s critical apparatus resembles that of most other fan fiction sites, its contributor guidelines are remarkably protective of Austen's "legacy" ("Canons"; cf. Pugh 37–9). Considering this "respect for the source texts and their author," and the "almost Leavisite tone" of the guidelines in question, Thomas concludes that the notion of literary canon, "not just as some kind of badge of quality, but also as guarantor of moral improvement and education," still holds sway in the Austen fandom (B. Thomas, "Canons"). In "Austen's Fans and Fans' Austen," Jun Xu studies a phenomenon that is related to canon formation with a linguistic corpus study of Jane Austen fan fiction. Comparing the occurrence of particular words in Austen's novels and a corpus of Jane

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[26] Notably, this issue has also been explored in more general terms by Cornel Sandvoss. In "The Death of the Reader?", Sandvoss builds on Wolfgang Iser's concept of "normalization," or the process by which a reader tries to align the "alien elements" of a text as closely as possible with "past experience" (29). He believes that this concept makes it possible to evaluate texts, as fans tend to do, and explains why texts are valuable to individual readers (26, 28, 31-2). In principle, texts that resist normalisation are more valuable than texts that do not (29). However, in the case of Sandvoss's fan texts, the reader has more "semiotic power," and can exclude elements that resist normalisation (30). As is the case for texts more generally, in other words, "every case of text-reader interaction" is different, and texts may be valued differently by individual readers (30). While Iser's theory is a step in the right direction, it is still necessary to develop a "new vocabulary and concepts to analyze aesthetic value in its function: the process of reading" (31).

[27] Notably, this issue is also addressed in more general studies, such as H. Jenkins, *Poachers* 94–8 and Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 7, 9-10.

Austen fan fiction, she concludes that, "although claiming to emulate her writing faithfully, Austen's fans reconstruct a modern Austen who is writing contemporary romance fiction through the 'old' characters such as Elizabeth and Darcy" (81). She argues, in other words, that Austen fans create an Austen of their own, "a new 'Author' in the reader's cultural context" (81, 83). This suggests that there is a tension between the source text, as such, and the version that is "canonised" by fans. In much the same way, other scholars have discussed the tension between "academic" and "fannish" approaches to Austen, which exists because Jane Austen has a popular and an academic audience (Van Steenhuyse, "Jane Austen"; cf. Grandi 25).

Only a few scholars home in on the textual features that are specific to fan fiction, but several of them base their conclusions on Jane Austen fan fiction.[28] In *The Democratic Genre: Fan Fiction in a Literary Context*, for instance, Sheenagh Pugh approaches fan fiction as a "genre," investigating "what *kind* of writing this is, how its particular conventions and history have shaped it, what needs it tries to satisfy, how it has developed and is developing" (11; cf. Kaplan, "Construction" 135). She illustrates her findings with several fandoms, including the Jane Austen fandom. Brett Jenkins, in contrast, focuses exclusively on Jane Austen fan fiction, because he believes that Jane Austen fan fiction throws one particular feature of fan fiction into sharp relief. He argues that, paradoxically,

> those elements of the source text which were initially valorized by fans—namely, identification with a character that exists within an oftentimes closed, narrative structure, and storyworld—are concurrently undermined by the equally valorized activity of opening up a text and its characters through writing. (372)

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[28] In what follows, I home in on studies that use Jane Austen fan fiction. There are also several studies that are based on other fandoms. Mafalda Stasi's study of "the slash text," for instance, is focused on slash's "intrinsic characteristics, which are related both to its conditions of production and its formal features" (118). Taking the metaphor of the "palimpsest" as a point of departure, Stasi discusses "various types of intertextuality in slash, and how they compare to other textual strategies in different genres, styles, and periods" (119). Similarly, Tisha Turk takes Gérard Genette's notion of metalepsis as a point of departure. She argues that the metalepses in fan fiction and fan vids are different from those in regular narratives, because they are extratextual: they play with the boundary between the actual world and the fictional world, rather than the boundary between two textual worlds (86-90). This makes it possible to achieve unusual metaleptic effects, for instance when the fan writer inserts a "Mary Sue," or idealised version of herself, into the storyworld, which is then recognised as such by the reader (88, 96). Daria Pimenova, finally, seeks to enrich the theoretical basis of fan fiction studies—which was developed on the basis of offline fandom—by combining Mikhail Bakhtin's "theory of dialogical textualities" and "play theory" (44-5). She believes that this theoretical framework provides a "better understanding of fan fiction, not only in its external structure, but rather in the inner mechanisms of its functioning" (44). Pimenova no longer compares the "source – fan fiction relationship" to a "story tree," because this metaphor does not fully capture the "communal aspect" of fan fiction (49-50). After all, online fan fiction can no longer be separated into clear "branches," and because models such as these are "unable to explain or predict the functioning of the internal mechanisms of fan fiction" (49-50). Pimenova approaches fan fiction as an interactive type of writing and describes its generating forces with Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia and dialogue and with concepts that relate to the notions of "game" and "play" (53-4, 55-9).

This paradox is particularly striking in the case of "realist" source texts like Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, where historical, individual characters are fitted into a meaningful whole (372). While I do not agree with Jenkins's decision to classify *Pride and Prejudice* as a "traditional form of realist fiction" (372), I believe he makes some important points. Jenkins argues that the plot of novels like *Pride and Prejudice* moves through "events essential to the characters' lives" towards a moment when their identity is "essentially stable, whole, and closed: the characters have made their choices, have acted, and have created meaningful lives" (373, 374). By fitting these characters into a wide range of new plots—new "meaningful wholes" with "beginnings, middles, and ends," fans not only create "*new* individual, historical meanings for the characters, but *multiple* meanings which effectively renders the characters meaningless" (374, 372, 375). Because the "sense of closure, wholeness, and meaningfulness" of the source characters is perpetually disrupted in fan fiction, the characters cease to be "a *whole* character—containing within them a set of characteristics and meanings derived from choices and actions within a delimited timeframe" and become "a structuralist character function, actant, or type, or an avatar within a spatially delimited storyworld" (372, 377, 381). Or, as Brett Jenkins puts it: "[f]anfiction writers of realist fiction take historical, meaningful characters, and make them *ahistorical* and meaning*less* by deferring the possibility of closure and the determination of meaning" (377). While I agree with the first part of Jenkins's argument, I do not believe that characters become "meaningless." I will present an alternative, cognitive model in Section 1.3.4. For now, I just want to note that Jenkins uses Jane Austen fan fiction to pinpoint a paradox that characterises fan fiction more generally.

1.2.2.2 Fan Fiction and Close Reading

While studies such as these are valuable, they also raise an important methodological question. It is remarkable that, even in literary studies of fan fiction, there are very few close readings or in-depth literary analyses of fan fiction texts (cf. B. Thomas, "What" 2-3, Hellekson and Busse, "Fan Fiction" 24). As I have noted, Bronwen Thomas believes that "close textual analysis is often denigrated on the basis that the identities and practices of fans cannot be abstracted from the sorts of texts they write, but must be analyzed as socially situated practices and activities" ("What" 2-3). This ties in with my earlier discussion, because it implies that many scholars believe that the study of fan fiction texts *as texts* is less important, or less relevant, than studies of the sociopolitics of fandom, the organisation of fan communities, the impact of media on fan cultures, and other research topics. However, it also raises a number of other questions: is it truly impossible to combine close textual analyses with approaches that have been used to study "socially situated practices and activities"? How can these approaches be combined, and what are the advantages of combining them? To answer these questions, I will discuss four studies that do use close readings, and explain how they relate to the overall analytical mode, heuristic toolbox, corpus, and aims of this dissertation.

In "Construction of Fan Fiction Character Through Narrative," Deborah Kaplan demonstrates that some social practices and activities make a difference on the level of the fan fiction text, because they create a distinctive relation between author, text, and readership. Kaplan uses findings about fandom, concepts from classical narratology, and a small corpus of fan fiction texts to come to a better understanding of the construction of characters in fan fiction. She does not analyse fan fiction texts to draw conclusions about "the peculiarities of fandom," but aims to "invert this analytical mode, using the mores and standards of fandom to provide exciting insights into the construction of fan texts as texts" (135). Kaplan posits that fan fiction texts are always grounded in an interpretation of the source text that is shaped by the source text itself, by extratextual materials such as interviews with actors or scholarly texts on the source text, and by the analyses of other fans (135, 136-7). She performs a close reading of three fan fiction texts against this background, using it to make sense of the narrative techniques that are used to develop character (135). For one thing, she notes that the fan fiction texts in question feature variable focalisation and other narrative techniques that create a dialogue between mainstream and fannish interpretations of the characters (138, 151). In one fic, for example, first-person narration is used to present the "bad guy" of *The X-Files* in a different light, and to encourage the fan community to identify with a character they love to hate (139, 143). Kaplan's work shows, in other words, that some fan writers use textual strategies to create polyphony on the level of the text, either explicitly (for instance, by contrasting various perspectives by means of focalisation) or implicitly (for instance, by presenting a voice that jars with the voices the reader brings to the text). These textual strategies reflect, and take full advantage of, the polyphony of mainstream voices and fannish voices that is inherent to fandom as a whole.[29] My "analytical mode" is very similar to Kaplan's, as is my focus on the relation between fan writer, -text, and -readership. However, because I use the lens of postclassical, cognitive narratology, my study brings different textual features into focus. This will allow me to study the impact of a different range of socially embedded reading and writing practices.

In this respect, my approach resembles the one taken by Bronwen Thomas in "What Is Fan Fiction and Why Are People Saying Such Nice Things About It?" Like Kaplan, Thomas makes sense of the textual features of Carol's "Ae Fond Kiss" by referring to the findings of Cornel Sandvoss, Tisha Turk, and other fan fiction scholars (17, 19). She also takes the relation between author, text, and readership as a point of departure. Even more than Kaplan, Thomas takes care to incorporate extratextual materials and analyses by other fans in her close reading, "taking into account how aspects of the interface and website design impact upon the reading experience" and "how that experience is shaped by the responses and discussions generated by the stories" (20). More specifically, she supplements her discussion of the narratological and stylistic features of "Ae Fond Kiss" with a discussion

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[29] Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson refer to this complex of texts as the "fantext" ("Introduction" 7). I discuss this concept in depth in Section 1.3.1.

of the infrastructure of *Mrs. Darcy's Story Site* (16-7) and of reader comments to the story (18-9). However, unlike Kaplan, she extends this theoretical framework with cognitive narratology. Thomas believes that cognitive narratology can shed new light on "the activities and forms of engagement" of fans, because it examines how readers use textual cues to construct storyworlds and become immersed, while still acknowledging that texts evoke a wide range of emotional and mental responses (12). She concludes:

> Although the focus of such approaches [as Richard Gerrig's and David Herman's] is still perhaps on how texts provoke such a response, rather than on mapping out and engaging with the environments in which those responses are enacted, work of this sort does offer the possibility of combining textual analysis with some consideration of what readers *do* with the worlds they fashion and refashion—and also of what motivates fans to stay with and expand the storyworlds they choose to enter. (12)

However, Thomas only demonstrates this explanatory power once in her analysis of "Ae Fond Kiss." She notes that textual features which, at first sight, appear to be "clumsy gaffes and anachronisms" actually demonstrate that fans play with the boundary between the fictional world and the "real" world: "[r]ather than being wholly transported (Gerrig 1993) into another world, the fan keeps one toe in the realm of the 'real' world, with the banal and the mundane rubbing up against the fantastical and the surreal" (18). I examine the "cues" of a larger corpus of fan fiction texts and metatexts. More specifically, I demonstrate how these cues invite fan readers to construct and engage with three key aspects of the storyworld: characters, spaces, and events. I deepen Thomas's approach, in other words, by focusing on a wider range of reading and writing practices. Unlike Thomas, moreover, I do not focus on the medium-specific dimension of the "environment" in which these constructions are embedded. Instead, I posit that fan fiction texts and metatexts are informed by particular frames of value that make the selection of some story content or the use of certain narrative techniques more preferable than other writing and reading practices.

In this respect, I follow Maria Lindgren Leavenworth and Malin Isaksson's *Fanged Fan Fiction: Variations on* Twilight, True Blood, *and* The Vampire Diaries. Like Kaplan and Thomas, Leavenworth and Isaksson use ethnographic and cultural studies of fans, as well as other theories,[30] as a means to an end: they want to gain "a depth of knowledge about the actual artifacts, acquired by sustained close readings of fan fiction" (9). More specifically, they analyse a selection of fan fiction texts to determine how vampires from American popular culture "are read, re-written and altered in fan fictions" (4). Their corpus comprises fan fiction texts that confirm the "norms" of the source text and fan fiction texts that run against such norms, "circumventing chastity or heteronormativity" or "rendering issues of evil and monstrosity in alternative ways" (112, 2). To specify what they mean by "norms,"

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[30] Notably, Leavenworth and Isaksson also refer to David Herman's work on storyworld construction—albeit very briefly (39, 53). This explains why their approach is compatible with Bronwen Thomas's. Here, I want to focus particularly on their use of Foucault's "discourse" concept.

Leavenworth and Isaksson build on Michel Foucault's understanding of "discourse," applying it to fan fiction (112). Like Foucault, they assume that discourse is produced by power:

> To control, punish and repress behaviors and identities, these need to be identified (produced) in contrast to the norm. Different kinds of categorizations and classifications, both past and contemporary, are structured similarly to the 'multiplicity of discourses [on sex] produced by a whole series of mechanisms operating in different institutions,' and they underpin other forms of separations between the normal and the deviant . . . . (Foucault, qtd. with addition in Leavenworth and Isaksson 112)

Leavenworth and Isaksson approach the figure of the vampire as a point of intersection between various discourses relating to monstrosity and sexuality. More specifically, they examine whether representations of the vampire in fan fiction texts establish different "categorizations and classifications" than the representations of the vampire in the source texts (112-4). As a point of departure, Leavenworth and Isaksson examine how fans deal with three aspects of the source texts: "the development of the vampire into a humanized figure that elicits sympathy," "genre structures and limitations" that are typical of the romance genre, and the representation of "agency and narrative perspective" (11). In their analyses, they focus on themes and motifs that recur both in the source texts and in the fan fiction texts, such as the theme of "liminal" monstrosity or the motif of "blood lust," as well as original narrative structures, phrases, imagery, and other elements (see, for example, 170-6). Although Leavenworth and Isaksson emphasise that there is an infinite variety of fan fiction, they ultimately identify "some of the main tendencies in contemporary online creativity" (4). For one thing, they conclude:

> It is in fanfics which depict a transgressive sexuality and sexual practices, and which explore questions of monstrosity with emphasis on horror and damnation, that the vampire is most clearly re-fanged, figuratively or literally. Contesting the canons' sexual ethics—monogamy, abstinence or heteronormativity, whatever the case may be—fanfic renditions of characters who are sexually experimental, who inflict or receive pain, who are exaggeratedly skilled in the arts of seduction and giving pleasure, recuperate figurative fangs in the return to a vampirism which is sexually threatening and brings out the victim's latent desires. (201-2)

I take a similar approach. I do not home in on the vampire, however, but on three constituents of the world of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: Elizabeth Bennet and other characters (as well as the manners that regulate their behaviour); Mr. Darcy's estate, Pemberley; and the novel's central courtship. I pay particular attention to themes and motifs that recur in Austen fan fiction, such as the theme of respectability and the motif of the rose garden. I believe that these elements, as well as the narrative techniques that are used to represent them, can shed light on the preferred reading and writing practices of this

community, as well as the "discourse" that is implied by these preferences. Most importantly, I demonstrate that Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, on the one hand, and a corpus of fan fiction texts and metatexts, on the other, "produce" different discourses about individuality and social responsibility.

Because I compare the discourses of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Austen fan fiction, my approach is also similar to the approach Anne Kustritz takes in "Painful Pleasures: Sacrifice, Consent, and the Resignification of BDSM Symbolism in *The Story of O* and *The Story of Obi*." Kustritz looks at an instance of *Star Wars* slash, entitled *The Story of Obi*, under the lens of fan fiction studies of slash, but she also uses scholarly discussions of BDSM symbolism and a close reading of the source text, *The Story of O*.[31] She argues that slash fiction makes it possible to present BDSM in a unique way, inspiring a "radical reevaluation of sexual domination's meaning and effects, especially for a largely female readership" (2.6). She argues that,

> [b]y calling upon the extensive shared knowledge of fan readers and the symbolism attached to the sexual conjunction of two same-sexed bodies, authors of slash fan fiction produce a constantly proliferating array of BDSM representations that challenge the speciation of erotic domination as an inherently destructive, unidirectional deadlock and create unique narrative and semiotic tools for rethinking erotic uses of power. (1.2)

Unlike Henry Jenkins, Camille Bacon-Smith, or Constance Penley, Kustritz does not approach slash fiction as the by-product of a fan community's frustrations, desires, or sociopolitical agenda. Instead, she examines how the particularities of slash fiction force writers and readers alike to change the way they think about sexual identities. She remarks, for instance, that the simple fact that slash revolves around two "same-sexed male bodies" gives the mode different affordances than "femslash" or "het" stories, because it "forces a unique reappraisal of those sexual destinies and action potentials associated with one or another set of genitals" (2.6). In much the same way, the fact that slash revolves around "characters individuated by richly detailed psychological and interpersonal backstories," who exist "within a particular cultural and historical context" and who are known by fan readers, makes it more difficult for writers to build stories around the "social types" that are usually associated with BDSM, such as "man/woman, femme/butch, top/bottom, and master/slave binaries" (2.7, 2.9). She notes:

> Character choices thereby become attributable to individual particularity rather than group membership alone, inviting readers to enter into complicated webs of emotional and experiential recognition rather than merely assigning equivalence according to corresponding positions within social hierarchies. (2.9)

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[31] Notably, Leavenworth and Isaksson also use extensive analyses of the source texts (e.g., 17-43).

Finally, the fact that there are so many slash fics, in which a wide range of "relational patterns" are explored, creates a "sense of choice" that is missing from "singular" stories, "whose narrative closure suggests that the characters' ends are inevitable and irrevocable" (2.10). Kustritz illustrates this point with a comparative close reading of *The Story of O* and *The Story of Obi*. In her analysis, she examines the ways in which themes that are central to BDSM symbolism (such as the participants' ability to *choose* to participate) are represented in the source text (where O simply does not have the ability to choose, and moves toward loss of identity and death, unlike her master) and the fan fiction text (where Obi does have the ability to choose, and moves steadily toward wholeness, unlike his master) (3.1-3.52). Like Kustritz, I take a comparative analysis of a source text and fan fiction text as a point of departure. As I noted in the General Introduction, my primary point of reference will be Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). I would briefly like to clarify why I do not refer as extensively to, say, the 1995 BBC/A&E adaptation of Austen's novel. This is not because I believe that the "canon" can be reduced to Austen's original text (see Section 1.3.4). Rather I believe that the historical distance between Austen's novel and Jane Austen fan fiction is reflected in a fundamental difference between the "discourses" that they produce. More specifically, I believe that the textual features that are used in the fan fiction texts and metatexts I discuss prioritise representations of individual experience and agency, while Austen's novel gives equal weight to the traditional social order. As a consequence, they produce different "discourses" about the relation between the individual and society. Because the "discourse" that underpins Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* has been discussed in Austen studies, Austen's original text provides a valuable point of contrast. It makes it easier to determine, in other words, what is distinctive about the "discourse" of the fan fiction texts and metatexts under discussion.

It is true that close readings of fan fiction texts and metatexts cannot be used to study a fan's identity or, say, the way in which fans interact at conventions. However, the studies of Deborah Kaplan, Bronwen Thomas, Maria Lindgren Leavenworth and Malin Isaksson, and Anne Kustritz show that close readings *can* be used to study certain aspects of what Thomas calls the text's "environment." In accordance with these four studies, I examine textual features through the lens of fan fiction studies, use a heuristic toolbox that is based on cognitive narratology, analyse Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, fan fiction, reader comments and other metatexts, and link these texts to "discourses" about individuality and social responsibility. My study, however, also has a very strong focus on what you might call collective "preferences." Close readings make it possible to study the impact of socially situated reading and writing practices, such as a community's preferences for particular content or for certain narrative techniques, on fan fiction texts and metatexts. Or perhaps it is equally accurate to say that fan fiction texts and metatexts help to create, reveal, reinforce, and challenge such preferences, creating the right "climate" for certain writing and reading practices to develop—and perhaps even other social practices and activities. This is the point of departure of my dissertation.

1.2.3   The *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*

I use this approach to study a corpus of texts from the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* or *Dwiggie.com*. This community rose to prominence during the first growth spurt of the online Austen fandom, in the late 1990s (see Section 1.2.1.2). As I have noted, the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* is an offshoot of the *Republic of Pemberley*. Founded in 1997 (*Dwiggie.com*, "How"), it may have been a response to the *Republic*'s prescriptive and limiting guidelines. The *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* first had a webpage on *Austen.com*, which also featured pages on Jane Austen and the Regency period (*Dwiggie.com*, "How"; *Austen.com*, "Home").[32] However, in May 2010, the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* moved to its own website, called *Dwiggie.com* (*Dwiggie.com*, "How"). The *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* is clearly proud of its lineage. Both on the new and the old website, the community emphasises that the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* houses "one of the oldest and largest archives of Jane Austen-based stories on the internet," and that it originated as "an offshoot of the Republic of Pemberley's Bits of Ivory board" (*Dwiggie.com*, "How"; *Austen.com*, "Derbyshire"). The community upholds several of the *Republic*'s standards. There is no profanity, extreme violence, or adult content in its archives, for example, because the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* asks authors to keep the rating of their stories between G and PG-13 (*Dwiggie.com*, "How"). As a result, the *Guild*'s "Epilogue Abbey" archive is very similar to the *Republic*'s "Bits of Ivory" board, because it houses stories that "take place in the same time period as Jane Austen's novels and stay relatively true to her work" (*Dwiggie.com*, "Home"). However, unlike the *Republic*, it also reserves one of its archives, called the "Fantasia Gallery," for "[m]odern stories, time-shifted stories, stories with fanciful elements, or more irreverent stories" (*Dwiggie.com*, "Home"). Finally, the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* also has an archive for stories that are not based on Jane Austen's work, called "A Novel Idea" (*Dwiggie.com*, "Home"). Authors are invited to post their stories in instalments on the DWG message boards (*Dwiggie.com*, "Contributor"; "Derbyshire"). Fan readers and writers can post comments there too, but the moderators ask their members to move more extended discussions to the "Tea Room"—a board that is devoted to more general topics of discussion (*Dwiggie.com*, "Contributor"; "Tea Room"). This makes it more difficult for readers and writers to discuss fan fiction texts in depth. Nevertheless, I have chosen to focus on this website because the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* maintains an excellent archive of its message boards. These message board archives go back to 2008 (*Dwiggie.com*, "Archives"). This is why I have limited my corpus to *Pride and Prejudice* fics that were written between 2008 and 2011. In addition, I have limited my corpus to stories that were completed between 2008 and 2011 (so of which I have the first and the last post). This leaves 224 stories (65,3 % of total), of which 163 are one-shots

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[32] Since the *Internet Archive*'s "Wayback Machine" crawled *Austen.com* at the time, it is possible to see what the site looked like in these early years. I have included the relevant links in the list of Works Cited.

(stories of one post; 47,5 % of total) and 61 are longer stories (17,8 % of total). I focus particularly on the longer stories.

	BOI	DWG	FFN	MDS	PL	LL	AHA	MRR	AU	BQ	DLC	BAC	AO3	Other	Pers.	WBM	N/A	TOTAL
1996	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	0	39
1997	101	47	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	2	206
1998	92	136	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	79	0	310
1999	61	210	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	0	0	4	6	48	0	335
2000	45	206	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	40	5	308
2001	61	243	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	9	46	3	370
2002	24	266	6	3	3	0	6	1	0	1	0	1	0	12	19	83	6	431
2003	12	213	20	12	3	0	24	3	0	0	0	1	1	18	30	110	15	462
2004	6	160	19	14	2	0	9	14	0	0	1	0	3	6	9	87	33	363
2005	10	153	53	6	6	0	16	17	2	3	2	0	3	20	10	38	95	434
2006	12	163	186	5	20	29	23	24	4	0	2	0	22	23	32	39	135	719
2007	11	119	185	15	3	1	96	48	10	3	1	0	19	27	54	31	94	717
2008	4	162	232	6	2	2	239	108	31	7	4	1	23	19	45	17	48	950
2009	0	117	265	2	0	2	221	59	15	1	2	5	53	9	30	3	38	822
2010	0	106	340	2	1	2	197	48	26	9	8	2	59	3	35	3	17	858
2011	0	92	474	2	1	0	205	32	43	22	21	9	56	0	17	3	12	989
2012	0	101	540	1	0	0	223	9	26	9	30	14	142	0	8	2	11	1116
2013	0	77	964	0	0	0	208	0	16	1	51	25	867	10	10	0	6	2235
2014	0	67	581	0	0	0	183	0	16	2	63	17	222	1	5	1	3	1161
2015	0	28	370	0	0	0	82	0	12	2	33	11	67	0	1	0	1	607
TOTAL	440	2666	4237	68	41	36	1734	368	201	61	220	87	1538	158	330	723	524	13432

Figure 2: Links to Jane Austen Fan Fiction Texts by Year and Website

The statistics of the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* (Figure 2) suggest that the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* soon outstripped the *Republic*'s "Bits of Ivory" board (BOI), archiving the highest number of stories a year between 1998 and 2005.[33] However, it seems that at least some of the fans who discovered the fandom in 2005-2006 chose to (also) post their stories on the general fan fiction site *Fanfiction.net* (FFN) and up and coming websites such as *A Happy Assembly* (AHA). The popularity of general archive *Archive of Our Own* (AO3) boomed in 2012-2013. This may be due to the success of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (LBD), an online, modern-day adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* which inspired a lot of fan fiction in its own right (*Jaffindex.com*, "All-inclusive"). Whatever the case may be, it seems that the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* is not as popular as it once was.

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[33] It should be noted that the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* counts links, rather than individual stories (*Jaffindex.com*, "Story Counts"). It is possible, therefore, that one fan fiction text is "counted" on two boards, simply because it was posted on two boards. This causes some discrepancies between the totals of *Figure 1* (stories by year and novel) and *Figure 2* (stories by year and board). In addition, there may be some "minor errors and glitches in the code" of the index (Victoria Cl). Even when one takes this into account, however, there is a clear shift away from "Bits of Ivory" towards the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, and then from the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* towards other boards.

1.3 Towards a Heuristic Toolbox for the Analysis of Fan Fiction

1.3.1 The Basics: Canon, Fanon, and Fantextual Conventions

In previous fan fiction studies, the storytelling practices of fans have typically been discussed with the concepts of "canon" and "fanon." As the definition I have given in the introduction suggests, the term "canon" has a textual and an imaginative dimension. In fan fiction studies, the term is used to refer to the specific source texts about which a fan writes *and* to "the events presented in the media source that provide the universe, setting, and characters" of a fan fiction text (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 9).[34] These sources may be literary classics, such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, but most fans base their stories on non-canonical novels, Japanese anime and manga, video games, television shows, films, and even on the lives of real people. The term canon was used in fandom long before it was adopted in fan fiction studies. Legend has it that Sherlock Holmes fans began to refer to their source texts as the "Canon" in the early twentieth century, after Ronald A. Knox jokingly compared Arthur Conan Doyle's stories to the Bible in his essay "Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes" (1911) (*Fanlore.org*, "Canon"). This may explain why the fannish notion of canon bears a family resemblance to other types of "canon," such as the Western canon or literary canon. Just as the Western canon comprises every work of art *a particular community accepts as* a pillar of Western culture, fannish canons comprise events that a group of fans accepts as "real" or authorised.[35] The concept of "canon," in other words, does not just refer to a fan writer's resources, but also to the sociocultural conventions that include some elements and exclude others. This is particularly visible in multimedia fandoms, such as those of *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, and, on a smaller scale, Jane Austen, where canons can include any configuration of novels, screen

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[34] For an alternative definition of canon, see Leavenworth and Isaksson 10. Leavenworth and Isaksson define the canon as the "official conceptual materials which the fans respond to" (10). I prefer to use Busse and Hellekson's definition because it is more obviously focused on storyworld constituents and because it does not limit the canon to "official" materials.

[35] I use "canons" because from the point of view of the analyst, there are many "canons" in fandom. This is reflected in the term's usage, especially in academic circles. While "Western canon" is invariably used with a definite article, its fannish equivalent is used in a plural form (e.g. "closed canons"—Pugh 27; cf. Parrish 28), with an indefinite article (e.g. "a closed canon"—Pugh 26; cf. Parrish 70, 151; *Fanlore.org*, "Canon"), with a definite article (e.g. "In the case of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the canon includes . . . "—Parrish 28; Pugh 27), and, perhaps most strikingly, without an article (e.g. "without contradicting canon" (Pugh 26), "any departure from canon," "adherence to canon" (Parrish 33, 34), and a detail "easily inferred in canon" (*Fanlore.org*, "Canon")). In addition, the term is sometimes used as an adjective, interchangeably with "canonical" (e.g. a character "is canon"—Parrish 32).

adaptations, "and even interviews and comments made by the authors" (B. Thomas, "Canons").

These different texts may establish different "norms," in Leavenworth and Isaksson's sense of the word. This appears, for instance, from Ellen Belton's comparative study of the 1940 MGM adaptation and the 1995 BBC/A&E adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Belton argues that the MGM adaptation "attempts to appropriate the novel for purposes that have as much to do with the relationship between the US and Britain in pre-war Hollywood as with Jane Austen" (175). The film enhances Austen's world with "American and democratic" values and associations to "reaffirm the ties between British and US society" (180). For one thing, this film represents traditional class differences as an obstacle to overcome on the way to "democratization and social equality," and emphasises "middle-class family solidarity" (183). The BBC/A&E series prioritises different norms. Even though this miniseries is hailed for its faithfulness to the novel, it actually "creates the illusion of fidelity to the original by presenting an interpretation of Austen's narrative that is also attuned to the sensibilities of a 1995 audience" (Belton 186; cf. Margolis 34). Belton illustrates this idea with the ending shot of the series:

> Austen's novel ends with a careful discrimination among relationships and a weighing of personal inclinations against moral and social obligations. . . . The BBC/A&E adaptation ends with the long-awaited kiss between Elizabeth and Darcy. This ending confirms the primacy of the romantic relationship over other claims and valorizes the drive toward individual self-fulfillment and gratification. (186)

This "late twentieth-century assumption that the needs and desires of the individual take precedence over other values" also affects the way in which Darcy is portrayed (194). As Belton notes, the "1995 audience wants Elizabeth to have it all," which includes a lover who sees her "as an independent subject" (187, 191). The "cultural acceptance of the idea of the New Age Man," in other words, "requires a romanticizing and softening of Darcy" (187, cf. 193; cf. Margolis 23). This is why Belton characterises this adaptation as "a postfeminist rewriting of the novel's central romantic relationship" (175).

In the case of the Austen fandom, the influence of the adaptations can be very subtle, to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to determine if there is a direct influence at all. Many Austen fics suggest, for instance, that Elizabeth does not just dislike Mr. Darcy because he wounded her vanity, which is the conclusion of Austen's Elizabeth, but also because she is attracted to him. This reading seems to be based more on adaptations like the BBC/A&E miniseries or on other fan fiction texts that are influenced by such adaptations than on Austen's novel. In much the same way, some details from the 1995 miniseries, such as Caroline Bingley's orange dresses, Mr. Darcy's dimples, and Elizabeth Bennet's cross necklace, also appear in fan fiction texts that are not explicitly based on the adaptation. This is where "canon" shades into "fanon." As I have noted, this term refers to a set of details, tropes, plot points, and other elements that were created by fans, but are used so often in

fan fiction that they *seem* to be borrowed from the source materials (Pugh 41; B. Thomas, "Canons"; *Fanlore.org*, "Fanon"). In many fics, for instance, Mr. Darcy's cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, is called Richard. This name is not mentioned in Jane Austen's novel or in any of the adaptations, as far as I can tell, but it is a common "fact" in fan fiction. In much the same way, the upper circles of Regency society play an important part in many fan fiction texts, while they are barely mentioned in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. These are instances of "fanon."

I prefer not to use the term "fanon," however, because some fans associate it with "undiscerning identification with an unreal object" and "naive writing styles" rather than "stylistic sophistication" (Driscoll 90). More often than not, it is used to refer to clichés and stereotypes (Marley). This is why I use a related concept that is more neutral and slightly broader. By reading, writing, and reviewing fics, fans constantly add to what Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson call the "fantext" of their fandom. By this, they mean "the entirety of stories and critical commentary written in a fandom (or even in a pairing or genre)" (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 7).[36] These stories and critical comments are written from a wide range of perspectives, including different readings of the canon. Several scholars have pointed out that fan communities are also interpretive communities, in Stanley Fish's sense of the word (Stein and Busse 197; Costello and Moore 126). Their members tend to share particular "interpretations and interpretive strategies" when it comes to the source materials (Stein and Busse, 197). Some of these interpretations and reading strategies are widely used across the fandom, making it distinctive from other reading communities. Roberta Grandi has noted, for instance, that there is a

> profound difference between the scholarly approach to the Austenian canon and the fannish attitude towards it. Critics tend to produce infinite interpretations of a finite and unchanging corpus; on the other hand, fans tend to produce an infinite, ever changing corpus out of a limited range of interpretations. . . . The meaning and message of Austen's novels is almost uniform for all the fans: the Austenian world is a utopian universe, where feelings are what really count, where true love always wins, and the 'evil of the world' is counteracted by an ever-present happy ending. (25)

Other interpretations and reading strategies are only shared within particular communities. If a community centres around a particular "'ship," or romantic pairing, for instance, its members will "agree on the centrality of particular events, characteristics, and interpretations that support their favored romantic pairing" (Stein and Busse 197). The members of a *Star Trek* community may agree, for instance, to interpret the interactions of Kirk and Spock in a romantic light. In that case, they agree to read the canon in a similar,

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[36] Please note that Busse and Hellekson's "fantext" concept is related to, but not exactly the same as Sandvoss's "fan text" concept. As I will explain in greater detail in Section 1.3.4.1, Sandvoss's concept refers to the texts that make up the fan object, and that are held together by the reader. Hellekson and Busse's concept refers to the textual complex that results from fans' interactions with that fan object.

highly distinctive way. Because each fandom or community produces texts from particular readings, the "fantext" contains "multitudes of interpretations of characters and canon scenes" that are "contradictory yet complementary to one another and the source text" (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 7; cf. Kaplan, "Construction" 137). Because fan writers are aware of conventions on the level of the "fantext," and know that their readership is aware of them too, a community's favourite readings and tropes act as additional constraints (Stein 248). I will refer to these constraints as "fantextual" conventions. The phrase"fantextual" convention refers, in other words, to any pattern that occurs in the fantext, whether it is a recurring interpretation of the "canon" or a tiny detail that keeps popping up in fan fiction texts, reader comments, and related metatexts.

1.3.2   A "Transfictional" Space

1.3.2.1   Deborah Kaplan's "Interpretive Space"

As these definitions suggest, the concepts of "canon" and "fantextual" convention are very broad: they do not clarify how the resources in question are integrated and negotiated in specific fan fiction texts by means of textual strategies, or how they influence the way in which the text is processed by the reader. Deborah Kaplan has begun to explore these questions in "Construction of Fan Fiction Character Through Narrative." Kaplan's theoretical framework clearly resonates with my discussion of the "canon" and "fantextual" conventions. I have already noted that, according to Kaplan, fan fiction texts are underpinned by "an interpretive act" because they offer "one possible understanding" of the source text (136). This interpretation is always shaped by the source text, by extratextual materials such as interviews, secondary literature, or the analyses of other fans (136-7). Some of these interpretations become widely accepted, and become part of the "fanon": "the noncanonical knowledge about a source text," or "the sum of the community's shared interpretive acts" (136). Although Kaplan still uses the term "fanon," in short, her conceptualisation of the term comes closer to what I have called "fantextual" conventions.

  Kaplan introduces this dynamic from the fan writer's perspective, arguing that "[t]he same fans who analyze character in the source text so closely will be writing fan fiction that plays into that interpretive and critical activity" (151). This does not mean that Kaplan ignores the fan fiction text or the fan reader completely. She argues, for instance, that it is the "fan fiction text," rather than the fan writer, that encourages "interpretive play" with the help of narrative techniques that present "an interpretation of character both wholly within its own text and in dialogue with the extratextual knowledge of the source text and the fanon accessible to the reader" (150-1). This hints at a complex interaction between fan writer, fan fiction text, and fan reader:

> Because both the producers and consumers of the fan works are aware of the source materials that are extratextual to the fan productions, a rich interpretive space is created in which fan fictions actively participate through narrative tools with their source materials. (151; cf. 137)

Naturally, the term "interpretive space" is a metaphor. After all, the producers and consumers of fan fiction do not literally build a space in which fan fiction texts alter the source materials, using their "narrative tools" as red pens. To specify the tenor of this metaphor, I first want to draw on recent research into "transfictionality." Fan fiction texts are always tied to at least one other text in a "transfictional relation" because they must feature some of the characters, settings, plots, or concepts of an antecedent text to qualify as fan fiction (Saint-Gelais, "Transfictionality" 612; cf. Saint-Gelais, *Fictions* 7, 19-20).[37] In recent years, Richard Saint-Gelais, Marie-Laure Ryan, and other scholars have discussed the nature and the theoretical implications of this relation. These studies help to clarify Kaplan's statement. In *Fictions transfuges: La transfictionnalité et ses enjeux*, for example, Saint-Gelais points out that "transfictionality never affects the initial text, which naturally stays the same, but the diegesis—that is, the reconstruction which the readers ultimately make of it, or agree to form on the basis of a continuation, a correction, an unusual or even a transgressive version" (70, my translation). The antecedent text, in other words, is only "denaturalised" or altered in the virtual and unstable "space" of interpretation, or reading (33, my translation). This draws attention to a dimension that is not fully explored in Kaplan's discussion. It suggests that Kaplan's "interpretive space" refers not just to moments when a fan writer writes up a particular understanding of the source materials, but also to moments when a fan reader's understanding of the fan fiction text—an understanding influenced by the text's use of narrative devices—changes her or his understanding of the canon. To highlight this dimension, I will use the term "transfictional" space to refer to Kaplan's concept.

1.3.2.2   Fan fiction, Narrative Comprehension, and Storyworlds

The ability to read a fan fiction text against the background of the canon is ultimately grounded in the ability to interpret narrative texts, in general. I will therefore place Kaplan's statement in the context of recent theories on "storyworlds." David Herman defines storyworlds as "mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what fashion in the world to which recipients relocate . . . as they work to comprehend a narrative" (*Story* 5). The storyworld of "A Lesson Hard Learned," for instance, contains everything readers imagine on the basis of Wendi's text, ranging from Mr. Darcy and Mrs. Reynolds to the private investigator's letter, the library, and the reason for Mr. Darcy's

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[37] Seen from this perspective, the fan fiction text can be defined as the "transfictionalizing" text (Ryan, "Transfictionality" 388) or "transfiction" (Saint-Gelais, *Fictions* 71), and the antecedent text as the "transfictionalized" text (Ryan, "Transfictionality" 388).

bitterness. These mental models and the role they play in the process of narrative comprehension have only recently become an object of study in narratology. Because structuralist narratologists focused on the level of narrative *langue* rather than narrative *parole*, they typically paid little attention to the "referential or world-creating properties of narrative" (Herman, *Basic* 106). This does not mean that they ignored the act of interpretation or the content level of narrative altogether. As David Herman notes, the ultimate aim of structuralist narratology is "to develop an explicit characterization of the model underlying people's intuitive knowledge about stories, in effect providing an account of what constitutes humans' narrative competence" (*Basic* 28). This includes people's intuitive knowledge about the "content" of narratives. Already in 1966, Tzvetan Todorov argued that a narrative can be described on two levels: the level of story (*what* is told?) and the level of discourse (*how* is it told?) (Shen 566).[38] This quickly became one of the most fundamental distinctions in narratology but, unfortunately, there has never been a consensus about the way in which the "story" should be modelled. Today, the term may refer to anything from a chronological sequence of concrete narrative elements to a configuration of abstract constituents and combination rules (Herman and Vervaeck, *Handbook* 43).[39] More importantly, structuralist models do not usually take the process of narrative comprehension into account, by which I mean the process through which readers come to an understanding of narrative texts.

David Herman has argued that the shift from "story" to "storyworld" brings two dimensions into focus. On the one hand, it highlights what he calls "the ecology of narrative interpretation" (*Story* 13). In the process of narrative comprehension, Herman argues,

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[38] I want to emphasise that, unlike Foucault's notion of discourse, this narratological concept is not related to historical power relations. To avoid confusion, I will use the term "discourse" first and foremost to refer to Foucault's concept and use terms such as textual strategies or writing practices when I refer to the narratological level of discourse.

[39] The *langue* of narrative is universal in principle but, in practice, there are almost as many models of it as there are structuralist narratologists (Herman and Vervaeck, *Handbook* 43). Gérard Genette, for one, has divided the distinction between story and discourse into three levels of analysis. The level of "narration" contains everything that relates to the narrator's speech act. On this level, the analyst deals with questions about agency (what kind of narrator is speaking?) and style (word choice, sentence length, typography) (42). The level of "récit" or narrative concerns the way in which characters, events, and other story elements are presented to the reader (42). It contains principles of organisation, such as summary, a-chronology, and focalisation. The level of "histoire" or story is the most abstract level of all, because it is constructed by the analyst. To distil the story, the analyst first has to strip away the narrator's mediation. What is left is a chronological sequence of narrative elements (42). According to some definitions, this is the "story" (43). In that case, the "story" coincides with what Russian Formalists called the "fabula" (Shen 566). Many structuralist analysts argue, however, that the story is not comprised of the specific characters, events, and objects of a narrative like *Pride and Prejudice*, but by an abstract system of constituents and combination rules. Someone like the early Roland Barthes (1966), for example, would not define Lady Catherine de Bourgh's barouche as an expensive carriage, but as an "indicator." This is a narrative element that says something about an element on another level of description—in this case, about a character (Barthes, "Introduction" 246-7).

interpreters attempt to reconstruct not just what happened—who did what to or with whom, for how long, how often and in what order—but also the surrounding context or environment embedding existents, their attributes, and the actions and events in which they are more or less centrally involved. . . . More generally, *storyworld* points to the way interpreters of narrative reconstruct a sequence of states, events, and actions not just additively or incrementally but integratively or 'ecologically'; recipients do not just attempt to piece together bits of action into a linear timeline but furthermore try to measure the significance of the timeline that emerges against other possible courses of development in the world in which narrated occurrences take place . . . . (13-4)

On the other hand, the concept of "storyworld" draws attention to the experience of reading. As Herman points out:

Interpreters of narrative do not merely reconstruct a sequence of events and a set of existents, but imaginatively (emotionally, viscerally) inhabit a world in which, besides happening and existing, things matter, agitate, exalt, repulse, provide grounds for laughter and grief, and so on – both for narrative participants and for interpreters of the story. More than reconstructed timelines and inventories of existents, storyworlds are mentally and emotionally projected environments in which interpreters are called upon to live out complex blends of cognitive and imaginative response, encompassing sympathy, the drawing of causal inferences, identification, evaluation, suspense, and so on. (*Story* 16-7)

These two dimensions are very important in the case of fan fiction, but Kaplan does not discuss them in depth. As I have noted, her analytical toolbox is partly based on classical narratology and particularly on "discourse" concepts in the narratological sense of the word, such as focalisation and various types of narration. It is true that, at one point, she discusses how these techniques allow the narrator to invite "character identification" and to explore the emotional power of character relationships ("Construction" 139). However, in the end her analyses are closely focused on the juxtaposition of fannish voices and mainstream voices. This is unfortunate, because the narrative techniques she discusses, as well as many others, are also used to build up a highly particular "storyworld," inviting a reading experience that is far more complex than Kaplan's "identification."

I want to illustrate this with Wendi's "A Lesson Hard Learned." As the brief summary in my introduction suggests, "A Lesson Hard Learned" engages with a glaring gap in the storyworld of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. In Austen's novel, Elizabeth Bennet declines Mr. Darcy's offer of marriage, accusing him of, amongst other things, un-gentleman-like manners, "arrogance," "conceit," and a "selfish disdain of the feelings of others" (Austen, *Pride* 188). In the remainder of the novel, Mr. Darcy is remarkably civil, respectful, and humble (244, 308, 346). In the final chapters of the novel, he explains that this is due to Elizabeth's reproofs, which have forced him to acknowledge that he was "selfish," "overbearing," and condescending (346-51, 359-61). This explanation is very

brief, however, and the reader is left to wonder why Mr. Darcy decided to change. As my summary suggests, "A Lesson Hard Learned" argues that he began to take Elizabeth's reproofs to heart because of a nightmare. This nightmare is described in the first part of the short story; the second part recounts how Mr. Darcy wakes up, determined to improve himself. As in Kaplan's corpus, the narrator of "A Lesson Hard Learned" uses focalisation to contrast the "voice" of *Pride and Prejudice* with the "voice" of this fic in an implicit way. Consider the following excerpt:

> Years past his prime, the gentleman's chocolate brown hair was now streaked with silver, being nearly white at the temples. If any prior acquaintances could have had the opportunity to see the gentleman now, they would note that he was still quite attractive. At second glance, they might notice the deep creases in his brow and around his mouth. It is likely that they would recognize that life had not been as kind to him as it could have been, for these lines were the obvious result of an almost constant frown. But there were none who cared to look, and he told himself on a daily basis that he cared not. (Wendi)

In this passage, the narrator uses a technique David Herman calls "direct hypothetical focalisation" (*Story* 311-2). The narrator uses an observer who is not actually there to convey a particular observation. In doing so, she also contrasts the "past" Mr. Darcy (as presented in *Pride and Prejudice* before the proposal) with the "present" Mr. Darcy (as described in "A Lesson Hard Learned").

This technique does not just encourage fan readers to catalogue the differences between the "voice" of this fic and the "voice" of *Pride and Prejudice*. It also invites readers to "live out" a complex emotional response. "A Lesson Hard Learned" was posted on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* with a "high angst" warning in the subject line. As is common in fandom, this warning indicates that the story contains content which may make the reader feel bad (see Section 5.2.2). In effect, the nightmare sequence of "A Lesson Hard Learned" contains some "angsty" content, such as Mr. Darcy's isolation, his obsession with the past and inability to move forward, his unhappiness, his mental and physical suffering, and, ultimately, his death (Wendi). This effect is also amplified, however, by a number of narrative techniques that only become apparent when "A Lesson Hard Learned" is examined through the lens of cognitive narratology. In the passage quoted, the narrator is actually drawing a parallel between the storyworld of this fic and the "actual" world. After all, readers who are familiar with *Pride and Prejudice*, in any of its versions, *are* prior acquaintances of Mr. Darcy, because they have an idea of what he was like in his prime. In this passage, in short, readers are taken by the hand and encouraged to mould their individual memories of Mr. Darcy into a particular shape. By drawing attention to the contrast between what happens in this fic and what happens in *Pride and Prejudice*, the narrator invites fan readers to feel anxiety and loss. This is also done by means of the selection of story content. "A Lesson Hard Learned" invites fan readers to feel a sense of loss because a number of elements that are key to the nightmare are designed in such a way

that they jar with their counterparts in the storyworld of Austen's novel. The narrator recounts that "the master" has delegated ever more of his duties, that his servants do not dare to look him in the eye, and that the majority of the mansion is closed off (Wendi). This context is doubly tragic, because the fan reader knows Mr. Darcy as a good landlord and master who takes a hands-on approach to the management of his estate, and continues the work his ancestors have started. This view is based on several snippets of information from Austen's novel (e.g., 38, 245), but especially on a glowing character reference by Mrs. Reynolds, Mr. Darcy's housekeeper (240). In "A Lesson Hard Learned," this association is used to make explicit the contrast that I have just discussed:

> Today was Mrs. Reynolds's monthly visit. When she walked into the room, she was struck with the realization that though she was approximately twenty years older than he, it appeared as if *he* were the elder of the two. The thought caused her eyes to fill with tears as she found herself remembering all that he had once been. . . . She shook her head as she left the room, finally allowing her tears to fall as she made her way through the shadowy halls that had once been filled with light and love. (Wendi)

Finally, this effect is strengthened because the author and the narrator set up a contrast between the actual timeline of events and, as Herman put it, "possible courses of development in the world in which narrated occurrences take place" (*Story* 14). In the Author's Note, Wendi reassures her readers that she does not "like unhappy endings! All is not what it seems!" (Wendi). This suggests that the events of the first part are not actually happening in the storyworld of this fic. In the text itself, however, there is no indication that Mr. Darcy's isolation and death are part of a dream—the first part of the narrative is not put in italics, for instance, nor does the narrator use a frame story to indicate that Mr. Darcy is sleeping. The transition from the first part of the narrative to the second is indicated by a line break that abruptly ends the nightmare (Wendi). While Wendi's Author's Note enables the reader to measure the true significance of the event sequence of the first part, the narrative itself is convincing enough to create "angst," which is relieved by the second part. These techniques invite the reader "to live out complex blends of cognitive and imaginative response."

1.3.3   Towards a Model of the Narrative Comprehension of Fan Fiction

1.3.3.1   Schema Theory

The question is: how do we model the process of narrative comprehension that takes place when fans read fan fiction? As a point of departure, I want to draw on narrative theories that

use schema theory to model narrative comprehension.[40] Schema theory is a cover term for a group of theoretical traditions in psychology, literary theory, Artificial Intelligence research, and linguistics (Emmott and Alexander 2). These traditions all assume that the brain processes information with the help of diagrammatic knowledge structures. These structures do not contain information about particular objects, events, or people, but about their "general form" (Emmott and Alexander 2). Most people know what to do in a bookshop, for instance. They enter, browse the shelves, pick a book, go to the till, hand the book over to the shop assistant, pay, take the book back, and leave. This knowledge structure only contains generic information. There is no mention of a particular bookshop or a particular book. By producing a stockpile of knowledge structures we can process information more efficiently, because we can match new experiences to "similar occurrences and understandings" (Douglas and Hargadon 154). Because this basic idea has travelled across theories and disciplines, it has been analysed into a wide range of concepts. As Catherine Emmott and Marc Alexander point out, the term "schema" is usually used as a superordinate term, while the terms "frame," "scenario," "script," and "plan" are used to refer to specific schema types (Emmott and Alexander 4). While "frames" contain generalised, stereotypical information about "objects, settings or situations," for instance, "scripts" also provide information about the events that typically define such situations (Emmott and Alexander 4; cf. Herman, *Story* 97). In this view, a cinema frame contains details about the theatre and the personnel you typically find there, while a cinema script also contains details about buying a ticket, taking a seat, and watching the film.

Over the years, several theorists have used concepts like these to enrich classical, structuralist models of narrative.[41] These scholars emphasise that reader participation is part and parcel of narrative comprehension. Marie-Laure Ryan has argued, for example, that a textual representation only becomes vivid when the reader completes the text's semantic domain with "information provided by internalized cognitive models, inferential mechanisms, real-life experience, and cultural knowledge, including knowledge derived from other texts" (*Virtual* 91). In *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse Perspective*, Catherine Emmott describes this process in greater detail. She argues that readers construct mental representations of fictional situations when they work to comprehend stretches of narrative text (103; cf. Caracciolo, "Virtual"119). These "contextual frames" help readers to remember which characters are present in the immediate environment, where the action is located, and when the action is taking place (*Narrative* 103). This information, which is

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[40] This is not the only way to model narrative comprehension. In *S/Z*, for example, Barthes posits that it is the reader who is the actual "producer of the text" (4), and he argues that readers use five "codes" when they work to make sense of narrative texts (18-20; cf. Howard ix-x). The "semantic" code, for instance, is used to associate "semes" or characterising details to a proper name, which ultimately results in a character (Barthes, *S/Z* 67). I believe, however, that models based on schema theory tend to be more detailed, and they highlight the "ecological" dimension of the storyworld.

[41] See, for example, Eco; Jahn, "Frames"; Herman, *Story*; Fludernik; Emmott, *Narrative.*

either provided by the text or inferred from it, is needed to understand subsequent sentences (*Narrative* 121; "Situated" 186). When readers of *Pride and Prejudice* begin to read the passage that recounts Mr. Darcy's first proposal, for instance, their contextual frame will, at the very least, include a rough idea of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, of the room they are in, and of the situation's place in the timeline of the story. For one thing, this contextual frame helps them to make sense of the pronouns in the opening lines of Mr. Darcy's proposal:

> After a silence of several minutes he came towards her in an agitated manner, and thus began,
> "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." (Austen, *Pride* 185)

Narrative texts are based on the assumption, in other words, that readers "know certain facts because they have been stated earlier in the text that is being processed" (Emmott, *Narrative* 3). However, apart from this "text-specific knowledge," readers also rely on "general knowledge," "knowledge of typical text structures," and "knowledge of the style of a particular text" (21). This additional knowledge helps readers to make inferences that fill out specific contextual frames (*Narrative* 6; "Situated" 176-7). Notably, these knowledge structures are acquired through experience with the world and with texts in particular (*Narrative* 23, 33-5). It is this sociocultural dimension that makes Emmott's argument compatible with Kaplan's. It suggests, in other words, that the contextual frames of fans are also partly based on knowledge they have picked up in fan culture, such as a particular understanding of the source materials and extratextual materials.

I want to illustrate this with excerpts from Wendi's "A Lesson Hard Learned" and Marie A's "Burnt Bridges." One of the opening lines of "A Lesson Hard Learned" reads:

> The gentleman was, as usual, lost in imagining a pair of fine eyes and the conversation that perhaps would have taken place if the owner of those eyes had been present to share his meal with him. (Wendi)

The phrase "a pair of fine eyes" is lifted from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, where Mr. Darcy meditates "on the very great pleasure which a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow" (27). The pretty woman in question is, of course, Elizabeth Bennet. This scene is also mentioned in some adaptations, such as the A&E/BBC miniseries. Because this phrase is used in a *Pride and Prejudice* fic, readers are invited to draw parallels between the context that is described in Wendi's text and the context in which "a pair of fine eyes" occurs in the novel or adaptation. The text invites readers, in other words, to equate the "gentleman" with Mr. Darcy and the object of his thoughts with Elizabeth Bennet. This gives the reader's contextual frame a wider meaning. Something similar happens in Marie A's "Burnt Bridges." In "Burnt Bridges," Mr. Darcy did not meet

Elizabeth again after his disastrous proposal. Seven years later, he sees a familiar face at a ball:

> Currently, he [Mr. Darcy-de Bourgh] was looking from the balcony of Lord Pembroke's London house at about half-a-dozen couples moving about. There was one woman, especially, who was taking his attention. She looked in her late twenties, beautiful and elegant, and Darcy could not shake the impression he had met her before. It was grating him that he could not place her. He had seen many women with the same classical beauty, tall and fair, and yet, there was something familiar about the serene countenance of this one. To add to his confusion, she reminded him of someone short and dark. He didn't know who that was, either. (Part 1)

Here, the narrator does not say who the woman is because she focalises the scene through Mr. Darcy-de Bourgh. While the narrator's description is full of omissions and vague formulations, however, it is also shaped by two characterisations that are commonly used in fan fiction. Mr. Darcy-de Bourgh remarks, for instance, that the woman is "tall and fair," and that she has a "serene countenance"; she also reminds him of "someone short and dark." These are common characterisations of Jane Bennet and Elizabeth Bennet, respectively. Notably, these characterisations are only partly based on Jane Austen's novel. Austen does not mention the hair colour of the sisters, for instance. However, due to the influence of popular adaptations, such as the 1995 A&E adaptation and the 2005 adaptation, details such as these have become widely accepted and used in fan fiction (cf. Pugh 41).[42] This seems to confirm that fans read across media and draw inspiration from several texts. More importantly, however, it also means that the narrator's "vague" description is still detailed enough to allow a "knowing" fan reader to put two and two together. The text is built on the assumption, in other words, that the reader will pick up on conventional characterisations—tall, fair, and serene for Jane, short and dark for Elizabeth. These examples raise some important questions. How can we determine that which texts "assume" about the knowledge of fan readers? How can we conceptualise a fan reader's "knowledge" of the source materials and extratextual materials? How can fan readers understand fan fiction texts when those texts are based on different source materials? How do you conceptualise conventions such as the common characterisations I have discussed?

1.3.3.2   Readers and Implied Readers, Authors and Implied Authors

Before I address these questions, I want to make one clarification. In my discussion of "A Lesson Hard Learned" and "Burnt Bridges," I have discussed the effect of certain strategies on the "reader." I want to emphasise, however, that I am not making claims about individual readers. Without a proper survey, it is impossible to say, for example, whether every reader

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[42] Notably, these "fantextual" characterisations are not always followed. In Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, for instance, Elizabeth's hair is streaked with "fiery copper highlights" (Chapter 1). This does not change the fact, however, that some elements are widely accepted in the fantext.

recognises Wendi's quote, just as it is impossible to say how a specific reader envisions Elizabeth's eyes. Catherine Emmott has noted that there may be

> a vast gap between the 'implied reader' (Iser 1978) or 'ideal reader' (Fillmore 1982) (i.e. the person with the exact amount of knowledge that the text demands) and the 'actual reader' (i.e. the particular individual who reads a book on a specific occasion). (*Narrative* 7-8)

However, Emmott also points out that it is essential to attempt to "assess the demands placed on readers by texts because an understanding of such demands is fundamental to an understanding of literacy" (8). Fan fiction texts have a very distinctive implied reader. As Emmott's definition suggests, this term is used in narratology to refer to "the image of the recipient that the author had while writing or, more accurately, the author's image of the recipient that is fixed and objectified in the text by specific indexical signs" (Smid 2). In *The Democratic Genre*, Sheenagh Pugh notes that fan writers have a particular knowledge of the source materials and related texts, and that they "can assume a similar knowledge on the part of their readership" (32). This assumption shapes their texts, creating both "a restriction"—because readers "without such knowledge" cannot fully relate to fan fiction texts—and "an opportunity"—because it "facilitates a lot of shorthand, allusion and irony" (32). The shorthand, allusion, and irony Pugh mentions are "indexical textual features" that indicate that the implied fan reader is a reader who is able to bring a certain knowledge of the source materials and related texts to bear on the fan fiction text.[43] This makes them different from texts that simply allude to other texts. Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, for instance, is tailored to a reader who is familiar with the Gothic novel but this reader does not need to have a detailed knowledge of, say, Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to appreciate that Austen's novel is a parody of the genre. The implied reader of fan fiction texts, in short, tends to be a member of an "implied" fan community, because their textual features are often attuned to communal norms, goals, and conventions.

Because the implied reader is an effect of the text, however, it is perfectly possible that different fan fiction texts evoke different implied readers, simply because they place different demands on their readership. I want to illustrate this with Naguabo's "The Mother of All Marriage Proposals" and Barbara A.'s *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy*. While the first is built on the assumption that the reader has a highly detailed knowledge of Austen's dialogue, the second assumes that the reader also has a highly detailed knowledge of the 1995 adaptation and the 2005 adaptation. In "The Mother of All Marriage Proposals," Mr. Darcy is staying at Netherfield, where he receives an offer of marriage from Caroline Bingley (Naguabo). He refuses, and tells her that she loves his name, position, and property more than she loves him (Naguabo). He also accuses her of pretentiousness and arrogance,

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[43] This has also been noted in recent studies of "transfictional" texts more generally. Marie-Laure Ryan notes, for instance, that "transfictional" texts assume that the reader has a thorough and detailed knowledge of the text on which they are based ("Transfictionality" 391).

and lays her brother's unhappiness at her door (Naguabo). After he has told her that he will never marry her, she points out that Elizabeth Bennet is outside, kissing Mr. Wickham (Naguabo). Mr. Darcy wakes up in screaming horror (Naguabo). When he thinks about his dream, he realises that there is some truth in Elizabeth's reproofs (Naguabo). This epiphany does not make any sense if you consider the text on its own. After all, Mr. Darcy defends "gentlemanly" opinions. Mr. Darcy's epiphany only makes sense to readers who know enough about the wording of Mr. Darcy's proposal and Elizabeth's rejection in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to realise that this fic is staging a role-reversal.

The first paragraph of "The Mother of All Marriage Proposals" seems to recount the opening events of *Pride and Prejudice*: Mr. Darcy is staying at Netherfield and his friend Mr. Bingley has developed an interest in Jane Bennet (Naguabo). As the story progresses, however, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand the events of the fic with the help of *Pride and Prejudice*. Mr. Darcy is cheered by Mr. Bingley's growing attachment to Jane Bennet, and by his own attachment to Elizabeth (Naguabo). He even notes that the improper behaviour of the Bennet family is no worse than that of his own aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh (Naguabo). This is hard to reconcile with the attitude of Austen's Mr. Darcy at that point in *Pride and Prejudice*. During his proposal, Austen's Mr. Darcy plainly tells Elizabeth that he did everything in his power to separate his friend from Jane Bennet (Austen, *Pride* 187). He also says, at one point:

> "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?" (188)

"The Mother of All Marriage Proposals" uses the reader's knowledge of Mr. Darcy's first proposal to emphasise this contrast. This context is evoked when Caroline Bingley enters, and exclaims:

> "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." (Naguabo)

The dialogue that follows is clearly based on the words of Mr. Darcy's proposal and Elizabeth's rejection in *Pride and Prejudice*, although the exchange also contains snippets from other conversations. Mr. Darcy's words tend to echo Elizabeth's words at Hunsford, and even when he uses his own words, he repeats Elizabeth's reproofs. Consider, for example, the following turn:

> "Do you expect me to rejoice in the pretentious displays in which you engage in every gathering or your disdain of all your neighbors and acquaintances before they have the opportunity to show themselves worthy of it? And how could I possibly attach myself to a lady who is determined to thwart the happiness of my best friend, her own brother?" (Naguabo)

Because this text establishes a link between Mr. Darcy's refusal and Elizabeth's refusal—that is, between the events of the fan fiction text and the reader's knowledge of canon—a layer of meaning is added to this story. When Mr. Darcy rejects Caroline Bingley, he also rejects the man he is at the time of his proposal in *Pride and Prejudice*. This is made explicit after Mr. Darcy wakes up:

> He struggled to remember the words spoken in his nightmare. They were familiar, in fact, they were markedly similar to parts of his own proposal to Miss Bennet at Hunsford and her rejection of his offer. Could it be that she was correct in her observations, and his character and behavior truly fell short of the manner of a gentleman? (Naguabo)

"The Mother of All Marriage Proposals," in short, is built on the assumption that readers will notice that Austen's words are used in a different context—that they will spot the contrast between the contextual frame that is evoked by this fic and the contextual frame that comes with these words in Jane Austen's novel.

Barbara A.'s *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy*,[44] in contrast, is geared to a reader who is familiar with the adaptations, as well as a number of other texts. Like "The Mother of All Marriage Proposals," this fan fiction text is set after Mr. Darcy's failed proposal, which has made him bitter. A cross-over of *Pride and Prejudice* and Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy* recounts how Mr. Darcy is visited by the ghosts of his mother, his father, Elizabeth's grandmother, and his future children (Chapters 1-4). They show him he should try to win Elizabeth. His father, the Ghost of Christmas Past, takes him back to the Meryton assembly (Chapter 2). There, he overhears Charlotte Lucas saying that Mr. Darcy owns "half of Derbyshire," to which Elizabeth replies that he must own the "miserable half" (Chapter 2). Although the dialogue is not exactly the same, the phrases "half of Derbyshire" and "miserable half" are lifted from the 2005 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (Sc. 1). This invites readers to imagine Mr. Darcy as Matthew Macfadyen and Elizabeth Bennet as Keira Knightley. Later, the ghost of Mr. Darcy's father urges him to remember how Elizabeth looked at him at Pemberley, when she saw him "dripping wet, coming from your swim," wearing only a "shirt" that was "soaking wet" (Chapter 2). In addition, he reminds his son of "the look that [they] exchanged when she was turning pages for Georgiana," and the smile she gave him (Chapter 2). These scenes only occur the 1995 BBC/A&E adaptation (Sc. 23, 25). As Ellen Belton has noted, this adaptation shows that Darcy gradually takes into account Elizabeth's "feelings and wishes" after he has blatantly disregarded them before and during his first proposal (191). To show this evolution, the filmmakers build on the "looks, glances, and facial expressions" with which Austen tried to say what could not be spoken (187). The "progress" of the series' main couple "is charted through a movement from sidelong glances to direct contemplation to mutual admiration"

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[44] A fully edited version of this story appeared in print as Barbara Tiller Cole's *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy: 'Pride and Prejudice' meets 'A Christmas Carol'* (2011).

(190). This evolution culminates in the look that is described in *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy* (Sc. 25). Looks such as these give the interactions of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth "a powerful erotic charge" (Hopkins, qtd. in Belton 188), which is emphasised by a number of "anachronistic alterations pertaining to sexuality" (Margolis 34). The second scene that is mentioned in *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy* is perhaps the most famous example of these "alterations." While Austen's Darcy meets Elizabeth at Pemberley looking like "he was . . . that moment alighted from his horse or his carriage" (Austen, *Pride* 242), Firth's Darcy has just taken a swim in Pemberley's lake (Sc. 23). These references invite the reader to picture Mr. Darcy as Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle as Elizabeth Bennet.

This does not go unnoticed by actual readers. One fan comments that she loves "how you appease both sides of the Darcy War by having a cross CF/MM Darcy. ☺" (comments to Chapter 2). Barbara A. replies that she "did try to give both sets of Darcy fans (MM and CF) something to hang their picture on" (comments to Chapter 2). These textual strategies are clearly geared to readers with a detailed knowledge of one or both of the adaptations. As Pugh has noted, however, these strategies also cause a "restriction." In response to this discussion, another fan writes: "Please help the uneducated newbie....what's the difference between a CF Darcy and a MM Darcy???" (comments to Chapter 2). Yet another commenter explains the references, and adds that "[t]here are strong opinions on which of the two is better" (comments to Chapter 2). Barbara A. agrees, saying:

> There are those of us..like me....who loved Colin Firth in the A&E mini series version of Pride and Prejudice..that any one that rights [writes] of Darcy...he looks like Colin Firth in our heads. And the same for those who saw the 2005 Pride and Prejudice feature release with Keira Knightley.
> If you don't have a preference, then do not fear. You will understand the story just fine! (comments to Chapter 2)

This discussion shows that *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy* evokes a different "implied reader" than "The Mother of All Marriage Proposals," simply because the text places different demands on the reader. It also shows, however, that it is worthwhile to look at comments by actual readers to determine what those demands are. Because fan fiction has a strong sociocultural dimension, I will check my own findings against reader comments by actual fan readers. From the point of view of literary criticism, this may seem to be superfluous, because my analyses of reader comments tend to confirm rather than qualify my readings of the fan fiction text. In the context of this study, however, such "affirmative" reader comments are the most interesting, because they show that the writing practices I trace in fan fiction texts do not exist in a vacuum. They resonate with reading practices that are shaped by the same "environment."

As the reader comments to *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy* suggest, fan readers have a tendency to ascribe the decision to refer to the adaptations, rather than the novel, to the author. The same goes for other strategies, such as the decision to adhere to or deviate from

those source materials, or from fantextual conventions. In the case of *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy*, the commenter seems to be right to do so, since Barbara A. confirms that she intended to give adaptations fans something to relate to. I do not believe, however, that these processes are completely defined, or better yet, delimited by the intention of an individual author. Rather, they are defined and redefined at the point of consumption, by the reader or analyst. Although fan readers tend to defer to the author, suggesting that the fan writer has creative authority over the text, they help to put the creative process into words. I believe that, in some cases, this adds a dimension to the text that the individual author did not anticipate. This is why we should separate the "fan writer" mentioned in these comments from the real-life author of the text—at least in an analysis of fan fiction and reader comments. It is more accurate to ascribe such textual strategies to an "implied author." Narratologists such as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and Seymour Chatman have defined the implied author as the idea that the reader has of the author's person, intentions, and creative process on the basis of the text (Nünning 240). I believe that this does not do for fan fiction, however, because fan readers also draw conclusions about these aspects on the basis of the Author's Notes, discussions with other fans, and other metatexts. This is why I prefer to use the definition of Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck. They argue that texts do not consist of textual features that exist before "the act of reading"; rather, they believe that "these features are constructed *in* the act of reading" ("Implied Author" 19). They also contend that

> the reader is never free. He is continually trying to find a balance between all the elements that influence the reading -- the text, the context, his own dispositions, and the author's self-presentation. This balancing act is what we call negotiation. (19)

This negotiation results in a particular image of the author, and it is to this image that fan readers refer in reader comments. I refer to a similar image when I ascribe certain narrative strategies to an implied author in my analyses.

For clarity's sake, I want to explain why I ascribe some strategies to the implied author and others to the narrator. Marie-Laure Ryan has pointed out that the act of narrating a story can be analysed into three "distinct semantic features," which she calls "narratorial functions" ("Narratorial" 146). The "creative" function refers to the idea that the narrating agent shapes the story and mentally encodes it in the signs of language (147). The creative function, in short, refers to the overall act of "forming discourse in the mind" (147). This function explains why interpreters assume that the story's expression can be traced back to a specific individual, a "narratorial self" (147). The "transmissive" function refers to the materialisation of this psychological construct in an oral performance or a written text (147). The "testimonial" function, finally, relates to the truth value of the agent's claims about the reference world—that is, the idea that the narrator accepts "responsibility for the assertive statements that make up the bulk of narrative discourse" (147). Even when the narrator is

unreliable or when the story is explicitly told as an invention, the audience will regard "the text as a largely accurate statement of facts" (147). After all,

> [i]f the reader did not take a core of propositions as undisputably true, the narrative world would be in a state of such radical ontological indeterminacy that it would be impossible to construe a narrative made out of existents, states, and events. (147)

There is no point in doubting the narrator's word, except when a statement is explicitly contradicted. In the introduction, for example, I explained that the trademark irony of Austen's narrator makes it difficult to accept the opening line of *Pride and Prejudice* at face value. Yet the reader still believes the narrator when she says that Mr. Darcy is clever, reserved, and fastidious (Austen, *Pride* 18).

It can be argued that a strategy such as the selection of the basic story stuff of a fan fiction text from the wealth of possible story content falls under the narrator's creative and transmissive functions. After all, when a narrator uses an ellipsis, he or she also "chooses" to omit content which must have happened on the level of the storyworld. And yet there is a difference. Compare Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy* and Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting* for instance. The narrator of *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy* jumps from Elizabeth's departure for Kent to her arrival in London, after her stay at Hunsford parsonage (Chapter 4, 5). This does not mean that the events that happen in the meantime in *Pride and Prejudice*—such as Elizabeth's visits to Rosings Park, Mr. Darcy's proposal, and the epiphany Elizabeth experiences when she reads Mr. Darcy's letter of defence—did not happen in the storyworld of this fic. The narrator simply does not recount them "in real time." Instead, Elizabeth briefly reflects that Mr. Darcy's letter has changed her opinions of him and Mr. Wickham (Chapter 5). In *Nothing Wanting*, in contrast, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy resolve their differences before Mr. Darcy can make his insulting offer of marriage (Chapter 3). In this reality, Mr. Darcy's proposal, as it happens in Austen's novel, does not exist.[45] If we assume that it is the narrator of *Nothing Wanting*, rather than the implied author, who is aware of the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice* but chooses not to include Mr. Darcy's proposal in the narrative, we would also have to posit that the narrator of *Nothing Wanting* is inventing the story he or she is telling even though this is not explicitly stated. We would have to assume, in other words, that she does not *describe* something that happened in an objective reality that precedes the act of narration, but that her words *create* a reality that never existed outside of the narrative. This would make it much more difficult for the narrator to lie or to be unreliable. On a theoretical level, it would also turn the storyworld's ontological foundations into quicksand—even though readers are likely to hold on to a core of "true" propositions in practice. To avoid these theoretical difficulties, I

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[45] Notably, there is an equivalent of Mr. Darcy's first proposal later on in the plot of *Nothing Wanting*. I discuss this in Section 2.3.2.1.

will refer to the implied author when I discuss strategies relating to the relation between fan fiction text, canon, and fantextual convention.

1.3.3.3 Ideology: Reader, Context, and Text

I have noted that Maria Lindgren Leavenworth and Malin Isaksson build on Foucault's understanding of "discourse," arguing that vampire fan fiction texts make use of "categorisations and classifications" that establish particular boundaries between the normal and the deviant. In narratology, this aspect is usually referred to as the text's "ideology": "the frame of values" that informs the narrative, and "installs hierarchical relationships between pairs of oppositional terms such as real vs. false, good vs. bad, and beautiful vs. ugly" (Herman and Vervaeck, "Ideology"). As Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck note, it is "the reader who pieces together the ideology of the fiction at hand, but relevant choices invariably emerge from an interaction between three elements: reader, context and text" ("Ideology"). Up to now, I have only hinted at this "context." I have argued that fan fiction texts and reader comments may be shaped by writing and reading practices, such as a writer using particular narrative techniques in a fan fiction text or a reader homing in on particular story content in a reader comment. When many fans have a clear preference for some practices over others, it is likely that, in this community at least, these practices are felt to be more "acceptable" or "fitting"—than others. Following Leavenworth and Isaksson, I have explained the existence of such preferences with the concept of "discourse." I now want to refine this concept with David Herman's concept of "discourse domain." Herman defines "discourse domains" as "arenas of practice that are governed by more or less distinctive interpretive paradigms and protocols for behavior" ("Animal"). In the context of Herman's current research, which focuses on the representation of the mental states of animals, these "domains" determine which narrative techniques are "deemed available (or appropriate) for presentations of animal subjectivity," such as the consciousness of a dog or a bird ("Animal"). In short, Herman argues that:

> mind-ascribing acts, rather than occurring in decontextualized, one-off acts of attribution, always unfold within particular arenas of practice, or discourse domains. Such domains determine when, to what extent, and in what manner it is appropriate and warranted to impute subjective experiences to others, nonhuman as well as human. Thus, in lieu of any top-down dichotomization of legible and illegible animal minds, I propose working inductively toward an understanding of the spectrum of attested mind-ascribing practices as they take shape in a given culture or subculture, with this spectrum ranging from minimal to maximal projections of mind across the species boundary. ("Animal")

Herman does not just focus on the presence or absence of "storyworld" content (such as the evocation or non-evocation of an animal consciousness) but also on the presence or absence of specific narrative techniques that can be used to ascribe or represent minds ("Animal").

These include narration ("She sat there quietly"), free indirect discourse ("She sat there quietly; *home seemed so far away now*"), and free direct discourse ("She sat there quietly. *Home—so far away. Must try to return."*) ("Animal").[46] This suggests that the discourse domain affects both the basic selection of storyworld content and the techniques used to represent them.

I believe that Herman's argument can be extended to techniques that are used to represent other aspects of the storyworld, such as characters, spaces, and events. More specifically, I believe the representation of storyworlds in the fan fiction texts that are archived on *Dwiggie.com*—for instance in terms of the selection of specific content and the use of particular textual strategies—is shaped by a specific discourse domain. I believe that this discourse domain is distinctive from other discourse domains. Discourse domains and the preferences that are associated with them take shape in a particular culture (such as the cultural context in which a fandom is embedded) or subculture (such as the Austen fandom). As Herman puts it:

> discourse domains can be described along the lines of what Wittgenstein (2009) called language games and Levinson (1979) labelled "activity types"; they are frameworks for conduct that organize participants' verbal as well as nonverbal comportment around recognized kinds or modes of activity, which are grounded in more or less fully shared sets of norms, purposes, and goals. Relevant activities include engaging in paleontological research, debating the status of animals minds, or going on a walk with a dog—in short, activities that involve interacting with one or more human or nonhuman others in a particular setting and for specific kinds of reasons. ("Animal")

Notably, Herman also believes that discourse domains cut across differences in text type and fictionality (such as the differences between a nonfictional reader comment and a fictional narrative) ("Animal"). I believe that the discourse domain of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* shapes everything from the ways in which members discuss Austen's storyworlds in the "Tea Room" to the ways in which they construct plots, space, and other storyworld constituents in fan fiction. This is the case because members of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* have more or less fully shared sets of "norms, purposes, and goals" that are different from, say, those of Austen critics. After all, Austen scholars are likely to talk about Austen's novels in a different way (for instance, during the Q&A at an academic conference) and to use different techniques to represent storyworlds (for instance, in an academic paper). I want to clarify this with the experiences of Gwyn Symonds, an academic who also identifies as a fan and tends to behave differently according to the context she is in. When Symonds posts online as a fan, she does not "bother with specialized jargon," is "less concerned with conventions related to the academic disciplines" she writes in, and does not "hold back the emotion" that underpins her reaction to the text (qtd. in Parrish 51). I believe this is also true for the members of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. In this

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[46] These are David Herman's examples.

community, reader comments may contain critical close readings of the fan fiction text, complete with textual evidence, but also favourite excerpts and emotional responses to the characters and plot twists. Herman's model makes it possible to detect widely accepted practices such as these. This does not mean, however, that the discourse domain of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* is perfectly coherent or homogeneous in other respects. Indeed, I believe that it contains many preferences that are contradictory to one another. I want to emphasise, therefore, that this dissertation does not describe the entire discourse domain of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. Rather, I discuss a number of writing and reading practices that have a direct impact on fan fiction texts, and relate them to one highly specific cluster of preferences that exists on the level of the community's discourse domain.

1.3.4   Redefining the Fan Object from a Cognitive Perspective

1.3.4.1   The Fan Object as a Meaning Structure

The notion of "transfictional" space revolves around a fan writer and fan reader who, on a cognitive level, have a particular understanding of the canon and fantextual conventions (see Section 1.3.2). This idea is key to several recent discussions of the fan object (that is, the object that inspires fans to engage in fan activities) even though these discussions are not usually based on cognitive narratology. In "The Death of the Reader?," for instance, Cornel Sandvoss takes a semiotic approach, arguing that the study of fan objects ultimately comes down to the analysis of signs and their meaning. It does not signify whether the objects in question are novels, television shows, football teams, or celebrities. Ultimately, they "all constitute a set of signs and symbols that fans encounter in their frames of representation and mediation, and from which they create meaning in the process of reading" (22). Sandvoss posits, in other words, that it is the interpreter who reads meaning into an object that is in itself meaningless. This idea is key to Sandvoss's notion of the "fan text"—that is, the complex of texts that fans consume as they try to find out as much as they can about their favourite TV show, sports team, or indeed, novel (see Section 1.2.2.1). The fan of a TV show, for instance, may watch every episode, read interviews with the actors, visit the filming locations, and so on. Sandvoss concludes:

> Fan objects thus form a *field of gravity*, which may or may not have an *urtext* in its epicenter, but which in any case corresponds with the fundamental meaning structure through which all these texts are read. The fan text is thus constituted through a multiplicity of textual elements; it is by definition intertextual and formed between and across texts as defined at the point of production. (23; cf Saint-Gelais, *Fictions* 57)

I want to emphasise that Sandvoss's "fan text" is related to but not exactly the same as Busse and Hellekson's "fantext." Sandvoss's concept refers to the texts that make up the

fan object, and which are held together by the reader. Hellekson and Busse's concept refers to the textual complex that results from fans' interaction with that fan object. These concepts, in other words, refer to different parts of the complex of texts that is held together by the fan object's "field of gravity." Sandvoss's concept prioritises the magazine articles, television broadcasts, interviews, and other source texts on which a fan's understanding of the fan object is based, while Busse and Hellekson's concept focuses on fan-made texts. This is why I will refer to Sandvoss's concept as the "canon," and reserve the term "fantext" for Hellekson and Busse's concept. Still, I also want to emphasise that, in practice, the boundary between these two categories is blurred. As Busse and Hellekson note, a fan's "understanding of the source is always already filtered through the interpretations and characterizations" that occur in fan-made texts ("Introduction" 7). This suggests that Sandvoss's "meaning structure" is first and foremost based on the canon but may also be influenced by the "fantext." I agree, in other words, that Austen fans will use one "fundamental meaning structure" when they interpret Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, a blog post about Austen's novel, or even an "I love Mr. Darcy" pin. Every fan will in all likelihood connect references to "Mr. Darcy" with their personal idea of Mr. Darcy. However, this meaning structure may also contain a focus on feelings, true love, and happy endings because they picked up this reading of Austen's novel in fan fiction, reader comments, and other "interpretive acts" (see Section 1.3.1). While I agree, in short, that the textual elements that make up the "canon" are held together because fans bring one fundamental meaning structure to bear on all of them, I also believe that this meaning structure may be influenced by the "fantext."

Sandvoss does not go into detail about this "meaning structure," even though it raises some important questions. Instead, he characterises the canon itself, by means of Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author":

> A text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning [. . .] but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash [. . . .] a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. (Barthes, qtd. with ellipses in Sandvoss 25)

Sandvoss compares the canon to Barthes' amalgam of quotations, but he does not specify what the "meaning structure" of this open and reader-centred text looks like. He does not specify, for instance, what its "structure" looks like, what type of "meaning" it organises, or what happens when fans seek out textual elements that are incompatible with other textual elements, such as screen adaptations with different actors. Nor does he specify how fan activities, such as fan writing, fit into all of this. I will address these questions in the following sections.

1.3.4.2   The "Structure" in "Meaning Structure"

Canon and Narrativity

I believe that Sandvoss's "meaning structure" can be specified with postclassical narrative theories on "narrativity," or the quality that makes texts into narratives (Prince 387). On the one hand, this means that narrative texts have some properties that make them different from non-narrative texts, such as mathematical problems or recipes (387). On the other hand, it means that narrative texts possess some "optional features that make narratives more prototypically narrative-like, more immediately identified, processed, and interpreted as narratives" (387). This may seem like a stretch, because it can be argued that fans who attend a game of football or an extreme metal concert do not approach those events as "narratives." In the context of fan fiction writing and reading however, it makes sense to approach fan objects as such. To write football fan fiction, for instance, you need more than a good knowledge of the rules of the game and a basic knowledge of the players. You also need to be familiar with the finer points of the players' personalities and backgrounds, with the way they fit into the team dynamic, the way they spend their spare time, and so on. The same is true for "band fic," "real people fiction" about musicians and bands (*Fanlore.org*, "Band Fic"). I believe fan readers take a similar perspective when they work to comprehend fan fiction. In the context of fan writing and reading, in short, football games and concerts are approached with a "meaning structure" that gives them "narrative" features. The idea that texts become narratives in the process of interpretation is already present in some structuralist discussions of narrativity. In *Story and Discourse*, for instance, structuralist narratologist Seymour Chatman argues that interpreters make sense of narrative texts with a sign system that is analogous to, but distinct from, Saussure's system of linguistic signs. The "signifieds" of this system are events, characters, and settings (25). The "signifiers" are all the elements in the "narrative statement" that are used to represent those units, in various media (25). This sign system, Chatman argues, endows "an otherwise meaningless ur-text with eventhood, characterhood, and settinghood" (25). This is what makes a text into a narrative.

However, it is precisely Chatman's emphasis on the "narrative statement," or narrative form, that makes his definition of narrativity incompatible with Sandvoss's "meaning structure." As Marie-Laure Ryan points out in "On the Theoretical Foundations of Transmedial Narratology," Chatman's discussion of narrativity in *Story and Discourse* is underpinned by the "speech-act approach to narrative" (2, 21). This means that he defines narrative by "the occurrence of the speech act of telling a story" about "*past* events" by "an agent called a narrator" (2). According to Ryan, this definition does not actually apply to all narratives, but to a small group of verbal narratives best known as literary fiction (1-2). Because Sandvoss's fan object is comprised of textual elements in a wide range of media, I prefer to use Ryan's alternative definition. Ryan situates narrativity even more exclusively on the level of the "signified," arguing that narrative has three constitutive features that

characterise the "mental image, or cognitive template" a work of art projects (4). She argues that a text will be widely recognised and accepted as a narrative when it evokes "cognitive template" with the following features:

1. Narrative involves the construction of the mental image of a world populated with individuated agents (characters) and objects (spatial dimension).
2. This world must undergo not fully predictable changes of state that are caused by non-habitual physical events: either accidents (happenings) or deliberate actions by intelligent agents (temporal dimension).
3. In addition to being linked to physical states by causal relations, the physical events must be associated with mental states and events (goals, plans, emotions). This network of connections gives events coherence, motivation, closure, and intelligibility and turns them into a plot (logical, mental and formal dimension). (4)[47]

Notably, Ryan makes a distinction between "being a narrative" and "having narrativity" (6-7). A text *is* a narrative when it is "produced with the intent to evoke a narrative script in the mind of the audience," and when this intent is recognised by the receiver (6-7). A text *has* narrativity, in contrast, when it evokes such a script even though the author—if there is one—did not intend to write a narrative (7). I believe that, while canons usually contain textual elements that *are* narratives, the canon as a whole *has* a high degree of narrativity.[48] When the life of a football player or a band member becomes a fan object, for instance, it is impossible to fit every physical and mental event that is described in television commentary, interviews, blog posts, magazine articles, and other texts into a structure that is coherent and organised enough to be called a "plot."[49] Fan objects like these still have a high degree of narrativity, however, because they are "mimetic" in Félix Martínez-Bonati's sense of the word: because they represent "states of affairs involving individual existents situated in time and space" (Ryan, *Virtual* 92). Following Sandvoss, in short, I argue that the object that inspires fans to write Jane Austen fan fiction is a complex of texts that may contain everything from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to screen adaptations and secondary texts. The meaning structure that holds these texts together has a high degree of narrativity because, at the very least, it contains a basic understanding of Austen's

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[47] I want to stress, however, that this is not the only definition of narrativity. Ryan's definition is more limited, for instance, than the definition of Monika Fludernik, who argues that "experientiality" is a sufficient condition for narrativity (Ryan, "Foundations" 4). Yet it is less limited than David Herman's definition, which also puts a great emphasis on the situatedness of the narrative and the implications of that situatedness. More specifically, Herman emphasises that narratives are always tied to "a specific discourse context or occasion for telling" (*Basic* 14).

[48] This implies that narrativity is a gradient phenomenon. After all, readers may be able to interpret some parts of a text in "narrative" terms, and yet be unable to fit other features into the same template ("Foundations" 7; cf. Herman, *Basic* 16).

[49] I believe this is also true for cult television shows and other "narrative" *ur*-texts, which tend to have a strong "lateral" resonance. I discuss this in Section 1.3.5.

characters, spaces and objects, and changes of state. I will home in on these constituents in Chapters two to five.

Canon and Experientiality

In my discussion, I will prioritise the "experiential" dimension of Ryan's constituents. The concept of "experientiality" was first developed by Monika Fludernik in *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*. In this study, Fludernik develops a narratological paradigm that revolves around "natural," cognitive parameters, rather than formal categories. This makes her research compatible with Ryan's "cognitive" definition of narrative. Fludernik explains her understanding of the term "natural" as follows:

> My use of the concept of the '*natural*' relates to a framework of human embodiedness. It is from this angle that some cognitive parameters can be regarded as '*natural*' in the sense of 'naturally occurring' or 'constitutive of prototypical human experience'. The term '*natural*' is not applied to texts or textual techniques but exclusively to the *cognitive frames* by means of which texts are interpreted. (12; cf. 312)

Fludernik's overall theoretical stance is constructivist. She assumes that readers "actively construct meanings and impose frames on their interpretations of texts just as people have to interpret real-life experience in terms of available schemata" (12; cf. 313). Fludernik posits that readers construct and sometimes even impose "narrativity" on texts "on the basis of real-world cognitive parameters" (313). She calls this process "narrativization," defining it as "a reading strategy that naturalizes texts by recourse to narrative schemata" (34). In this respect, too, Fludernik's view on narrativity is similar to Ryan's. In Fludernik's paradigm, however, narrative schemata are closely related to "experientiality," which she defines as "the quasi-mimetic evocation of 'real-life experience'" (12). She specifies this as follows:

> Experientiality in narrative as reflected in narrativity can therefore be said to combine a number of cognitively relevant factors, most importantly those of the presence of a human [or anthropomorphic] protagonist and her experience of events as they impinge on her situation or activities. The most crucial factor is that of the protagonist's emotional and physical reaction to this constellation, which introduces a basic dynamic feature into the structure. Second, since humans are conscious thinking beings, (narrative) experientiality always implies -- and sometimes emphatically foregrounds -- the protagonist's consciousness. Narrativity can emerge from the experiential portrayal of dynamic event sequences which are already configured emotively and evaluatively, but it can also consist in the experiential depiction of human consciousness *tout court*. (30)

For Fludernik, narrativity ultimately depends on "mediated human experientiality," whether story experience is mediated through the consciousness of the narrator, the protagonist, a hypothetical observer like Wendi's, or even the reader. When readers work to understand a

narrative, they rely on the cognitive parameters that they have derived from real-world experience—that is, on the cognitive traces of their interaction with the world. This means that readers necessarily interpret narratives in "experiential" terms. Ultimately, in short, "experientiality" is both a matter of the characters' experiences, as they are represented in the text, and the reader's real-life experience. Fludernik develops four levels of "natural" categories (Fludernik 43-50), but these categories are too theoretical to be worked into a practical, heuristic model (cf. Herman and Vervaeck, *Handbook* 103). In my analytical chapters, therefore, I use theories that are compatible with Fludernik's concept of "experientiality." In Chapter 2, I combine Philippe Hamon's theory on evaluation in narrative with cognitive theories on character. More specifically, I posit that the reader's experience of characters is shaped by sociocultural knowledge and especially by the cognitive templates of evaluation. In Chapter 3, I extend this framework with Alan Palmer's notion of "group frame." In Chapter 4, I use Marco Caracciolo's work, who has argued that the reader's experience of space is also shaped by visual images, embodied images, and emotional responses. In Chapter 5, finally, I use Hilary P. Dannenberg's work, because she takes a similar, "experiential" approach to the analysis of plot.

1.3.4.3 The "Meaning" in "Meaning Structure"

Essential Features

I have argued that Sandvoss's "meaning structure" is organised by a cognitive template that contains characters, spaces and objects, and changes of state. In practice, however, this "template" is filled in with meaning. While Ryan describes the categories that afford structure to storyworlds in general, the "meaning structure" that holds canons together revolves around specific characters (Elizabeth Bennet, Fitzwilliam Darcy), objects (letters, bonnets), events (Elizabeth's visit to Hunsford, her refusal of Mr. Darcy's proposal), locations (Hunsford parsonage, Pemberley), and other referents that make the world of *Pride and Prejudice* different from, say, the world of *Jane Eyre*. To specify this dimension of Sandvoss's meaning structure, I first want to draw on Maria Lindgren Leavenworth's "Transmedial Texts and Serialized Narratives." Leavenworth develops a model of the fan object on the basis of recent research into transmedial storytelling, which she uses to shed light on tendencies in the production of fan fiction (1-3). More specifically, she draws ideas from a theory developed by game theorists Lisbeth Klastrup and Susana Tosca (Leavenworth 7). In "Transmedial Worlds – Rethinking Cyberworld Design," Klastrup and Tosca develop a theoretical framework that makes it easier to analyse storyworlds that are

spread across multiple media platforms (Klastrup and Tosca).[50] This analytical framework revolves around the notion of "transmedial world," which they define as follows:

> Transmedial worlds are abstract content systems from which a repertoire of fictional stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms. What characterises a transmedial world is that audience and designers share a mental image of the 'worldness' (a number of distinguishing features of its universe). The idea of a specific world's worldness mostly originates from the first version of the world presented, but can be elaborated and changed over time. Quite often the world has a cult (fan) following across media as well. (Klastrup and Tosca)

When an interpreter encounters one of the world's actualisations, and recognises it as such, he or she is able to see additional layers of meaning in the text (Klastrup and Tosca). When you watch *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, for example, and recognise it as an online, modern-day adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, you will be able to appreciate how prejudiced Lizzie Bennet is in the first instalments of her video-blog, how cleverly the storyworld is modernised, or how the creators have changed Austen's storyworld to suit the social media platforms across which their adaptation is spread.

Klastrup and Tosca's definition resonates in interesting ways with my discussion. The idea that designers and audience members are both familiar with the transmedial world complements my discussion of the "transfictional space," and their "abstract content systems" resemble Ryan's "cognitive template." Finally, their definition offers clues to the "meaning" of Sandvoss's "meaning structure," because it suggests that designers and audience members have an idea of what is "essential" about the transmedial world, that they base that idea on the first instalment "presented" (or, I would argue, encountered), and that this idea may be elaborated and changed over time. I will only use Leavenworth's application of Klastrup and Tosca's model as a point of departure, however, because her analytical categories are much less widely applicable than Ryan's. Klastrup and Tosca argue that the transmedial world can be analysed into three core elements, which Leavenworth defines as follows:

> Mythos is 'the backstory of all backstories—the central knowledge one needs to have in order *to interact with or interpret events in the world* accordingly'; topos is 'the setting of the world' and 'knowing *what is to be expected from the physics and navigation in the world';* and ethos is 'the explicit and implicit ethics of the world'

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[50] Notably, they focus on narratives that were not conceptualised as transmedia stories from the get-go, such as *Lord of the Rings* and *Star Wars* (Klastrup and Tosca). This means that they use a broader definition of "transmedia storytelling" than Henry Jenkins, whose definition is perhaps most famous. In *Convergence Culture*, Jenkins associates transmedia storytelling with stories "that unfold across multiple media platforms, with each medium making distinctive contributions to our understanding of the world" which is represented (293). This process, he emphasises, involves "a more integrated approach to franchise development than models based on urtexts and ancillary products" (293).

and 'the knowledge required in order to know *how to behave* in the world' . . . (Leavenworth 7; all quotes from Klastrup and Tosca)

"Mythos" in particular seems too broad to capture what is essential about a realistic text like Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This is due to the fact that Klastrup and Tosca's original concepts are primarily based on the worlds of videogames. They initially define "mythos," as "the establishing conflicts and battles of the world, which also present the characters of the world" (Klastrup and Tosca). This "includes stories of or rumours about certain lore items and creatures which are unique to the world" (Klastrup and Tosca). Although Leavenworth makes this concept more neutral, her notion of "mythos" is still very difficult to apply to realistic worlds, such as those of Austen. Indeed, her definition of "mythos" relies on some of Ryan's categories, such as "events." It makes more sense, therefore, to look at specific characters, spaces and objects, and changes of state first, since these can be used as a jumping point for a study of the world's "backstory," "physics and navigation," and "ethics." This seems to be confirmed by another theoretical model, which is actually used in close readings by Maria Lindgren Leavenworth and Malin Isaksson in *Fanged Fan Fiction* (53-6, 57-8). In "Starring Lucy Lawless?," Sara Gwenllian-Jones discusses the complex of texts that revolves around and includes *Xena: Warrior Princess*. She defines this complex of texts as the "Xenaverse" (9-10). Interestingly enough, Gwenllian-Jones revises this definition in a later article, arguing that the "Xenaverse" is a "fictional cosmology" mapped onto the New Zealand landscape of the series, as the "morphological dimension of the metatext" ("Virtual" 88).[51] This definition clearly resonates with Marie-Laure Ryan's "cognitive template" (see Section 1.3.4.2). Even in "Starring Lucy Lawless?," however, Gwenllian-Jones argues that the complex of texts that surrounds *Xena: Warrior Princess* is centred around the character of Xena, rather than the actress who plays her (12). Taking the perspective of fans who read and build on this text, she analyses Xena's "star text" into six "stages" of "knowledge and interpretive possibility" (17). These include Xena's psychological profile, her erotic relationships with other characters, and her role in the development of the series' themes and motifs (17-9). Gwenllian-Jones's model seems to confirm that it is worthwhile to approach the fan object from the perspective of cognitive narratology. After all, characters are a key part of Ryan's "cognitive template," both as experiencing agents and constituents of the meaningful whole that is the storyworld. To sum up, I argue that when fan readers imagine the storyworld of a fan fiction text, they draw on the "meaning structure" they use to make sense of the textual

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[51] Sara Gwenllian-Jones's uses the word "metatext" differently than I do. I use the term to refer to texts about fan fiction texts, such as reader comments and discussions. Sara Gwenllian-Jones, in contrast, uses the term to refer to the textual elements that make up the "canon" of *Xena: Warrior Princess*, and perhaps even the "fantext" that accumulates around it ("Virtual" 88). The notion is closely related, in other words, to the process "in which cult fictions extend themselves beyond the bounds of their primary texts, migrating across other media, morphing into countless versions, both official and unofficial, material and immaterial" (85).

elements of the canon. This meaning structure contains characters, spaces and objects, and changes of state with a number of features that are accepted as essential by a group of fans.

Incompatible Elements

The idea that Sandvoss's "meaning structure" has some features that are felt to be essential helps to explain why the narrative communication between fan writers and fan readers does not break down. Building on Kaplan and Sandvoss, I have argued that fan writers and fan readers share an understanding of the canon. This does not mean, however, that every fan's understanding is based on the same textual elements. Fans of *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, may base their understanding of Austen's storyworld on the novel, but also on screen adaptations, websites about the Regency period, conversations they have had with other fans, and, indeed, on details and interpretations they have picked up in fan fiction. When fan writers build up a storyworld in fan fiction, their understanding of Austen's world may be based on any or all of these textual elements; when fan readers work to comprehend a fan fiction text, they may rely on an understanding of Austen's storyworld that is based on another set of textual elements entirely. A fan fiction text only "works" when there is at least some overlap between the fan writer's and the fan reader's understanding of Austen's storyworld. If this were not the case, the fan reader in question would interpret the text as an original narrative, rather than fan fiction, because they would no longer see any connection with Austen's storyworld.

In this respect, Sandvoss's "meaning structure" bears a family resemblance to Umberto Eco's "intertextual frames" (105-10). This concept is rooted in the frame system theory of Marvin Minsky. Catherine Emmott mentions this theory as one of the seminal studies of "general knowledge" (Emmott, *Narrative* 23). Minsky, an artificial intelligence theorist, posits that interpreters process new situations with the help of remembered frameworks, which he calls "frames" (Minsky 1-2). He compares these knowledge structures to networks "of nodes and relations," which comprise two strata (1-2). The "top levels" contain elements which are always involved in the situation; the "lower levels" are comprised of "slots," which tend to be filled with default data, but which can be completed with specific data in the process of comprehension (1-2). This information may concern people, objects, events, and even expectations or presumptions, as long as they meet the conditions that are encoded in the slots (1-2). In accordance with this model, Eco's intertextual frames are substantial memory structures that contain information about stereotypical fictional situations (*Lector* 105-7). He discusses four frame types, which cover everything from the standardised plot of a detective novel to a prototypical Western duel (108-9). Eco stresses, however, that these frames are not necessarily shared by every reader, because everyone's cultural background is different (110). This model can be applied to a fan's understanding of the "world" of *Pride and Prejudice*. Consider, for example, Vicky's "All in a Name." This short story retells the proposal scene of the 2005 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* from Mr. Darcy's point of view (Vicky). As a consequence, the proposal takes place in a folly in Rosings Park

rather than Hunsford parsonage, simply because the film does not stay true to the novel (Vicky). Yet this text is still intelligible to readers whose understanding of Austen's world is based first and foremost based on the novel. This is because many of the "top levels" of the frame stay the same: it still contains such categories as Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth, and a proposal, even though they are filled in with alternative data. In this conceptualisation, Sandvoss's meaning structure becomes highly flexible.

1.3.5   From Canon to Fantext: Immersion and Interactivity

Building on the ideas of Klastrup and Tosca, I have argued that the "meaning structure" that holds the textual elements of the canon together tends to be based on the first textual element a fan encounters. This means, most importantly, that it is typically based on the first storyworld the fan constructed. Up to now, I have taken the perspective of postclassical narratology, comparing narrative texts to "blueprints" for storyworld-making that are imagined by the reader. In the context of fandom, however, these blueprints are only the first step in a chain of events. As Bronwen Thomas puts it:

> Cognitive narratology's focus on how readers process narratives, and construct mental models that take the shape of storyworlds, is ideally situated to account for many of the activities and forms of engagement that we find in fanfiction communities. In particular, Richard Gerrig's focus on how words become worlds . . . and his suggestion that narrative transports readers into other times and other places . . . provide an obvious starting point for this kind of approach. Equally, the idea that storyworlds are themselves subject to constant revision by those who participate in their construction allows us to go beyond textual blueprints to the worlds that are made and remade on the basis of those blueprints. (B. Thomas, "What" 12; cf. Leavenworth and Isaksson 53)

The "activities" and "forms of engagement" of fans go beyond the reader participation that takes place in the context of narrative comprehension, as it is described by Richard Gerrig and other narrative theorists. During the process of narrative comprehension, the reader's interaction with the text is fairly limited. The word "comprehension" implies that the reader tries to understand the text, to interpret it. In this context, what is *stated* can be supplemented by what is *implied* or can be *inferred*, but it can never be upstaged by the text's *potential*. When the reader sets out to "comprehend," in other words, it is "wrong" to approach Claudius as Hamlet's ally (Herman, *Story* 12) or to ignore large parts of Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (Eco 77, 233). The reader has even less freedom, it seems, during that process that Richard Gerrig calls "transportation" but which is more commonly known as "immersion" (Ryan, *Virtual* 93). In *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, Marie-Laure Ryan defines immersion as "the experience through which a fictional world acquires the presence of an autonomous, language-independent reality populated with live human beings" (14; cf.

Murray 98-9). A fic like "A Lesson Hard Learned" is immersive because the writing takes readers there, to the library, and urges them to imagine the events as they unfold. With this imagining comes a loss of distance, as readers see Mr. Darcy in their mind's eye, almost feel his letter, or simply feel for him as if he were a real person. Responses like these can be evoked by novels, films, video games, and texts in other media, as long as they are mimetic (Ryan, *Virtual* 92). Several narrative theorists have argued that immersion ultimately depends on the co-operation between text and reader. Marie-Laure Ryan has noted, for instance, that a text will only appear to describe a world when readers fill the text's semantic domain out with information from their own cognitive, experiential, and cultural backgrounds (*Virtual* 91). At the same time, however, readers are unlikely to become immersed when the text does not allow them to project or 'recentre' their consciousness to that fictional world for an extended period of time (*Virtual* 103). Many hypertexts and postmodernist novels, for example, draw the reader's attention to the text itself, and are more about play than immersion (Ryan, *Virtual* 198-9, 283-4). Marco Caracciolo has developed a similar argument in psychological terms. He argues that when readers try to comprehend a passage of narrative text, they actually run a mental simulation of the fictional situation on some of the neuronal pathways that they use for actual perception ("Virtual" 119, 121). When the passage has particular features, such as markers of focalisation, the reader is more likely to feel immersed (120-1; cf. Ryan, *Virtual* 130-5). Both Ryan and Caracciolo, in short, posit that texts can invite or encourage readers to have a particular experience.

Still, it would be reductive to equate the reader participation that is described by Ryan and Caracciolo and fans' interactions with the fan object. When readers are "lost" in a text, they can bring additional information to bear on it, but it is impossible to explore every possible implication or context and still stay immersed. While readers can speculate about what will happen next, they cannot imagine an entire counterfactual plotline without breaking the spell of immersion. In the context of fandom, the reader is afforded a much wider range of interaction. Fans can look up details or discuss them with friends; they can explore possibilities and counterfactual plotlines; they can strengthen their emotional investment in the storyworld by watching adaptations, featurettes and interviews; they can develop vague feelings, thoughts, and evaluations further in reader comments. They can return to the text again and again, talk about it with friends, jot down ideas, or indeed, develop them into fully-fledged stories. While the image we have during the process of reading is sketchy and incomplete due to the limitations of working memory, fans can develop that image into something that is far more detailed and creative. There seems to be a consensus in discussions of fan fiction that fans immerse themselves in their object of affection and engage with the "gaps" they find there (e.g., Pugh 41; Gwenllian-Jones, "Virtual" 92).[52] On his blog, "Confessions of an Aca-fan," for instance, Henry Jenkins has

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[52] For a link to reception theory and the notion of gap filling, see Sandvoss 28-9.

developed a typology of "negative capability," by which he means meaningful gaps and details in the source text that invite readers to use their own imaginations ("Part One"; cf. Pugh 41).[53] Jenkins distinguishes five such elements, including holes (events that are not narrated, but which must have happened), silences (elements that appear to be excluded for ideological reasons), and potentials (elements that suggest how the narrative could have continued or, I would add, how it could have taken an alternative course) ("Part Two"). It is also important to note, however, that gaps and immersion are two sides of the same coin: fans only perceive "gaps" because they assume that the fictional world is as extensive and complete as a "language-independent reality."

Several scholars of cult fandom have noted that this assumption is a driving force behind fandom. In *Fan Cultures*, for instance, Matt Hills calls the worlds of cult texts "hyperdiegetic" (138). He argues that every cult text creates

> a vast and detailed narrative space, only a fraction of which is ever directly seen or encountered within the text, . . . but which nevertheless appears to operate according to principles of internal logic and extension . . . . (137)

This world encourages "creative speculation" and what Hills calls "affective play": it gives fans the chance to develop intense emotional attachments, to move freely across the boundaries between "inner" and "outer," "real" and "fantasy," and to create "affective meanings" that elude established sociocultural categories (138, 90-3). Sara Gwenllian-Jones has made a similar argument. In "Starring Lucy Lawless?," she emphasises that the practices that surround cult television shows, such as fan activities and merchandising, revolve around characters and the fictional world to which they give access (11-2). These fictional worlds are vast, due to the serial and the fantastical nature of cult television (11, 13; cf. Gwenllian-Jones, "Virtual" 87). By the same token, however, they are also never fully represented—they always promise fulfilment ("Starring" 11). Gwenllian-Jones argues that it is this "deficit between what is presented on screen and what is implied or omitted" that motivates fans to add their interpretive and inventive practices to the cultural fields that surround cult television series (11-3).

Sara Gwenllian-Jones has characterised the result of this process in "Virtual Reality and Cult Television." Drawing on the work of Virtual Reality scholars, such as Janet Murray, Maria-Laure Ryan, and Mark Poster, Gwenllian-Jones argues that there is an "immersive" and an "interactive" side to watching a cult television series. *Star Trek*, *The X-Files*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and other cult shows are immersive because they present fantastical worlds "to which the alchemy of textual data and imagination transports the reader,

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[53] Henry Jenkins has drawn "negative capability" from the work of John Keats, but he uses it in a completely different sense. While Keats understands "negative capability" as the ability to be "in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact & reason" (qtd. in H. Jenkins, "Part One"), Jenkins relates it to an "encyclopedic impulse" on the reader's part, i.e. a desire to "know all of the details of a favorite story" (H. Jenkins, "Part Two").

facilitating a pleasurable psychic sense of 'being there' as the action unfolds" (83). In the process, however, there is "an interaction of the user's imagination and the imaginative text that, to use Pierre Lévy's term, 'deterritorializes' . . . the fiction in the process of actualizing it in the reader's imagination" (84-5). Viewers are encouraged to make associations with facts, texts, and experiences, so that the cult text extends beyond its own boundaries and ceases to be a closed and authored text. She explains:

> Cult television series already include processes and devices of deterritorialization within their primary texts, making exuberant use of intertextual, intratextual, and self-reflexive references, playing with fragmentation and excess and extending their fictions beyond the television text to a variety of other discourses and media incarnations. These characteristics function to dissolve, emphatically and explicitly, singular textual containments of the fiction, releasing it into virtuality. The cult fiction exceeds its primary textual expression (as television text) and, as virtuality, invites and supports intense imaginative viewer engagements that may be immersive or interactive or both. (85; cf. 90-1)

Gwenllian-Jones's examples show that this process is centred around the series' fictional world, or "fictional cosmology" (88, 90). She points out, for instance, that *Xena: Warrior Princess* makes "extensive use of characters, events, and places from history, mythology, and popular culture" (88). As a consequence, the fictional world of *Xena* functions as a window on other worlds (88). Cult television series, in short, "exert their fascination not through the linear pull of story events but rather through their lateral resonance and connectivity" (91). Following Lubomír Doležel, Gwenllian-Jones compares this mass of interconnected knowledge about the fictional world, which is implied by the text and mastered by the reader, to an encyclopaedia (91-2). Viewers must be familiar with this encyclopaedia to fully understand the cult text and the world that it evokes (92). In the context of fandom, however, it also becomes a resource which fans "draw from in order to reconstruct the fictional world in imagination and to reactualize it in tertiary textual form (as fan fiction, scratch video, and so on)" (94). She concludes:

> Broken down to its constituent elements yet retaining the substance and logic that give it coherence, the deterritorialized fiction exists as data and potential that is subject to all manner of interventions and reconfigurations. (94)

These studies clearly resonate with my discussion of the "meaning structure" that holds the canon together. On the one hand, they highlight the idea that Sandvoss's "meaning structure" is not shaped by a single text or medium, but that it is an emancipated, "virtual" structure. On the other hand, they seem to confirm that it has two dimensions. In the process of immersion, and particularly immersion in the first textual element the fan encounters, it acquires the substance and logic that we associate with a "world." I have argued that this "substance and logic" can be analysed into the constituents of narrative—that they have a high degree of narrativity. I say have a high degree of narrativity, because even cult

television shows, which *are* narratives, do not fit entirely into the cognitive template of narrative. Shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* are clearly designed as narratives. They revolve around a world with characters, objects, and physical and mental events that are ordered into a complex structure. On the one hand, every episode and every season is structured by a self-contained story arc that moves toward an individual conclusion (cf. Creeber 8-10). On the other hand, the lives of the characters are represented with "an unfolding and episodic narrative structure that moves progressively towards a conclusion," as they would in a soap opera (8, 9, 11). Viewers learn more about the characters with each episode, while the conclusion towards which their story seems to move is endlessly deferred (4). Yet these shows also have a very strong lateral resonance that complicates the notion of "plot." In the process of interaction, the world's constituents become more like the lemmas of an encyclopaedia, because they are associated with a wealth of knowledge. This becomes clear when the knowledge in question is written down (Gwenllian-Jones, "Virtual" 92-3). *The Regency Encyclopedia*, for instance, is an online encyclopaedia that was made by fans for fans.[54] It was founded in 2006 as a resource for fan writers who want to write stories about the late Georgian and Regency eras (*Fanlore.org*, "Regency"). On the website, fans can find excerpts from academic texts about Jane Austen's time period with information about boys' clothes, naval ships, marriage settlements, and much more (*Regency.com*). It also provides a list of names that were certainly in use in England before 1800, a gallery of fashion plates which are searchable by colour, and a map gallery (*Regency.com*). The latter includes digitised maps from the period, but also interactive maps of Bath and London that allow the user to calculate the distance and travel time between two points (*Reg-ency.com*). These locations include locations from Austen's texts, such as Gracechurch Street (where Elizabeth Bennet's aunt and unce, the Gardiners, live in *Pride and Prejudice*) (*Reg-ency.com*). This clearly demonstrates that the world of *Pride and Prejudice* has a lateral resonance that can be explored through an extensive and repeated interaction with the text.

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[54] Notably, there are also professional encyclopaedias, such as Kirstin Olsen's *All Things Austen: An Encyclopedia of Austen's World*. This encyclopaedia is introduced as follows:

> Readers will learn the origin of the term "box office" and will investigate the mystery of exactly what sort of spectacles Frank Churchill was fixing at the Bateses'. They will discover why opera girls were so scandalous and why William Price could not get promoted from midshipman to lieutenant without help. They will discover how a servants' bell worked, what a calling card looked like, and how the games of casino, lottery tickets, and loo were played. Crucially, they will learn how terms still used today, such as 'public place,' 'toy shop,' 'hobbyhorse,' and 'pocketbook,' differ in their usage from the same terms in Austen's day. (xii-xiii)

Even though Olsen does not profess to be a fan, her work helps to illustrate how the world of Jane Austen's novels can be associated with a wealth of related elements.

1.4 Methology and Ethics

1.4.1 Methodology

Up to now, I have used cognitive narratology to explore the cognitive dimension of concepts from fan fiction studies and fandom. In the rest of this thesis, however, I use cognitive narratology in what Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller call a "heuristic" approach (208). In "Narrative Theory and/or/as Theory of Interpretation," Kindt and Müller examine various narrative theories to determine "whether contributing, in whatever way, to the interpretation of literary texts is regarded as a task proper to narratology" and "how the relationship, if any, of narratology to interpretation has been defined" (206). They examine, in other words, the relationship between narrative theory and the theories that underpin literary interpretation, such as feminist or psychoanalytical approaches to literary texts (212). Kindt and Müller argue that theories of interpretation can be analysed into three "basic structural features" (212). The first is a "conception of meaning," which determines "the type of meaning sought" (212). A feminist reading, for instance, will focus on elements that can be related to patriarchy and the role of women, just as a psychoanalytical reading will focus on elements that relate to, say, the id, ego, and superego. This "conception of meaning" is not completely random: to some extent, it is shaped by the interpreter's "norms"—that is, on the "goals and values" that determine what the interpreter finds interesting, significant, or worth studying (212). The last structural feature is a "conception of interpretation," or "a set of assumptions and rules as to how such meaning is to be identified" (212). This is the method of analysis. The "heuristic" approach I take is one of four possible relationships between narrative theory and "interpretation theory," next to the autonomist,[55] contextualist, and foundationalist position (206-9). In the "heuristic" view, it is assumed that narrative theory should contribute to the interpretation of texts, and that it should do so as an "auxiliary discipline" (207-9). Narratology is used, not to provide an entire conception of meaning, but to "supply points of reference for stimulating, structuring and problematizing interpretations" (208). I particularly want to distinguish my approach from the "contextualist" position, because this approach underpins several of the cognitive narrative theories I discussed.[56] In "contextualist" narratologies, narrative theory is "an

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[55] Kindt and Müller argue that this form arose from "high" structuralism (209). This does not mean, however, that the autonomist view can be equated with the field of classical, structuralist narratology. After all, some "low" structuralists, such as Gérard Genette, are very much concerned with interpretation (Kindt and Müller 208). What is at stake here, then, is the question whether narratologists do or do not believe that narratology should contribute something to the interpretation of texts.

[56] I will not discuss the autonomist and the foundationalist perspective here, because they are not relevant for my discussion. In the autonomist view, it is assumed that narrative theory is not concerned with interpretation at all, but with "determining the general characteristics of narrative" (Kindt and Müller 206). In the foundationalist

interpretive approach in its own right, or at least has the potential to become one" (207). Contextualist narratologists do not assume that the characteristics of narrative are context-independent. Instead, they examine those characteristics with an eye to the text's social, cultural, historical, and, indeed, cognitive context, "moving on from a structuralist analysis to a functional study of literature" (207). In *Story Logic*, for example, David Herman argues that both narrative theory and language theory should be seen as resources for the broader endeavour of cognitive science, and that narratological and linguistic principles should be approached as strategies that encourage interpreters to build and update storyworlds (2, 5). The real target of narrative analysis, in other words, is "the process by which interpreters reconstruct the storyworlds encoded in narratives" (5). Herman's study has a theoretical and a practical dimension. He develops a theoretical model of the process of narrative comprehension, but he also interprets specific texts, such as ghost stories, from this perspective—looking for textual features that have an impact on the reader's storyworld-building (6-9; e.g., 33-4). His research, in other words, comes with its own "conception of meaning." I take a different approach. The "conception of meaning" of my research is first and foremost derived from fandom and fan fiction studies, and I am interested in textual features that relate to that particular paradigm. As I have demonstrated, I also enrich this "conception of meaning" with the findings of contextualist theories such as Herman's, because I believe it is worthwhile to explore the cognitive dimension of "fannish" concepts. Still, I aim to make sense of the textual features of fan fiction texts, not with reference to theoretical models that apply to the cognitive aspects of narrative in general, but to concepts that apply to fan fiction *and* have a cognitive dimension. In the analytical chapters, I use a toolbox of narratological concepts that are compatible with this framework.

With this integrated "conception of meaning," however, also comes a particular "conception of interpretation," or method of analysis. Talking about the sheer enormity of "world literature," Franco Moretti notes that "world literature is not an object, it's a *problem*, and a problem that asks for a new critical method" ("Conjectures" 55). While my study is different in scope to Moretti's, it cannot be denied that fan fiction poses a number of problems to literary researchers that call for different critical methods. I have already noted that the advent of the internet has changed the demographics of fandom and the ways in which fans interact with each other and with the texts they write (see Section 1.2.1.2). As Bronwen Thomas notes:

> fanfiction is best understood within the context of a 'network culture' (Bolter 2001) where the boundaries between authors and readers become blurred, where authors can revise and update their work at will, and where the choices made by readers are affected by the design of the Web site and the presence of menus and links. This

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approach, it is assumed that narratology cannot provide a "comprehensive reading of texts," as the contextualist approach posits, but that it can "provide a kind of basic interpretation, which can also yield criteria for evaluating more detailed interpretations" (207-8).

means that though the content of online and print-based stories would be difficult to tell apart, the design and presentation of the stories, and the distribution of power between participants, may be very different indeed. ("Gains" 143)

In this dissertation, I do not have the space to discuss how fan writers take advantage of, and play with, the specific technological properties of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* when they write their stories.[57] However, I want to take the time here to point out that the advent of the internet has also changed the nature of fan fiction, as object of study. First, therefore, I will discuss a number of challenges and possibilities that are created by the fact that my object of research is digital. Technically speaking, *Dwiggie.com* is an internet forum that has a number of message boards and archives, and which is the centre of a fan community. As an internet forum, the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* has a number of properties in common with other online services, such as blogging services or even the world wide web as a whole, simply because it relies on the same technology—the internet. More specifically, *Dwiggie.com* is transient and archival. These two properties pose a challenge to the methods that are traditionally used in literary studies.

First, *Dwiggie.com* is transient because it can be changed at any moment. This creates a number of affordances that regular authors do not have. Fans can post revised versions of their stories, can have stories pulled from the internet, for instance if they want to publish them with a professional publisher. Perhaps most importantly, they can receive and sometimes even implement feedback from readers by the next instalment of the fan fiction text. These are possibilities that regular authors can only dream of. However, it also means that the object of research is no longer fixed: researchers may be faced with radically different versions of one fan fiction text, with a corpus that may disappear at any moment, and reader comments that are impossible to retrieve because they were posted all of five years ago. To deal with these challenges, I have used data mining technology to take a back-up of the message board archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. This made my corpus more fixed, and made it possible to analyse stories offline. These message board archives still exist online, and all links provided in the bibliographic information will take the reader there. In some cases, however, the texts I refer to have already been deleted from the archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. The chapters of Jan H's *The Child*, for instance, are still a part of my back-up but have been deleted from the online archives. I will not put my back-up online because I feel authors have the right to pull their texts from the internet (see Section 1.4.2). However, I will be happy to give interested readers access to the back-up if needed.

Second, *Dwiggie.com* is archival because it is built to store large amounts of data. At the time of writing, the website houses well over 2,000 stories, numerous reader comments and forum posts, and hyperlinks to related websites. On the home page, for example, there are hyperlinks to the *Republic of Pemberley*, where you can find a lot of information about the

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[57] For an overview of media-conscious discussions of fan fiction, see Section 1.2.2.1, note 23.

adaptations and the Regency period, and to the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index*, which in turn has a searchable catalogue of online Jane Austen fan fiction. In addition, some writers refer to *YouTube* and *Wikipedia* to clarify aspects of the storyworld they are describing. This infrastructure invites readers to go to other websites, to browse the archives, to seek new information, and to read more fan fiction (cf. B. Thomas, "Canons"). However, it also makes it very difficult for analysts to select a corpus. While not as extensive as Moretti's "world literature," it is impossible to "close read" every text on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. Yet making a selection of fan fiction texts, as literary scholars who use close reading are forced to do (Moretti, "Conjectures" 57), means losing sight of the bigger picture: of the preferences for story content and textual strategies in which the community's "discourse domain" becomes visible. This is why I have used a combination of "close" and "semi-distant" reading.

I use the term "semi-distant" reading to distinguish my approach from "distant" reading techniques, such as studies of secondary literature (Moretti, "Conjectures" 57) and especially automated methods of analysis (Meister, "Computational" 17). I believe that the latter, in particular, hold much promise for future research into fan fiction. In the early stages of my research, I have tried to select a corpus for one of the chapters of my dissertation with *MALLET*, a type of topic modelling software. This programme "reads" the corpus and groups words that tend to co-occur. In the case of the archives of *Dwiggie.com*, this resulted in topics such as the following:

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88  0,11119 collins mr cousin catherine lady patroness mrs
clergyman longbourn dear lucas de hunsford cousins bourgh
great noble estate parson
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These terms tend to co-occur in the archives of *Dwiggie.com* because Austen fans characterise Mr. Collins in much the same way as Jane Austen does: with reference to his relation Elizabeth Bennet (cousin), his patroness (Lady Catherine de Bourgh), his home (Hunsford), and his use of particular adjectives (such as noble and great). Some topics are much harder to interpret, however. Ultimately, I opted to perform a different type of reading, which comes closer to the way fans read large numbers of fics. I have read over a hundred stories, not to analyse them, but to summarise them and to spot fantextual conventions. I used this "semi-distant" reading to ensure that the close readings of the analytical chapters resonate with the rest of the corpus.

1.4.2 Ethics

As I am approaching fan fiction from a literary studies perspective, it may come as a surprise that I want to say a word about the ethical dimension of my research. Before I specify the ethical guidelines I have followed throughout my research, therefore, I want to clarify *why* I am specifying them in the first place. In this dissertation, I discuss fan fiction texts and the

"discourse domain" that underpins them. I approach fan fiction, in short, as a phenomenon that is both artistic and social—that is both an act of creation and a result of human interaction. This is why I do not just analyse fan fiction texts, but also blurbs, Author's Notes, reader comments, and forum discussions. Unfortunately, this dual perspective complicates my research. In some cases, it is hard to determine whether I should follow the ethical codes of the humanities (and particularly of literary studies) or of the social sciences. These protocols are very different. As Amy Bruckman notes, it used to be common practice for literary scholars to use information about the author's person to explain the author's work. This practice fell out of grace in the middle of the twentieth century, however, under the impetus of W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's "The Intentional Fallacy" (1954) and Roland Barthes' "Death of the Author" (1977) (Bruckman 223). Around the same time, disciplines as diverse as medicine and the social sciences began to develop ethical codes to regulate "human subjects research," and to protect the human subjects under scrutiny (223). Today, many literary studies are exempt from these regulations, precisely because they do not study authors as human subjects (223). According to the United States Title 45 regulations, for example, a study of the works of an author does not qualify as "human subjects research" unless the researcher interacts with, or obtains "identifiable private information" about the author in the course of the research (224).[58]

This guideline relies on a clear distinction between the "public" and the "private." To obtain "identifiable private" information about the author, the researcher has to step out of the public sphere (which contains published works and interviews), and invade the author's private one (e.g., to conduct personal interviews, to observe a day in the life of, or to read unpublished letters). Since the advent of the internet, this distinction has become problematic. The *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, for example, is a public space on paper, but it is not necessarily treated as such by users. Author's Notes, reader comments, and forum discussions may contain information that feels "private," such as references to the author's home, family, or to other aspects of their personal life. These personal details are not the object of my research. I never refer to personal details or try to reconstruct the author's identity to "explain" the why and wherefore of specific textual strategies. However, the very fact that I take this information from the internet and store it on my computer in a back-up of the website's message board archives may be distressing to fans. Similarly, it is possible that fans regard fan fiction texts as personal manuscripts rather than published works and become upset when they find out that I have analysed their work. Some fans may not want to be reminded of what they said five years ago or wrote at the very beginning of their

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[58] Please note that this discussion is grossly oversimplified—I ignore traditions that are not focused on the figure of the author, such as reader response criticism, and recent, interdisciplinary approaches. The point is that literary studies seem to be exempt from the restrictions that are imposed in the social sciences because it does appear to qualify as "human subjects research".

literary careers. Others may be distressed because I include copies of "deleted" narratives in my corpus.[59] I wish to address these ethical concerns here.

In early stages of my research, I made an ethical framework to deal with such issues. This guide has determined my decision-making whenever the "requirements" of my research and its "benefits" come into conflict with fans' "rights to and *expectations* of autonomy, privacy, informed consent, etc." (Ess et al. 2). I want to make sure, in other words, that the fans who are involved in my research do not suffer psychological harm because of it. As a point of departure, I have first analysed the research situation according to the recommendations of Charles Ess and the working committee of the Association of Internet Researchers. In terms of "environment," my research focuses on the message board archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* (2008-2011), rather than its live internet forum. These archives contain Author's Notes, instalments of fan fiction texts, and reader comments. When necessary, I also examine contributions to the "Tea Room" archives (2008-2011). These contain discussions on a plethora of topics, including personal ones. In addition, the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* asks that users use their real name rather than pseudonyms, because "a real name leads both to greater intimacy among dwiggies as well as a greater accountability on the part of the poster" (*Dwiggie.com*, "Contributor"). However, the "expectation" of privacy is relatively low. The *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* is a public website and its message board archives are not password protected. The site's privacy policy clearly states that "[a]ny information you share on the message boards, archived stories, and Baronetage entries becomes public" (*Dwiggie.com*, "Privacy"). When fans want to share something in private, such as links to adult-rated websites, proofreading remarks, or offline copies of fan fiction texts, they move to a different medium, such as e-mail. This suggests that fans acknowledge that the message boards are part of the public domain. The site does not explicitly state that all messages, including reader comments, are archived, but the "message board archives" link is clearly visible (*Dwiggie.com*, "Derbyshire"). It is likely, in other words, that fans are aware of these archives and of their public nature. This does not mean that fans give up all expectations of privacy or "informed consent." For one thing, it is made very clear that authors retain the copyright to their stories:

> Authors retain the copyright of their stories shared on Dwiggie.com. Contact the authors directly if you want to use or re-publish their works. Do not put copies of our stories on other web sites without the authors' permission. (*Dwiggie.com*, "Privacy")[60]

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[59] Authors may delete stories, for instance, because they no longer want to be associated with it, or because they published a version of it with a publisher. Fans can contact the moderators if they want to have messages or archived stories removed (*Dwiggie.com*, "Privacy").

[60] Some information is not shared, such as the e-mail addresses that are used during registration unless authors decide to share them themselves, and IP addresses (*Dwiggie.com*, "Privacy").

While the "acknowledged publicity" of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* makes issues of "individual privacy" and "confidentiality" less relevant (Ess et al. 5), the site's emphasis on the author's right to consent cannot be ignored—even if "use" does not necessarily refer to academic, fair use.

I also decided to err on the side of caution because some of the community's members are minors. The *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* asks authors to respect a G to PG-13 rating (*Dwiggie.com*, "How"). This rating also applies to comments on the message boards (*Dwiggie.com*, "Contributor"). The moderators explain: "[w]e do have many young people visiting this site, and it is our intention to keep things acceptable for them" (*Dwiggie.com*, "How"). They specify:

> Our single guideline for what is or is not appropriate for this site remains this: we have young people (early teens or even younger) on this site, and we ask that authors and responders be considerate and not post anything that would be inappropriate for them. (*Dwiggie.com*, "Contributor").

In the USA, children who are younger than 12 cannot give informed consent (Ess et al. 5). While my research is not human subjects research in the strict sense of the word, minors may be less aware of the "public" nature of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, and may be more likely to post "personal" manuscripts or comments.

This is why I have taken some ethical precautions. First, I have posted an announcement in the "Tea Room" of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, in which I detail my research (*Dwiggie.com*, "PhD"). In this post, I identified myself as a literary scholar, stated my intentions, and assured the community that I would not be making value judgments about their work or make claims about their thoughts, feelings, or personalities. I also emphasised that, while I would like to use their user names to give them credit for their work and opinions (as far as they relate to fan fiction), I would also anonymise the data if they wanted me to. This gave the members of the community the chance to ask questions, either via the forum or via email. Second, I contacted every fan author whose work I analyse in depth via email. Because the email addresses of members are hidden unless the author chooses to make them public, I have asked the help of Amy I.—one of the moderators of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. When I could not contact the author for whatever reason, I did not use the narrative in my dissertation, but performed a "semi-distant reading" on it. Third, I used different degrees of "disguise" in my academic texts. Here, I followed the guidelines of Amy Bruckman, who approaches internet users as "amateur artists." She assumes, in other words, that internet users have a right "to receive credit for their creative and intellectual work," but also that researchers "need to protect vulnerable human subjects in research studies" (229). That is why she recommends that pseudonyms be treated as real names.[61] She believes that researchers should use different "levels of disguise" depending

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[61] Needless to say, this is even more true for the user names of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, which are probably real names or nicknames.

on the "risk" involved (229-30). Bruckman's guidelines determine "whether names and other identifying details" should be changed, but it also regulates the "content of what may be published" (229). I have applied these guidelines in my dissertation.

More specifically, I have opted to use two types of "disguise." In the case of the fan fiction writers of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, the risk is low and the writers clearly deserve credit for their creations. This is why I use real user names *unless* the author has asked me not to do so (cf. Bruckman 229). I respect the author's claim to copyright by asking permission, and I do not mention personal details "that would be harmful to the subject if revealed" (cf. Bruckman 229). I use a higher degree of disguise for reader comments and forum discussions. Because there are so many readers who comment on stories, and because the turnover rate of fan readers seems to be even higher than that of fan writers, it is very impractical (if not impossible) to contact individual commenters. In addition, reader comments and forum posts are more likely to contain personal information than Author's Notes. This is why I opted for a "light disguise" (Bruckman 230). This means that I name the "group" (for instance, "comments to Chapter 4") rather than individual user names, pseudonyms or other "identifying details" (cf. Bruckman 230). I do use verbatim quotes, however, because, at most, these quotes may direct scholars to the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* and, indirectly, to the identifying information that is posted here (cf. Bruckman 230). However, I do not mention these identifying details and especially details that could be "harmful to individuals" in my text (cf. Bruckman 230). With these three precautions, I have tried to minimise the risk of psychological harm.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have placed the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* in context. I have also introduced the overall topic and "analytical mode" of my research, and laid the foundations of the heuristic toolbox I will use in the remainder of this dissertation. More specifically, I have pointed out that it is worthwhile to use concepts from cognitive narratology in close readings of fan fiction texts because these concepts throw textual features into relief that "encourage" fan readers to construct the storyworlds of those texts in a certain way. By this, I mean that the textual features in question place certain demands on readers in order to create a wide range of narrative effects. This results in a particular "implied reader." I have illustrated this idea with excerpts from Wendi's "A Lesson Hard Learned," Marie A's "Burnt Bridges," Naguabo's "The Mother of All Marriage Proposals," and Barbara A.'s *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy*. These narratives all build on the assumption that the reader draws parallels with particular canons or fantextual conventions. When this demand is met, the passages in question gain a wider meaning (Wendi, Marie A), are qualified by the

context that the reader brings to the text (Naguabo), help to create emotional responses (Wendi), or spark debates about community conventions (Barbara A.).

In the interests of clarity, I have examined the resources of the implied fan reader through the lens of cognitive narratology. This lens reveals two ideas that are fundamental to the following chapters. First, it draws attention to the fact that the storyworlds of fan fiction texts and the "meaning structure" of canon have the same basic structure. I have argued that when fan readers work to understand a fan fiction text, they fill in their construction of the fic's "storyworld" with the help of a meaning structure, or schema, that is based on all of the texts that make up the canon. This "meaning structure" has a high degree of narrativity because it is organised around characters, spaces and objects, and changes of state. These categories provide a useful and logical point of departure for a comparative study of the contextual frames that are evoked by fan fiction texts, on the one hand, and the "meaning structure" that individual readers bring to bear on those contextual frames, on the other. This is why I devote the second and third chapter to character, the fourth to spaces and objects, and the fifth to the events of the plot. Second, the lens of cognitive narratology suggests that the "meaning structure" of canon is shaped by the fan community. This means that the implied reader of fan fiction texts is a member of an "implied" fan community. That is to say: the textual features of fan fiction tend to be attuned to a particular image of the preferences of the fan community. Most importantly, the textual strategies of fan fiction texts are often attuned to elements that are widely believed to be essential to the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice*. This overlap between the storyworld of the fan fiction text and the "meaning structure" of canon prevents the communication between fan writer and fan reader from breaking down. By comparing the representation of characters, spaces and objects, and changes of state in Austen's novel with those in fan fiction texts, reader comments, and related metatexts, I will pinpoint some of the features that are considered to be "essential" to the meaning structure that this community brings to bear on fan fiction texts.

Ultimately, however, I aim to chart one part of the "discourse domain" of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. I will demonstrate that the integrated theoretical framework I have outlined above makes it possible to discern and explain patterns on the level of the "fantext," by which I mean the complex of fan fiction, reader comments, and other metatexts that are produced by the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. As I have noted, I will approach these patterns as "preferences" that are grounded in a particular part of the fan community's "discourse domain." To pinpoint what is specific about these preferences, I will use Jane Austen's novel rather than the adaptations as my primary point of reference. I am aware that the preferences of fan communities are constantly being revised, due to the interactive nature of fandom. Still, I believe that it is possible to trace at least one cluster of preferences that existed between 2008 and 2011 in the fan community of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. These preferences are first and foremost related to the fan community's expectations about Jane Austen fan fiction. However, they also seem to be informed by a specific interpretation

of Austen's work, and to reproduce a distinctive frame of value relating to the relationship between the individual and traditional social categories.

Chapter 2
Jane Austen Fan Fiction and Character

2.1 Introduction

> *"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 gentlemanlike manner. . . . From the very beginning, from the first moment, I may almost say, of my acquaintance with you, your manners impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form that groundwork of disapprobation on which succeeding events have built so immovable a dislike; and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry." (Austen, *Pride 188)*

In one of the most famous scenes in English literature, Elizabeth Bennet refuses Mr. Darcy's offer of marriage, giving him a formidable dressing down in the process. During her refusal, Elizabeth displays her penchant for observation—a talent that leads Mr. Bingley to describe her as a "studier of character" earlier in the novel (42). Yet Elizabeth does not just try to define the traits that are essential to Mr. Darcy's personality. She also tries to determine thoughts, feelings, beliefs, motivations, and other mental qualities that do not quite belong to his "character." Nor does she simply study these qualities. When Elizabeth concludes that Mr. Darcy's "manners" are grounded in "arrogance," "conceit," and a "selfish disdain of the feelings of others," she does two things. On the one hand, she defines a number of attitudes ("arrogance"), character traits ("conceit," "selfishness"), and feelings ("disdain") that seem to explain his behaviour. I will refer to such mental qualities as "dispositions"— by which I mean "a person's abilities and inclinations to act in certain ways," either mentally

or physically (Palmer, *Social* 27).[1] On the other hand, Elizabeth evaluates Mr. Darcy's behaviour and the reasons for that behaviour by ethical norms. Here, I do not use the term "ethical" to refer to just any system "of value and custom instantiated in the lives of particular groups of human beings" (Crisp). Such a broad definition would also include table manners, for instance.[2] I reserve the term for systems of value and custom that involve "notions such as rightness and wrongness, guilt and shame, and so on" (Crisp). By my definition, in short, ethics is a synonym for "morality" (Crisp). This is why I will not approach Elizabeth as a studier of character, but as a "moral mind reader."

In this chapter, I compare the way this character trait is represented in *Pride and Prejudice*, on the one hand, and Jack C.'s *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*[3] and Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth," on the other. My discussion focuses on the "Hunsford" of these three texts. This term is used in the Austen fandom to refer to the first proposal, and specifically to the fact that it is a turning point in the developments of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. As the epigraph suggests, this moment is also the culmination of Elizabeth's attempts at "moral mind reading." This makes it an interesting point of departure for my discussion. The two fan fiction texts in question clearly rewrite the characters of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Based on George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, Jack C.'s *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* diverges from Austen's story when Mr. Darcy has a riding accident near Longbourn and is forced to convalesce there (Chapter 1). Jack C.'s Elizabeth is even more prone to jump to conclusions than Austen's Elizabeth, while his Mr. Darcy is exceptionally charitable towards the Bennet family (e.g., Chapters 10-12, 17). In Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth," the events of *Pride and Prejudice* unfold in Loversall, Yorkshire, where Elizabeth Bennet and her father run a small bookshop (Chapter 1). Their lives change forever when William Darcy, CEO of Pemberley Books and Press, holidays in the neighbourhood (Chapter 1). Contrary to Austen's novel, however, it is Elizabeth who has a history with Miss Cherie Wickham, and it is William who fails to see Cherie's true nature (Chapters 13-7). In this chapter, I discuss how these alterations affect the representation of Elizabeth Bennet's "moral mind reading."

I will examine *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, and "Goodnight Elizabeth" through the lens of Philippe Hamon's theory on evaluation in narrative, on the one hand, and "theory of mind" and related discussions of character, on the other. When

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[1] I do so because it is debatable whether "arrogance" is an attitude or a character trait, or whether "disdain" is a feeling or an attitude.

[2] It is beyond the scope of this chapter to summarise the entire philosophical field of "metaethics," which has long tried to determine exactly what ethics is, or what happens when people make moral judgments (Crisp). The definition I use here, in other words, is a working definition. Most importantly, I want to distinguish my understanding of the term from Philippe Hamon's, who uses the term "ethics" to refer to every system from table manners to political systems and theories (*Texte* 107).

[3] Jack C., or Jack Caldwell, published this story as *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner: A Pride and Prejudice Farce* in 2013 with White Soup Press. Needless to say, my discussion focuses on the online version as it was posted on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*.

integrated, these narrative theories draw attention to textual points where evaluation, "mind reading," and character intersect. These points are not thrown into relief when characters are approached as fan objects, as Sara Gwenllian-Jones does in her influential discussion of character in fandom. In what follows, I bring narratological concepts to bear on Gwenllian-Jones's key assumption: the idea that, in the context of fandom, characterisation is a social process. More specifically, I compare textual points where evaluation, mind reading, and character come together in *Pride and Prejudice, Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner,* "Goodnight Elizabeth," and the comments of fan readers. I conclude that there is an important difference between Austen's novel and this complex of fan fiction and metatexts. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the characters' evaluations are couched in ethical terms that resonate with eighteenth-century Anglican discourses, such as "vanity," "pride," and "humility." This implies that the norms which ultimately make the behaviour of Austen's characters "right" or "wrong" are rooted in a tradition that transcends the individual. This does not mean that Austen's novel endorses traditional values without question. The behaviour of Elizabeth Bennet, for instance, poses a challenge to traditional discourses on gender. However, on a level of evaluation I call the "ethos" of the text, Austen's novel preserves a framework of core principles from Anglican ethics. These principles are presented as valuable standards for behaviour, since Austen's characters approach them as unquestionable truths and try, at least, to live by them. This makes the norms of Austen's novel fairly "absolute," in Vincent Jouve's sense of the word. Jouve defines "absolute" values as values that, according to the world view in which they are embedded, are issued by a transcendental "sender" such as "God, Fate, Providence, Morality, or Justice" (69). This makes them different from "relative" values, which are issued by immanent "senders" such as an individual's desire, interest, need, or cowardice (69). As my use of the word "fairly" suggests, I approach Jouve's concepts as the extremes of a continuum. While the norms of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* are situated closer to the "absolute" extreme, the norms used in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, "Goodnight Elizabeth," and reader comments are situated closer to the "relative" extreme. These texts still use phrases from canon that have "absolute" connotations. However, they also reframe those phrases, placing them in an "immanent" context. More than Austen's novel, they suggest that the "wrongness" or "rightness" of a character's behaviour depends on a wide range of circumstances. The narrators, characters, and readers typically evaluate the behaviour of the characters with reference to the characters' personal desires, to the different sets of guidelines that regulate various spheres of life, or, on a meta-level, to the way Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are "supposed" to behave according to the members of this fan community. This makes the ethical implications of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, "Goodnight Elizabeth," and the reader comments under discussion more relative than the "ethos" of *Pride and Prejudice*.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Evaluation, Characterisation, and Mind Reading

2.2.1.1 Evaluation in Narrative

In narratives, evaluations may be represented with a wide range of textual strategies. A good understanding of these textual strategies is needed to determine how *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, and "Goodnight Elizabeth" place demands on the reader. This is why I will first discuss Philippe Hamon's theory of evaluation. Hamon lays the foundations of this theory in *Introduction à l'analyse du descriptif* (1981), but he develops it most fully in *Texte et idéologie* (1984). There, he sets out to develop a "poetics of the norm": a set of practical concepts that are suited to the analysis of the relation between text and ideology (*Texte* 5-7). Hamon posits that some texts have an "ideological effect," because they construct "normative-evaluative systems" (20; "Text" 197). These systems "can appear and be localized in particular privileged *textual points*," which "function as intersections or normative focal points of the text" ("Text" 197; *Texte* 20). According to Hamon, the most important "points" are characters, because they tend to use normative-evaluative systems when they evaluate their world, and because they tend to be evaluated by similar standards:

> In a text, it is definitely the character-subject as agent and patient, as the anthropomorphic vehicle of a number of semantic 'effects', that is the point where ideologies and their normative systems first surface: there can only be a norm where there is a 'subject'. (*Texte*: 104, my translation)

Hamon compares characters to "junctions" or "motifs," because they are the points where ideological meanings tend to converge and become visible in the text (*Texte* 107). Very early on in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, for instance, Elizabeth is forced to re-evaluate her father. After Mr. Darcy's accident, Mr. Bennet does not perform his duties as a host. When his guest is lying on the ground, injured, he does not curb the amusement of Lydia and Kitty (Chapter 1). He refuses to share his best cognac to relieve Mr. Darcy's pain, and he openly mocks him when he hears that Mr. Darcy's horse was startled by the family's cat (Chapter 2). This behaviour shocks Elizabeth, and makes her revise some long-held beliefs:

> Her father she knew to be a sardonic observer of the human condition, always ready to laugh at the follies of others. Before today, she thought this wit was a sign of his intelligence. But his performance with the injured Mr. Darcy seemed that of a confirmed misanthrope. Why had she not seen this before? (Chapter 2)

In this passage, Elizabeth uses a norm to evaluate the behaviour of her father. Using Hamon's terminology, we can analyse this passage into the following elements:

> "Norme évaluante" or evaluating norm
>
> Intelligence (A'1) ← is better / worse than (R2) → misanthropy (A'2)
>
> ↑
>
> R1 – link established by Elizabeth ("évaluation")
>
> ↓
>
> Laughing at the folly ← is better / worse than (R2) → Laughing at Mr.
> of others (A1)   Darcy's injury (A2)
>
> "Procès évalué" or evaluated process
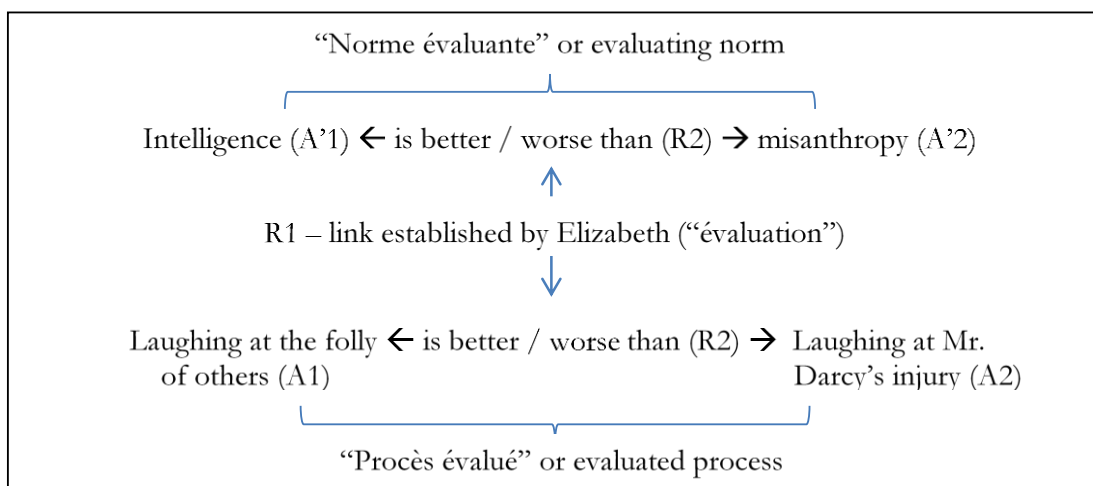
Figure 3: *based on Hamon,* Texte *21*

This textual point, which is linked to Elizabeth on the level of the storyworld, evokes just one of the norms that are used in Jack C.'s narrative.

Taking characters as a point of departure, Hamon delineates what you might call "evaluative competencies." He distinguishes between the ability to evaluate what one sees (*savoir-voir*), the way tools are used (*savoir-faire*), the way language is used (*savoir-dire*), and the way one acts in society (*savoir-vivre*) (*Texte* 24-5). These competencies come down to the knowledge and application of different sets of norms—aesthetic norms in the case of *savoir-voir*, technical norms in the case of *savoir-faire*, linguistic norms such as grammars in the case of *savoir-dire*, and social norms such as etiquette and ethics in the case of *savoir-vivre*.[4] Hamon defines the norms of *savoir-vivre* as follows:

> [E]ach time that a character acts in a collectivity, his relation to others can be regulated by rules of etiquette, laws, a civil code, hierarchies, precedences, alimentary taboos, table manners, rules of courtesy (appropriate/inappropriate, correct/incorrect, private / public, distinguished/vulgar, guilty/innocent, and so forth) which, assumed

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[4] I will not go into *savoir-voir*, *savoir-faire*, and *savoir-dire* because I believe that their scope is too narrow to cover every aspect of a character's "evaluative competence." Characters do not just evaluate the way one uses tools, for instance, but also other skills, such as the way they walk or sing or dance. However, for clarity's sake, I will illustrate Hamon's categories very briefly. The first category is the sphere of "*savoir-voir*." Hamon uses this term to refer to evaluations that pertain to someone's ability to perceive or enjoy things (*Texte* 24-5). During her tour of Pemberley, for instance, Elizabeth admires Mr. Darcy's taste in furniture, because it is "neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; . . . with less of splendor, and more real elegance, than the furniture of Rosings" (Austen, *Pride* 236). The second category is the sphere of "*savoir-dire*," which contains evaluations that concern the ability to use language. Here, the evaluating norms are linguistic or stylistic norms, such as grammatical correctness, comprehensibility, and so on (Hamon, *Texte* 24-5). Mr. Bingley remarks on Mr. Darcy's style of writing, for instance, saying that his friend rarely uses words of less than four syllables (Austen, *Pride* 47). The third category, which Hamon calls "*savoir-faire*," the evaluations pertain to practical skills, such as the ability to use tools (*Texte* 24). Lady Catherine de Bourgh is mildly positive about Elizabeth's ability to play the pianoforte, for instance, saying that she "would not play at all amiss, if she practised more, and could have the advantage of a London master," since she already has "a very good notion of fingering" (Austen, *Pride* 171-2).

by this or that character, have a discriminating effect on his actions and his ability to act in society, on his knowledge of the world. ("Text" 204; cf. *Texte* 107)

As this suggests, a character's behaviour in society may be influenced by or measured against a wide range of norms. I mention Hamon's examples here, because the category of *savoir-vivre* is the most relevant for my discussion. After all, as my introduction suggests, I home in on evaluations of the dispositions that cause characters to behave in a certain way towards others.

Hamon's theory also brings a number of textual strategies into focus that can be used to represent such evaluations. He notes, for instance, that evaluations on the level of *savoir-vivre* tend to be based on evaluations on the level of *savoir-voir*, *savoir-faire*, and *savoir-dire* (*Texte* 107). Using Elizabeth as a focaliser, for instance, the narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* notes that Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst have considerable "powers of conversation," since they can "describe an entertainment with accuracy, relate an anecdote with humour, and laugh at their acquaintance with spirit" (53). Here, the narrator does not just evaluate Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst's ability to use language; she also evaluates their ability to follow the social conventions of drawing room conversation (cf. Jouve 24-5). Notably, a character's evaluations can also become the subject of evaluation, for instance by the narrator. Indeed, it is entirely possible for "layers" of evaluation to qualify each other. After Elizabeth has walked all the way to Netherfield to check on Jane, for instance, Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst pronounce her to be "an excellent walker" (Austen, *Pride* 35-6). Stretching Hamon's concept of *savoir-faire* to include not just the use of tools, but actions in general, you could argue that the sisters give a positive evaluation of Elizabeth's action. Yet this is not actually the case because the "compliment" is framed by a negative evaluation of Elizabeth's *savoir-vivre*. Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst remark that Elizabeth's untidy hair and muddy clothes, and the fact that she went for a walk on her own, imply "an abominable sort of conceited independence, a most country town indifference to decorum" (36). While the Bingley sisters admit that Elizabeth's walk is quite a feat, in other words, they do not feel that it is "proper" or acceptable for a young lady in her situation to go for a long walk in the first place. This evaluation of Elizabeth's *savoir-vivre* is layered onto their evaluation of her walking prowess. The evaluation of the Bingley sisters is in turn evaluated by the other characters. These evaluations suggest that the remarks of Caroline Bingley and Mrs. Hurst reflect badly on *them*, because they cannot enter into Elizabeth's reasoning and see that Jane's well-being is more important to her than "decorum." Mr. Bingley remarks, for instance, that Elizabeth's behaviour "shews an affection for her sister that is very pleasing" (Austen, *Pride* 36). When Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are engaged, moreover, Elizabeth playfully points out that Mr. Darcy fell in love with her while he "knew no actual good of" her (359). In reply, Mr. Darcy asks if there was "no good in your affectionate behaviour to Jane, while she was ill at Netherfield" (360). This suggests that Mr. Darcy evaluates Elizabeth's behaviour using ethical norms, approaching her walk to Netherfield as a sign of "virtue" rather than a slip in decorum.

Hamon argues that every evaluation can be rephrased in "moral" terms (*Texte* 109). When this happens, the evocation of norms becomes the evocation of an "ideological effect." After all, the norms in question are connected to and situated in a larger system, such as the world view of a particular character. This new context may change the meaning of specific evaluations, in a process Hamon calls "rewriting évaluatif" (*Texte* 109). After Elizabeth has read Mr. Darcy's letter of defence in *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, she becomes convinced that her earlier evaluations of Mr. Darcy were coloured by "vanity" (201-2). For one thing, this changes the weight and meaning of the evaluations mentioned during her refusal of Mr. Darcy's hand in marriage. In an analysis of the text as a whole, "normative-evaluative systems" such as these are in turn related to the use of certain themes, character developments, and other textual elements. This leads to an interpretation of the sum total of the text's ideological effects. I will refer to this level, which is constructed by the analyst and therefore always a matter of interpretation, as the "ethos" of the text.

As my explanation suggests, a study of evaluation in narrative should not just focus on the text, but also on the reader. Like other structuralist narratologists, however, Hamon focuses mainly on "codes" that he believes are inherent to the text. He does not go into the reader's role in the construction of the text's ideological effects (cf. Herman and Vervaeck, *Handbook* 118-9). Several scholars, such as Vincent Jouve and Liesbeth Korthals-Altes, have recently tried to introduce this readerly perspective (Herman and Vervaeck, *Handbook* 120-1).[5] In the interests of coherence, however, I will recontextualise Hamon's theory with the cognitive perspective I developed in the previous chapter.[6] This perspective allows me to bridge the gap between the textual strategies I just discussed and the way in which characters and readers *experience* the storyworld, making Hamon's concepts better suited

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[5] This reflects a larger trend in narratology, namely an increased interest in the "mind." Over the past few decades, the mind has become a hot topic in narratology. As I have noted in my theoretical chapter, for instance, the mind is central to David Herman's shift from "story" to "storyworld." As I have explained, Herman defines the storyworld as a construct that is experienced by the characters and constructed by readers on the basis of the text (*Story* 13-22). Indeed, Herman argues that a text is only prototypically "narrative" when it offers a "blueprint" for "worldmaking," and when it foregrounds an experiencing consciousness within the world it evokes (*Basic* 76, 14, 105). Alan Palmer has made a similar argument. He believes that, while fictional texts contain many instructions for world-building, narratologists should pay special attention to "sets of instructions that relate to mental functioning" because, "in essence, narrative is the description of fictional mental functioning" (Palmer, *Fictional* 12). These theories are compatible with Fludernik's theory of experientiality (Chapter 1, Section 1.3.4.2).

[6] The "cognitive turn" in narratology has already shed new light on other concepts from classical narratology, such as the notion of "narrative situation." In narratology, this term is used to refer to any typology that describes the relation between the narrator, on the one hand, and the subject of his or her story, on the other. This includes the relation between the narrator and the characters. Franz K. Stanzel's "authorial narrative situation," for instance, includes a narrator who is very visible and very knowledgeable about the storyworld, to the extent that he or she can read the characters' thoughts and unconsciousness (Jahn, "Narrative" 364). Similiarly, Mieke Bal has argued that any narrative situation can be described with the formula "X relates that Y sees that Z does" (Jahn, "Frames" 443). Manfred Jahn has reconceptualised models such as these, arguing that they actually describe cognitive templates that the reader uses to make sense of narrative texts, in the manner of Minsky's frames (Jahn, "Frames" 443-4). I want to reconceptualise Philippe Hamon's "structuralist" categories of evaluation in a similar way.

for an analysis of fan fiction. In "Plot, Morality, and Folk Psychology Research," Bart Keunen argues that such evaluations as moral judgments are part and parcel of what David Herman calls "modeling procedures" (179; Herman, "Storied" 64). This suggests that concepts like Hamon's evaluating norm, evaluated process, and hierarchical relations actually describe very basic assumptions about the way in which people make evaluations. This "schema" shapes both the representation of evaluations in narrative texts, such as Elizabeth's evaluation of Mr. Bennet in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, and the reader's interpretation of that representation. I argue, in other words, that narrative texts contain textual cues that are based on a "schema" that is structured as Hamon describes, and that these cues activate a similar "schema" in the reader's imagination. Finally, in the reader's imagination, this "schema" is fleshed out with specific norms, specific subjects of evaluation, and specific hierarchical relations. When a passage of fan fiction text contains cues that relate to an evaluation, fan readers will construct a "contextual frame" that contains the character's act of evaluation, and they will use general knowledge about evaluations to reconstruct that act. These form the basis for the fan reader's understanding of "ideological effects," and even of the "ethos" of the entire text. At every turn, moreover, the fan reader's interpretation may be influenced by the "discourse domain" that is constantly being established and revised by the fan community. Ultimately, in short, the fan fiction text's "ethos" is shaped by the reader, the text, and the context.

2.2.1.2 Evaluation and Characterisation

I want to place Hamon's theory in the context of studies of character and characterisation. I believe evaluations do not just offer clues about the "ethos" of a text, but also about the characters themselves. More specifically, evaluations and evaluations of evaluations help to create the character's "mimetic" meaning, which may form the foundation for the character's "thematic" meaning. The meaning that makes up a character is "mimetic" when it helps to create the illusion that the character is as complete as a "real" person. This meaning becomes "thematic" when it can be related to a larger idea, or theme.[7] On a

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[7] As these terms suggest, my discussion is related to James Phelan's discussion of character in *Reading People, Reading Plots*. I prefer not to use Phelan's categories, however, because I am more interested in the effect that the text has on the reader than in the intentions of the author. Taking a rhetorical approach to narrative, Phelan sees the text as an artistic whole that is created by an author, according to particular principles (Phelan 10). In *Reading People, Reading Plots*, he argues that characters have "attributes" (9). These are character traits that are charged with potential, because they *may* add something to the development of the character in three spheres of meaning: the "mimetic," the "thematic," and the "synthetic" (9). On the "mimetic" level, the character is a person (11). It is the author's aim, in other words, to create the illusion that the character is a person who is really telling a story, who is actually addressing an audience, who is really acting in a particular situation, and so on. On the "thematic" level, the character is representative of an idea (12-3). The author uses the characters, as well other elements, to prove that a certain idea is true, to make a claim about a particular issue, and so on. On the "synthetic" level, finally, the character is a textual construct (14). This means the author tries to present a particular selection of

mimetic level, evaluations hint at one aspect of the "minds" of characters.[8] If readers have enough evaluations, and evaluations of evaluations, they may come to an understanding of the character's "evaluative competence"—that is, of the dispositions that cause characters to make particular evaluations. This is why I believe it is worthwhile to place my discussion of evaluation in the context of Alan Palmer's work on "fictional minds." Like the postclassical narratologists I discussed in the previous chapter, Palmer believes that narrative texts contain "instructions" that enable the reader to reconstruct storyworlds (*Fictional* 34, 12). Unlike David Herman or Catherine Emmott, however, he focuses on one set of instructions, arguing that "the most important sets of instructions . . . are those that govern the reader's understanding of the workings of characters' minds" (34, 12). Most importantly, Palmer argues that readers make sense of textual representations of a character's mind with a "continuing consciousness frame" (175). He posits that

> [t]he reader collects together all of the isolated references to a specific proper name in a particular text and constructs a consciousness that continues in the spaces between the various mentions of that character. . . . A character frame is established on meeting them or hearing of them for the first time (this is top-down). It is then fed by specific information about the character from the text (this is bottom-up). The reader then sets up some initial hypotheses (top-down) that are modified by further information (bottom-up) and so further refined and so on. (176)

In the "top-down" stages of this process, "frames, scripts, and preference rules" provide "the defaults that fill the gaps in the storyworld" and supply "the presuppositions that enable the reader to construct continually conscious minds from the text" (176). I believe that, in the case of characters like Elizabeth Bennet, Palmer's continuing consciousness frame contains an idea of the character's "evaluative competence," reconstructed by means of general knowledge about evaluations and inferences based on the "contextual frames" in which specific acts of evaluation take place. This "mimetic" morsel of meaning may be related to a larger idea, which adds a "thematic" dimension to the character. Marilyn Butler has argued, for instance, that the development of Austen's Mr. Darcy (and Elizabeth for that matter) is ultimately meant to convey an abstract, moral lesson about "the sin of pride, obnoxious to the Christian, which takes the form of a complacency about the self and a correspondingly lower opinion, or prejudice, about others" (206; see Section 2.3.1). That

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properties in a particular way to achieve a particular effect. The exact nature and reasons for Mr. Darcy's transformation only becomes clear, for instance, when he explains it briefly to Elizabeth towards the end of the novel (Austen, *Pride* 346-351, 359- 361). This draws attention to the fact that "Mr. Darcy" is actually constructed by the text. My understanding of "thematic" and "mimetic" is similar to Phelan's, but they are more closely focused on the reading experience than on the author's design.

[8] Following Alan Palmer, I use the term "mind" to refer to "all aspects of our inner life: not just cognition and perception, but also dispositions, feelings, beliefs, and emotions" (Palmer, *Fictional* 19). By this definition, the mind is related to, but not exactly the same as "character" (19). This is why I approach Elizabeth as a "mind-reader."

is, she fits specific character traits into an argument about the "ethos" of Austen's text. I believe that the characters of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and "Goodnight Elizabeth" are underpinned by a different "thematic" meaning because they are shaped by, and help to maintain, a different discourse domain than Austen's novel.

2.2.1.3 Mind Reading

One "default setting" of the continuing consciousness frame is the assumption that "characters will think and act in certain fundamental respects like real people" (Palmer, *Social* 11). Not in the least, this includes the assumption that characters, like real people, try to read minds (49). In the cognitive sciences, the term "mind reading" or "theory of mind" is used to refer to the type of reasoning Elizabeth Bennet uses when she tries to figure out why Mr. Darcy behaves the way he does (Zunshine 277). This reasoning is part of "our standard, everyday, unthinking, 'commonsense' assumptions about how our minds and the minds of others work" (Palmer, *Fictional* 244). This basic understanding of the mind helps us infer the reasons behind the actions of other people: the thoughts, beliefs, feelings, hopes, dreams, desires, or intentions that make them take "intelligent action" (Herman, "Storied" 41). Mind reading often goes hand in hand with evaluation. Indeed, Bart Keunen has argued that "moralistic judgments—that is, judgments of others' conduct in terms of systems of moral norms—often constitute the basis for attributing motivational drives behind the others' actions" ("Plot" 179). This is why it is worthwhile to study evaluation and mind reading together.

These assumptions also shape the way in which characters "read" each other in narratives, and the way in which we, as readers, read them in turn. Consider, for example, the first meeting of Elizabeth and William in Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth." While William is immediately fascinated by Elizabeth's fine eyes and beauty, she thinks he is a pompous, condescending "stick-in-the-mud" (Chapter 1, 2). Elizabeth bases this evaluation on the way he behaves during their first meeting. She gets the impression that he is boasting (because he talks about his "grand" gardens at Pemberley), that he is "lecturing" her (because he tells her not to pull grass out of a lawnmower while the machine is still running) and his "stern brow" suggests that he is not too pleased when her dog muddies his pants (Chapter 1). She concludes that he is "haughty," "stubborn," that he does not have "a good sense of humour," and that he is not "nice" (Chapter 1). This is an instance of "mind reading," because Elizabeth draws conclusions about the dispositions that seem to cause William's behaviour ("haughty," does not have "a good sense of humour," "stubborn," "not nice"). Readers who are familiar with *Pride and Prejudice* may conclude, in turn, that Elizabeth is judgmental and has a tendency to jump to conclusions, because her conclusions are based on very little evidence. These readers are ultimately proved right: in Karen Apenhorst's story, William later attributes his behaviour during this first meeting to shyness:

He was often uncomfortable among strangers, and at that moment Elizabeth had thrown him wholly off guard. He would freeze, build up a quite strong wall around him, and try to go unnoticed. By seeing him as such most people concluded him to be extremely proud and arrogant. Proud he may have been, but arrogant he most certainly was not. (Chapter 4)

Both the characters and the reader, in short, "read minds."

2.2.2 Character and Fan Object: Immersion and Interactivity

By recontextualising Hamon's concepts, it becomes possible to involve both the "immersive" aspect of fan fiction (that is, the fact that fan readers reconstruct the world that is evoked by the fan fiction text in imagination) and the "interactive" aspect of fan fiction (that is, the fact that fan readers "reactualise" that world by referring to it in reader comments) in my analysis. First, the recontextualised version of Hamon draws attention to textual cues that are related to evaluations, but it also leaves open the possibility that those textual cues—or the storyworld's "blueprint"—can be interpreted or imagined in different ways. This is the case, for instance, when the narrator describes an evaluation but does not clearly state the evaluating norm of that judgment. Second, this version of Hamon's theory is compatible with fan fiction studies that assume source worlds, and source characters in particular, are "open." There are only a few studies in which this insight is worked into character models that are practical enough to use in a textual analysis of fan fiction texts. Even fewer are related to moral mind reading.[9] I will focus, therefore, on Sara Gwenllian-Jones's analysis of the "star text" of the title character of *Xena: Warrior Princess* ("Starring" 17). I have noted that Gwenllian-Jones analyses the reading and writing processes that surround Xena into six "stages" of "knowledge and interpretative possibility" (17; see Section 1.3.4.3). I will discuss four of these categories.[10]

- *Competencies:* this category refers to the the range of Xena's abilities (18). These competences and incompetences determine what she can do and how she is likely to react, in particular circumstances (18).

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[9]I will not discuss analyses such as Deborah Kaplan's ("Construction") and Sheenagh Pugh's here because they are grounded in structuralist narratology and, therefore, less suited to an analysis of fictional minds and mind reading. As Uri Margolin has noted, the two main structuralist models of character either reduce characters to their function in the plot or to their role as character-narrators (Margolin 844-5). When Gérard Genette defines a character as an intradiegetic narrator, for instance, he actually reduces that character to its role as a speaker. The character becomes little more than one of the voices through which the narrative is formulated. This is why analyses like those of Deborah Kaplan and Sheenagh Pugh have their limits.

[10] I have decided not to use Gwenllian-Jones's distinction between "background" and "real-time" hard data because this distinction is problematic (cf. Leavenworth and Isaksson 53) and not really relevant to a discussion of evaluation, mind reading, and character.

- *Themes and motifs: Xena: Warrior Princess* features a number of "*motifs--* betrayal, vengeance, self-sacrifice, conflicts of good and evil--through which fundamental questions of human identity and experience can be explored" (18). Xena's star text is used to explore such issues, both on the programme itself and in fan culture (18).

- *Behaviour, Ethics, and Psychology:* fans use their knowledge of the series and their "interpretive and imaginative skills" to reconstruct and develop a psychological profile of Xena, an "interior self" (18). This profile explains why Xena does what she does (18). It is this aspect that inspires the most intense instances of "fan engagement and speculation" (18).

- *Erotics:* it is unclear whether the main characters of *Xena: Warrior Princess*, Xena and Gabrielle, share a bond of sisterly or romantic love (19). This ambiguity invites speculation on the part of fans, who love to spot subtextual moments and try to fill the gaps (19).

In the textual points that are the focus of this chapter, an intersection is created between the character's "competencies," "behaviour, ethics, and psychology," and even "erotics" and "themes and motifs." When Elizabeth Bennet concludes that Mr. Darcy's "disposition must be dreadful" (Austen, *Pride* 79), for instance, that claim implies something about her competencies (because she is mistaken about Mr. Darcy and, therefore, not as good at reading minds as she likes to think), about her behaviour (because it is an instance of her habit to read and evaluate the minds of other characters), her ethics (because her claim is underpinned by a normative-evaluative system), and about her psychology (because, ultimately, this claim is a reflection of Elizabeth's thoughts and beliefs). Additionally, it implies something about her relationship with Mr. Darcy (because it indicates that her dislike for the man deepens), and it may contribute something to the motifs and themes of the novel (for instance, the motif of "misreading," or the theme of "pride"). My theoretical framework helps to throw these points of overlap into relief and makes it easier to determine how they are grounded in the text.

The recontextualised version of Hamon's theory also allows me to analyse a specific aspect of Gwenllian-Jones's "interpretative" possibility: they make it possible to analyse instances of evaluation, mind reading, and characterisation that occur in reader comments. Fan readers may do more than simply imagine a storyworld on the basis of the text: they may also have their own opinion about the characters' mind reading skills, and express it in reader comments. It can be argued, therefore, that in the case of online fan fiction, "characterisation" is a process that happens both in the fan fiction text itself and in the process of "productive" reception. Jack C.'s *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, for instance, contains traditional instances of characterisation, such as the narrator's claim that Elizabeth prides herself "on her discernment and wit" (Chapter 1). Yet fan readers also engage in what you might call metacharacterisation: they isolate, define, and evaluate character traits they

find in the main text, whether those character traits belong to Jack C.'s Elizabeth or to Austen's Elizabeth. As I will discuss in greater detail below, for instance, several fans were damning about the "evaluative competence" of Jack C.'s Elizabeth after they read the narrative's second "Hunsford" (see Section 2.3.2.3).

This does not mean that there are no differences between characterisation and metacharacterisation. Even in the case of fan fiction texts, the author and the reader do not have the same level of authority over the text. Alexandra Elisabeth Herzog has noted, for instance, that fan writers use various types of Author's Notes "to assert their status as firmly empowered transformers of the source text," performing anything from "intensely collaborative" to "firmly prescriptive, models of authorship" (1.3). Jack C. typically uses his Author's Notes and other metatexts to assert his authority over the text, for instance. He points out that his story is meant to be a farce and, therefore, that his characters are not meant to be faithful to canon. He also defends his interpretation of *Pride and Prejudice*, and refuses to be persuaded by other readings (Jack C., "A word"). He believes that Austen's Elizabeth changes more than Austen's Mr. Darcy, while most other fans argue that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy both change ("A word"). This authority is rarely disputed by other fans. Even fan readers who are frustrated by Jack's representation of Elizabeth accept that *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* is Jack's story (and point out that fan writers can ultimately do what they want) ("A word"). Even when you keep these complex power relations in mind, however, it is reductive to say that the instances of characterisation in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and meta-characterisation in reader comments are two very different things, and should be approached as two completely separate phenomena. I believe there is a nexus between a text and its reader comments where interpretive conventions about characters are defined, confirmed, qualified, and refuted. [11] As I have explained in my theoretical chapter, the creative licence of fan authors is always restricted by the canon and by fantextual conventions (see Section 1.3.1). In my case studies, therefore, I will compare the way in which instances of evaluation and mind-reading from *Pride and Prejudice* are represented in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and "Goodnight Elizabeth," as well as the reader comments to those texts.

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[11] Bronwen Thomas has argued that, on online forums like the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, narrative becomes a "participatory process" because writers and readers engage with each other and with the text as the story unfolds ("Update" 205, 208). In some cases, reader comments even influence the way in which the story progresses (205). In an Author's Note to chapter sixteen of *Somebody's Natural Daughter*, for instance, Allison OM writes that she kept the previous reactions of her readers in mind when she wrote the chapter (Chapter 16). Such explicit acknowledgements are relatively rare in the corpus of this study, however, so it is difficult to determine how much influence fan readers really have over fan authors. Pugh believes that fan writers feel that they ultimately "write what *they* want to write," precisely because they are "part of the same fan community as their readers," and, therefore, share many of their preferences (229). The fact that fans' understanding of canon keeps changing (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 7), however, indicates that there is room for negotiation in the community. This why I believe that, on a more general level, reader comments help to create and negotiate conventions about characterisation on a number of levels.

2.3 Evaluation, Characterisation, and Mind Reading in *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, and "Goodnight Elizabeth"

2.3.1 Individual Fulfilment and the "Established" Social Order

I have noted that the "ethos" of a text is a matter of interpretation and, therefore, subject to debate. This is very striking in the case of *Pride and Prejudice*. In *Jane Austen: Two Centuries of Criticism*, Laurence W. Mazzeno gives a historical overview of scholarly approaches to Jane Austen and her novels. His objective, however, is twofold:

> First, of course, it is an attempt to see how Austen has fared as the object of critical inquiry. But second, it is, in postmodern critical terms, intended to gaze at the gazers, to examine the philosophical and critical premises from which critics have approached Austen and her fiction to reveal something of their methods and motives. (2)

The issue of ethos is central to what Laurence W. Mazzeno calls the "Great Austen Controversy" (2). This debate, which has been raging for the better part of two centuries, revolves around the following question: did Jane Austen "believe in the moral values and social structure of Regency England, or was she using her considerable wit and talent for storytelling for subversive purposes?" (2). I believe it is more accurate to reformulate this question as: do Jane Austen's novels endorse the moral values and social structures of Regency England, or do they subvert them? This "Controversy" shows that the "ethos" of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* can, and has been, interpreted in several ways. Indeed, Claudia L. Johnson notes that

> Austen has contrived *Pride and Prejudice* in such a way that virtually every argument about it can be undercut with a built-in countervailing argument, a qualifying 'on the other hand' which forestalls conclusiveness. (*Women* 77)

Several Austen scholars disagree, for instance, whether the individual fulfilment that is shown in *Pride and Prejudice* is conservative or subversive. In *Character and Conflict in Jane Austen's Novels* (1978), Bernard J. Paris points out that *Pride and Prejudice* represents both individual and social concerns:

> Jane Austen's usual practice is to look at individuals from the point of view of society and to criticize those who follow their own will or who deviate from a rigid code of manners and morality. *Pride and Prejudice* tends to look at society from the point of view of the individual and to criticize those institutions, conventions, and values which hamper intercourse and obstruct happiness. (97)

He does not believe, however, that Austen's novel endorses the one more than the other. Instead, he concludes that Austen "attempts to strike a delicate balance between the necessity of prudence, decorum, and social responsibility on the one hand, and the desirability of self-expression, spontaneity, and personal fulfillment on the other" (103). Ultimately, he says, Austen tries to find a happy medium, criticising both excessive forms of individualism and an extreme adherence to social institutions, conventions, and values (103).

Other Austen scholars occupy a different position in this "Controversy." Several scholars have argued, for instance, that Jane Austen's novels are shaped by a Christian, or Anglican, ethics.[12] By this, I mean a system that defines the notions of "right" and "wrong" from a Christian or Anglican point of view—associating them, not just with feelings like guilt and shame, but also with notions like "virtue" and "sin," and extensive justifications for its particular hierarchy of norms and values based on a wide range of religious and theological writings. They are associated, in other words, with a collectively developed, traditional world view.[13] In *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (1975), for instance, Marilyn Butler argues that Austen's "manner as a novelist is broadly that of the conservative Christian moralist of the 1790s" (164). As I have noted, she believes that *Pride and Prejudice* ultimately deals with "the sin of pride, obnoxious to the Christian, which takes the form of a complacency about the self and a correspondingly lower opinion, or prejudice, about others" (206). She argues that this idea is thrown into relief by the similarities between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. Unlike Jane and Mr. Bingley, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are both satirical observers of others, and they are reluctant to change their minds once they have decided to criticise someone (Mr. Darcy in Elizabeth's case, Mr. Wickham in Mr. Darcy's case) (205, 210-1). More importantly, however, they are also both uncritical of themselves:

> Darcy's theory of human nature implies a curiously blended attitude towards his own: in theory he admits he is fallible, but the real impression left is one of pride. For Elizabeth, too, the quality that goes with severity about others is complacency towards the self. (205)

In Butler's view, Elizabeth's tendency to observe other people—to read and evaluate minds—is used on the level of the text's "ethos" to advocate social relations that are

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[12] As early as 1966, for instance, Gilbert Ryle associated Jane Austen's representation of the mind with the Christian morality of the third Earl of Shaftesbury (Miles 16, 17).

[13] I believe the norms that underpin table manners are similar to ethical values, in the sense that they are issued by "society," are part of a system of values, and are associated with feelings like "shame." However, the argument that is meant to explain why some behaviour is "good" ("elegant," "sophisticated") and other behaviour is "bad" ("vulgar," "common") is couched in a different discourse. Table manners differ from the norms of the Christian ethics I have mentioned because they are not associated with notions like "virtue" and "sin," or the world view that gives these terms their moral weight. Most importantly, table manners are not usually considered to be God-given. As such, they seem to be less "absolute" than Christian norms. Following Vincent Jouve, I will refer to the norms in this grey area as "relative," immanent norms (see Section 2.1).

governed by Christian principles. The novel suggests, in other words, that the best attitude towards others is underpinned by the modesty and charitable nature of Jane and Bingley, on the one hand, and the perceptiveness and the "pessimistic view of human liability to err" of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, on the other (212). Butler concludes that, the closer one examines *Pride and Prejudice*, "the more difficult it becomes to read into it authorial approval of the element in Elizabeth which is rebellious"—that is, the element that, according to other theorists, makes her into "a heroine who champions individualism against the old social order" (203). Ultimately, these "rebellious" elements are an accepted part of a traditional, Christian discourse.

Claudia L. Johnson makes a countervailing argument in *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (1988). She first notes that it is true that *Pride and Prejudice* appears to confirm a number of "conservative myths" that suggest "established forms cherished rather than prohibited true liberty, sustained rather than disrupted real happiness, and safeguarded rather than repressed individual merit" (74). However, she believes that *Pride and Prejudice* actually contains a new "conservative myth," because it transforms other myths in such a way "that they are made to accommodate what could otherwise be seen as subversive impulses and values," turning the myths themselves into "vehicles of incisive social criticism" (75). Elizabeth's "'improper' rambles, conceit, and impertinence" are only a couple of examples of these subversive elements (77). More generally, Johnson argues that the characters of *Pride and Prejudice* pursue personal happiness. The reader is invited to "consider what pleases or, conversely, what vexes and mortifies them," and "to assess the quality and durability of their happiness" (80). This technique is closely related to the text's "ideological effects":

> Austen's care to establish the standards of her characters' happiness provides us with an index to their moral imaginations, tempers, and resources that enables us to engage in judicious moral evaluation without resorting to the conclusive moralizing characteristic of some of her contemporaries. (*Women* 80-1)

Johnson does not believe that the novel presents Elizabeth's pride as a "sin," measuring it by the "orthodox" moral norms "expounded in sermons and conduct books"; rather, she argues that the novel honours pride to some extent (83). In wounding Elizabeth's self-esteem Mr. Darcy also takes away her happiness (83). Ultimately, his development confirms that "to be guilty of hauteur is to deprive people of a pleasing sense of self-esteem that it is legitimate for them to have" (84). Similarly, "the pursuit of happiness privileges private judgment and invites a degree of autonomy of which more conservative novelists were suspicious" (84). Elizabeth only gets away with this, however, because her standards for happiness and her decisions are more sociable—that is, better attuned to the existing social structure—than, say, her sister Lydia's (84). Ultimately, "Austen's attempt to reform gentry myths in *Pride and Prejudice* entailed consenting to most of their basic outlines," and leaving "the social structure . . . substantially intact" (89, 88). This means that, in the end,

there is a synthesis of subversion and conservation in her representation of "marriage," "family," "class relations," and other traditional social categories (89). Johnson concludes that Austen's novel turns "established forms" into "the purveyors of ecstatic personal happiness," because it only

> consents to conservative myths . . . in order to possess them and to ameliorate them from within, so that the institutions they vindicate can bring about, rather than inhibit, the expansion and fulfillment of happiness. (92-3)

Unlike Paris and Butler, in short, she believes that the balancing act of *Pride and Prejudice* still implies a degree of social criticism.

In this dissertation, I will not try to end this "Controversy." I will not, in other words, try to determine whether the behaviour of Austen's characters is conservative or subversive or both, or whether *Pride and Prejudice* contains a traditional or a modified conservative myth. Indeed, like Claudia L. Johnson, I believe this to be impossible. As I have noted, I am using Jane Austen's novel as a point of contrast that helps to reveal the peculiarities of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, "Goodnight Elizabeth," and other fan fiction texts. This is why I will examine how these texts represent the fundamental harmony between individuals and traditional institutions that, according to Paris, Butler, and Johnson alike, is depicted in *Pride and Prejudice*.

2.3.2   From Moral Mind Reading to Individualised Mind Reading

2.3.2.1   "Hunsford"

As I have noted, I will home in on a moment that is known in the Austen fandom as "Hunsford." In its narrowest sense, the term "Hunsford" refers to Mr. Darcy's first proposal and Elizabeth refusal. In some cases, its meaning is even more narrow, because it is also used to refer to Hunsford parsonage—the rectory where Austen sets the first proposal (Austen, *Pride* 69, 184-9). This is suggested, for instance, by the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index*. There, the word is used in thematic search categories to refer to the proposal scene in general (e.g. in "London winter (pre-Hunsford) meetings" and "Immediate post-Hunsford altered resolutions") and to the setting (e.g. in "First meeting at Hunsford, not Meryton" and "Altered persons/events at Hunsford/Rosings before proposal") (*Jaffindex.com*, "Thematic"). In its broadest sense, however, the term "Hunsford" is used to refer to the proposal as a watershed moment in the development of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth.[14] The term occurs on the boards of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* in the verb

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[14] Notably, the term is used more often to refer to Mr. Darcy's development than Elizabeth's development. *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and "Goodnight Elizabeth" are exceptions to this rule, so I will focus on Elizabeth's development.

form "to Hunsfordize" along with variants such as "Hunsfordizing" and an "un-/non-/partially Hunsfordized Darcy." One reader of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* notes, for instance, that a central confrontation between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy is "Hunsford-like," not so much because Mr. Darcy is confronted with Elizabeth's disapproval, but also because Elizabeth becomes aware of her own blindness (comments to Chapter 17). This is suggested by Jack C.'s reading of *Pride and Prejudice*: he argues that it is "Lizzy that gets hit over the head at Hunsford. Her vaunted ability to read people is proven to be off-kilter, especially where it comes to Darcy" ("A word"). This implies that Jack C.'s "Hunsford" also includes the moment when Elizabeth reads Mr. Darcy's letter, the day after the first proposal. In much the same way, one reader of "Goodnight Elizabeth" remarks that some implausible elements, such as William's blind faith in Cherie Wickham and the tone of Elizabeth's letter, can be explained by the fact that Karen Apenhorst "needed an argument, a Hunsford, and Wickham as the focal point for it" (comments to Chapters 15 and 16).

It is remarkable that *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and "Goodnight Elizabeth" have a "Hunsford." As I have noted, these two fan fiction texts do not follow the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* to the letter. This makes them different from "elseworlds"—that is, stories that set the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* in a different world. In such stories, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth undergo the same development as Austen's characters, simply because the plot is exactly the same. This is not necessarily true for narratives like *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and "Goodnight Elizabeth." Yet both of these fan fiction texts have a Hunsford-like moment. This is also true for many other "what ifs." Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*, for instance, seems to step around a "Hunsford" at first, but the narrative's plot is actually built up in such a way that Mr. Darcy ultimately goes through the same development. In *Nothing Wanting*, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy come to an understanding much sooner because Colonel Fitzwilliam tells Elizabeth the truth about Mr. Wickham (Chapter 1, 2). He also informs Mr. Darcy that Elizabeth does not think he is a gentleman before his cousin has the chance to propose (Chapter 1, 2). Elizabeth is confronted with her own gullibility, and Mr. Darcy realises how conceited he has been (Chapter 2). As a consequence, they become engaged much sooner (Chapter 3). This watered-down version of Austen's "Hunsford" is only a prelude, however. After the marriage, Mr. Darcy believes his aunt's slanderous claims about Elizabeth. When he learns that Lady Catherine has lied to him, and hears Elizabeth's side of the story, he feels unworthy of the woman he married and curses his foolishness, his temper, and his pride (Chapter 21). There is also a similar, double "Hunsford" in Jan H's *The Child.* In this story, Mr. Darcy goes abroad after his failed proposal (Chapter 3). As in canon, Lydia elopes with Mr. Wickham, only to be abandoned when she becomes pregnant (Chapter 3). Two years later, Mr. Darcy sees Elizabeth Bennet again in London with Lydia's child, and when he finds out what has happened, he tries to bribe Mr. Wickham into taking responsibility for his actions (Chapter 1-5). Although this story is set after Austen's "Hunsford," Mr. Darcy comes to realise that he has not changed as much as he had thought, because he inflicted Mr. Wickham on the Bennet family (Chapter 15, 16). The fact that

"what ifs" tend to feature a "Hunsford" suggests that, for the fans of this community at least, the development of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth is generally considered to be essential to, or characteristic of, the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice*. Still, as I will demonstrate in the following sections, this does not mean that fan fiction texts represent Elizabeth's development in the same way as Austen.

2.3.2.2 "Hunsford" in *Pride and Prejudice*

In this chapter and the next, I will examine how Austen's characters, and especially Elizabeth Bennet, approach the norms that regulate *savoir-vivre*. I will home in on Christian norms in this chapter, and discuss other "manners" in the second. I choose to focus on Christian norms first because the arguments of Butler and Johnson provide a good point of entry for such a discussion. After all, their arguments suggest that Austen's characters are able to find personal happiness even though—or perhaps because—they make their behaviour accord with an established, Christian ethics. If we look at this conclusion from Butler's perspective, Austen's novel demonstrates that the ethics of eighteenth-century Christianity leave room for "standards of happiness" that bring true and lasting personal happiness. If we look at it from Johnson's perspective, *Pride and Prejudice* shows that Christian ethics *can* accommodate such standards, while still leaving the "basic outline" of its principles intact. To clarify and refine this idea, I will discuss textual points where evaluation, mind reading, and character intersect. These will help me to determine how "thick" moral concepts such as "pride," "vanity," or "humility" are used in Austen's novel. The term "thick" moral concept was coined by moral philosopher Bernard Williams to refer to such concepts as "treachery, loyalty, usury, and courage" (Keunen, "Plot" 178). These concepts are more complex than "thin" moral concepts, such as "right" or "good," because they carry more meaning (178). Like Butler, I believe that some of this meaning derives from the ethics of eighteenth-century Anglicanism. As I will demonstrate, however, Austen's narrator does not explicity point out that "pride" and "vanity" are sins, or that humility is a "virtue." Instead, she refers repeatedly to concepts that have similar, ethical connotations. This invites the reader to interpret the characters' evaluations in ethical terms. On the level of the text as a whole, these ethical evaluations frame and reaffirm each other. Since Austen's novel is focalised through Elizabeth, I will demonstrate this with textual points that are related to her character.

Elizabeth is characterised in great detail in *Pride and Prejudice*, both by the narrator, by the other characters, and by Elizabeth herself. These characterisations often include evaluations, particularly about Elizabeth's ability to "read" the minds of others. In the first chapter of *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, Mr. Bennet tells his wife that their daughters are "all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters" (Austen, *Pride* 7; cf. 59). That is why he wants to "throw in a good word" for Elizabeth when he writes to give Mr. Bingley—a man he has never met—permission to marry his daughters (6). Although Mr. Bennet is sarcastic about his *carte blanche*, his

statement clearly sets up a norm by which Elizabeth and her sisters are measured. Mr. Bennet contrasts the personalities of Lydia, Kitty, Mary, and Jane (who are just "silly and ignorant") with the personality of Elizabeth (who also has some "quickness"). In the process, he also establishes a hierarchical relation in which "quickness" is valued more highly than "silliness and ignorance."[15]


"Norme évaluante" or evaluating norm

Quickness (A'1) ← is better / worse than (R2) → Silliness/ignorance (A'2)

↑

R1 – link established by Mr. Bennet ("évaluation")

↓

Elizabeth (A1) ← is better / worse than (R2) → Jane, Mary, Kitty, Lydia (A2)

"Procès évalué" or evaluated process
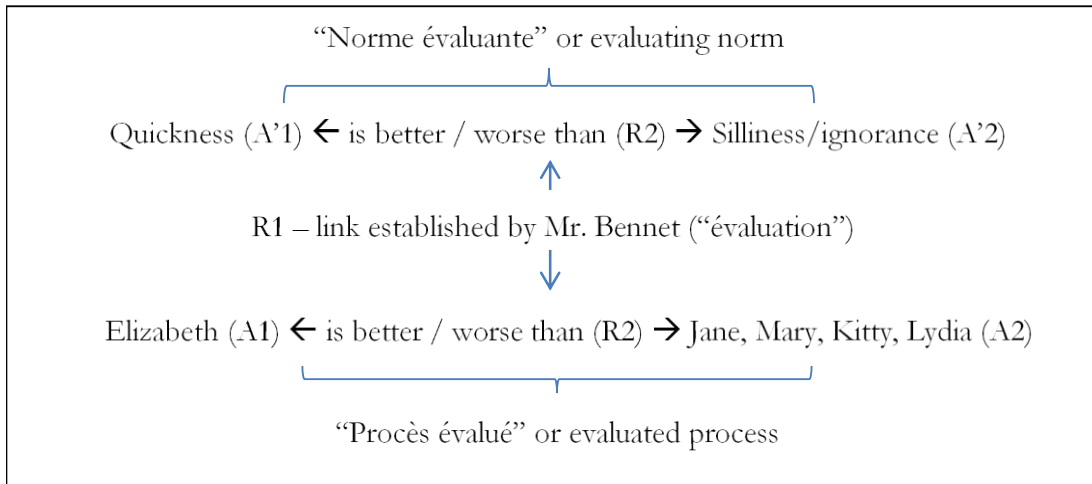
Figure 4: based on Hamon, Texte *21*

Here, he is evaluating Elizabeth's perceptiveness. Although the word "quickness" was used in the early nineteenth century to typify sensations, speech, movements, and emotions, Mr. Bennet seems to use it to capture the "liveliness" of Elizabeth's mind, or her acuteness ("Quickness"). This is confirmed by the rest of the novel, because the narrator later links Elizabeth's liveliness to her perceptiveness, especially with regard to other people. Associating Elizabeth's discernment with a number of other character traits, the narrator tells the reader that Elizabeth is light-hearted and satirical when she observes others. After Mr. Darcy has insulted Elizabeth at the Meryton assembly for instance, the narrator tells us that she recounts his insult "with great spirit" among her friends, because she has a "lively, playful disposition, which delighted in any thing ridiculous" (14).

From the very first, the narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* also evaluates Elizabeth's "evaluative competence," by which I mean the abilities and inclinations that shape her evaluations of other people. When Elizabeth and Jane discuss their first impressions of the Bingley sisters after the Meryton assembly, for instance, we are told that Elizabeth has "more quickness of observation" than her sister and "less pliancy of temper" (Austen, *Pride* 17). As a consequence, she is "little disposed" to like the sisters, who had a pleasant conversation with Jane but whose "behaviour at the assembly had not been calculated to please in general" (17). This evaluation is confirmed by the narrator, who says that they are

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[15] Notably, Mrs. Bennet immediately adds a different "normative-evaluative system" when she replies that "Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good humoured as Lydia" (Austen, *Pride* 7). Mrs. Bennet's statement evokes a normative-evaluative system in which "more" beauty and vivacity are better than "less" beauty and vivacity (and, it is implied, intelligence).

"proud and conceited," and only good humoured and "agreeable" when they choose to be (17). In these passages, the narrator seems to give a positive evaluation of Elizabeth's ability to "read" other people. This is not entirely the case, however. The narrator also points out that Elizabeth's "judgment" is "too unassailed by any attention to herself" to be disposed to approve of the Bingley sisters (17). This already suggests that Elizabeth, for all her perceptiveness, is not entirely immune to flattery.

This tension between Elizabeth's tendency to read and evaluate "minds" and her bias is hinted at throughout the novel. When Elizabeth goes to Netherfield to nurse her sister back to health, several events show that she prides herself on her "discernment" (Austen, *Pride* 201-2). Elizabeth is happy to accept Mr. Bingley's characterisation when he calls her a "studier of character" (42). During one of her discussions with Mr. Darcy, she comments on her own disposition. She remarks that she is diverted by "[f]ollies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies," but never laughs at "what is wise or good" (56). This implies that she believes that she is discerning enough to tell the difference between the two. Notably, this implicit self-evaluation is immediately qualified by Mr. Darcy. During the same discussion, he points out that Elizabeth's "natural defect" is "wilfully to misunderstand" everybody (57). Though Mr. Darcy slightly overstates the case, he is right that she is not always an objective observer—especially when it comes to himself. Indeed, Elizabeth misjudges Mr. Darcy's "manners" throughout the novel. Here, I use the word "manners" in the eighteenth-century sense of the word. When Samuel Johnson published the sixth edition of his dictionary in 1785, the term manners referred to much more than bows, curtseys, and other forms of "ceremonious behaviour" or "studied civility" (S. Johnson 80). It was also used to refer to a person's character of mind, morals, and habits (80). By this definition, "manners" have a courteous and an ethical dimension. This spectrum of meaning is also present in the novels of Jane Austen. As Jane Nardin and Penelope Joan Fritzer point out, Austen's narrator uses the social behaviour of her characters—their air, conduct, tone, actions—to reveal something about their moral character—their integrity, sociability, compassion (Nardin 1; Fritzer 4-5). This is also reflected in Elizabeth's evaluations.

Elizabeth first evaluates Mr. Darcy's *savoir-vivre* by norms that are not embedded in an ethical system, such as ballroom etiquette. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy meet at an assembly, where Mr. Darcy insults Elizabeth's appearance and flatly refuses to dance with her (Austen, *Pride* 13-4). By refusing to dance with a lady who is in want of a partner, Mr. Darcy breaks an important rule of Regency ballroom etiquette. This discourtesy is also committed by some of Austen's other characters, such as Lord Osborne in *The Watsons*, John Thorpe and Captain Tilney in *Northanger Abbey*, Tom Bertram in *Mansfield Park*, and Mr. Elton in *Emma* (Fullerton 85). When Elizabeth evaluates Mr. Darcy's behaviour for the first time, therefore, she seems to measure his behaviour by norms of etiquette rather than ethics. The narrator simply says that, after Mr. Darcy's slight, Elizabeth has "no very cordial feelings" towards him (14). Very soon, however, this initial evaluation becomes framed in moral judgments, because Elizabeth and the other characters begin to see Mr.

Darcy's discourtesy as a sign of "pride." Mr. Darcy's pride is presented as a flaw in his moral character, because it is evaluated by ethical, Christian norms in an implicit and an explicit way. On an implicit level, the term "pride" is more weighty than, say, "arrogance" precisely because it has ethical connotations—because, as Butler notes, it is a "sin" according to eighteenth-century Anglicanism. On an explicit level, Elizabeth begins to evaluate Mr. Darcy's pride by ethical norms after she has met Mr. Wickham. Mr. Wickham (falsely) accuses Mr. Darcy of withholding an inheritance. He tells her that Mr. Darcy condemned him to a lifetime of poverty because he was the favourite of Mr. Darcy Sr. (Austen, *Pride* 76-9). While Elizabeth merely disliked Mr. Darcy before, she now draws conclusions about his moral character:

> "I had supposed him to be despising his fellow-creatures in general, but did not suspect him of descending to such malicious revenge, such injustice, such inhumanity as this!" (79).

The word "inhumanity," in particular, suggests that she is now evaluating Mr. Darcy's *savoir-vivre* by norms for "humane," rather than "courteous" behaviour. She is actually saying that Mr. Darcy's behaviour (that is, the "fact" that he has ignored his father's will) is not "acceptable" or "right" because it does not evince a spirit of forgiveness, a sense of justice, or "humanity"—by which I mean a fundamental respect, sympathy, and kindness towards other people. This norm can be represented as follows:

"Norme évaluante" or evaluating norm

Revenge, injustice, ← is worse / better than (R2) → Forgiveness, justice,
inhumanity (A'1)   humanity (A'2)

R1 – link established by Elizabeth ("évaluation")

Mr. Darcy ignores ← is worse / better than (R2) → Mr. Darcy executes
the will (A1)   the will (A2)

"Procès évalué" or evaluated process
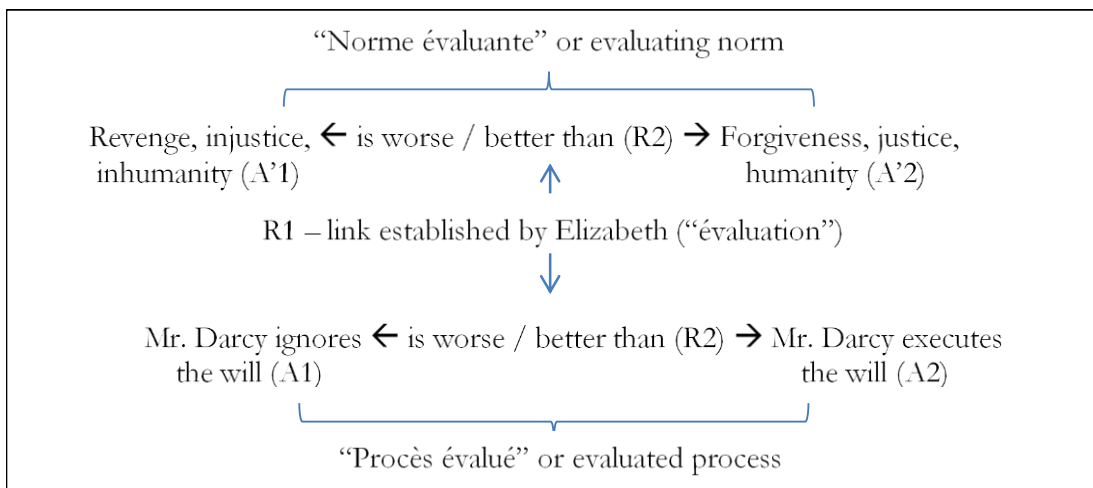
Figure 5: *based on Hamon,* Texte *21*

Here, Elizabeth places Mr. Darcy's "pride" in the context of values that have a similar, ethical connotation. This strengthens the term's ethical resonance. Something similar happens when Elizabeth finds out that Mr. Darcy has separated Mr. Bingley and her sister Jane (Austen, *Pride* 180-3). Here, Elizabeth concludes that Mr. Darcy's behaviour is governed by "the worst kind of pride" and "caprice" (182). As a result, the ethical overtones of "pride" and "caprice" strengthen one another. This suggests that Elizabeth does not just

measure Mr. Darcy's behaviour by standards for "courteous" behaviour, but also by standards for "ethical" behaviour.

During the first proposal at Hunsford, Elizabeth uses moral concepts that are related to etiquette together with concepts that are related to ethical norms. This dual emphasis accords with the eighteenth-century definition of "manners" mentioned above. Elizabeth first accuses Mr. Darcy of separating Jane and Mr. Bingley, arguing that "[n]o motive can excuse the unjust and ungenerous part" he played in that affair (Austen, *Pride* 186). She is even angrier when he shows no "remorse" whatsoever (187). She confronts him with his "cruelty" towards Mr. Wickham and is shocked to find that he treats "the mention of his misfortunes with contempt and ridicule" (Austen 187, 189). Finally, she accuses him of ungentlemanlike manners, "arrogance," "conceit," and a "selfish disdain of the feelings of others" (Austen, *Pride* 188). In the second stage of Austen's "Hunsford," however, Elizabeth reads a letter in which Mr. Darcy defends himself against the charges laid at his door. This forces her to re-assess her evaluative competence (that is, her ability to read minds) and her *savoir-vivre* (that is, the propriety of what she has been doing). She finds herself wanting on both counts. On the one hand, she has to admit that she has misread Mr. Darcy. She concludes that, despite his "proud and repulsive" manners, she has not actually "seen any thing that betrayed him to be unprincipled or unjust—any thing that spoke him of irreligious or immoral habits" (Austen, *Pride* 201). She also realises that she has ignored the opinions of his friends and relations, who clearly esteem and value him (201). Here, she clearly re-evaluates Mr. Darcy's behaviour by ethical, Christian norms. On the other hand, she is also forced to conclude that, as far as Mr. Darcy is concerned, she has allowed her behaviour to be regulated by the wrong principles:

> 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 despicable 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!—Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly.—Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, 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. (Austen, *Pride* 201-2)

This epiphany is clearly couched in terms with Christian overtones. Elizabeth is berating herself because she realises that her "vanity" has made her see the worst instead of the best in people—that it has made her approach them with "useless or blameable distrust" instead of "generous candour." In this passage, in other worlds, Elizabeth first evaluates the way in which she tends to approach other people, in general. This accords with a Christian ethics, which *purport*, or *are felt* to be absolute—to be universally true, and applicable to every

human being under every circumstance. Only then does Elizabeth evaluate her behaviour towards Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham specifically. Building on the "absolute" epiphany that is described in the first part, she concludes that her vanity has, in this particular instance, made her partial and blind to the true characters of Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham. This "vanity" is closely tied to her "wit." She later tells Jane, jokingly but ashamed:

> "And yet I meant to be uncommonly clever in taking so decided a dislike to him [Mr. Darcy], without any reason. It is such a spur to one's genius, such an opening for wit, to have a dislike of that kind. One may be continually abusive without saying any thing just; but one cannot always be laughing at a man without now and then stumbling on something witty." (Austen, *Pride* 217-8)

It can be argued that this statement, too, contains both an evaluation of Elizabeth's behaviour to other people (namely, her general tendency to laugh at them) and her behaviour towards Mr. Darcy in particular (namely, her decided dislike of him). In *Pride and Prejudice*, in short, Elizabeth does not just change her attitude towards Mr. Darcy; she changes her attitude to her "fellow-creatures," in general. Arguably, the importance of this "absolute" dimension is already indicated by the famous opening line of *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen, *Pride* 5). In the General Introduction, I have noted that Austen's trademark irony makes it difficult to take this statement at face value. As William Nelles remarks, "Austen's trademark irony seldom allows such claims to be taken at face value; they must be gauged by the degree to which the events of the novel corroborate them" (120). Arguably, Elizabeth learns to judge herself and Mr. Darcy by standards of behaviour that do not derive from the "worldly wisdom" of the people of Meryton and, though to a lesser extent, Lambton, who fail to look at themselves and only see Mr. Darcy's pride (Austen, *Pride* 12, 20, 76, 141, 252; see Section 3.3.2.1).

It would be reductive to say that Austen's norms are entirely "absolute." It is true that, on the level of the text as a whole, Austen's narrator uses what Hamon calls "rewriting évaluatif" to change the meaning of Elizabeth's initial evaluations of Mr. Darcy. After all, the narrator shows us that those evaluations are grounded in "vanity." This is only partly the case, however. At the same time, Mr. Darcy becomes convinced that he is, in fact, proud and conceited (Austen, *Pride* 349). When they are engaged he asks:

> "What did you say of me, that I did not deserve? For, though your accusations were ill-founded, formed on mistaken premises, my behaviour to you at the time had merited the severest reproof. It was unpardonable." (347)

This restores some of the reader's faith in Elizabeth's evaluative competence—and some of Elizabeth's pride in her abilities as a mind reader. Once Elizabeth is engaged to Mr. Darcy, her "spirits" rise "to playfulness again," and she displays her wit in an extensive reading of Mr. Darcy's mind, in which she argues that he was first attracted to her because he was

"sick of civility, of deference, of officious attention" (Austen, *Pride* 358-9). As Bernard J. Paris puts it: "Once Elizabeth's pride is restored—indeed, inflated—by Darcy's second proposal, she is her expansive self again" (135). As the "Austen Controversy" shows, this makes it difficult for the reader to evaluate Elizabeth's *savoir-vivre*. While Elizabeth's epiphany suggests that her pride is "unacceptable" and has to be curbed before she can be happy and take up her place in society as Mrs. Darcy, the conclusion of the novel suggests that some degree of pride is "acceptable," because Elizabeth is able to fit it into her role as Mrs. Darcy. As I have demonstrated, however, the fact that several ethical evaluations play a key role in the novel, and are used to reaffirm each other, suggests that the ethical norms of Anglicanism are still seen as important guidelines for the characters' *savoir-vivre*, which ultimately help them to find personal happiness.

2.3.2.3 Jack C.'s *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*

I have argued that, in *Pride and Prejudice*, moral concepts are framed and reaffirmed by other moral concepts, which invites the reader to interpret the most important evaluations in ethical terms. In *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, in contrast, the moral concepts that are key to Austen's "Hunsford" are framed in a different way, so that they become more clearly grounded in the characters' minds. Most importantly, it is suggested that Elizabeth's blindness is not just due to vanity; it is also due to her feelings for Mr. Darcy. This is emphasised by the fact that the "Hunsford" of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* is split into two parts. In the first part, Elizabeth's evaluations are influenced by her wounded vanity, but also by the fact that she is struggling against her growing feelings for Mr. Darcy. These feelings include her sexual attraction to the man. In the second part, her cruel words are, paradoxically, inspired by her love for Mr. Darcy. This invites the reader to interpret Elizabeth's evaluations, not from an "absolute," Christian perspective, but from a "relative," sociopsychological point of view. This shift is also visible in the reader comments, where fans tend to evaluate the behaviour of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy in "mimetic" terms, referring to the characters' mind and circumstances rather than to ethical "themes."

Reframing Vanity

At first, the narrator of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* seems to evaluate the evaluative competence and *savoir-vivre* of Elizabeth in a similar way as Austen's narrator. In the opening paragraphs, Jack C.'s narrator tells us that Elizabeth "would be considered the beauty of her family if not for her eldest and youngest sisters" (Chapter 1). This trait is directly related to Elizabeth's ability to read minds, because she

> overcame her shortcomings in appearance by sharpening her mind. She prided herself
> on her discernment and wit, and many a pretentious person was the unknowing
> subject of her condescension." (Chapter 1)

Jack C.'s narrator immediately indicates that this Elizabeth, too, thinks highly of her ability to "read" other characters, and her ability to make witty remarks about them.[16] However, the implied author and the narrator also complicate this moral attribution with an evaluation of Elizabeth's *savoir-vivre*, especially as it relates to her attitude towards other people. On the one hand, this is suggested by the transfictional echoes of the phrase "prided herself on her discernment and wit." This phrase is lifted from the epiphany of Austen's Elizabeth, where she exclaims "I, who have prided myself on my discernment" (Austen, *Pride* 201-2). As I have noted, Austen's Elizabeth is berating herself because she realises her vanity has made her see the worst instead of the best in people, and that it has made her blind to the true characters of Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham (see Section 2.3.2.2). In *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, this moment of self-evaluation is turned into an implicit evaluation by the implied author. By using the phrase "prided herself on her discernment and wit," the implied author does not just invite the reader to recall the epiphany of Austen's Elizabeth; the phrase also evokes the evaluative-normative system that underpins that epiphany, and this gives the phrase a negative connotation.

The narrator emphasises this negative connotation by associating Elizabeth's discernment and wit with the word "condescension." The narrator's choice of words suggests, in other words, that Elizabeth does not just observe "pretentious" people, but that she looks down on them. It suggests, in other words, that Elizabeth thinks she is better, or at least more perceptive, than other people. This is confirmed by the way the term "condescension" is used in the rest of the narrative. As in common usage, it tends to have negative overtones. The narrator also uses it, for instance, to characterise the attitude of Mr. Darcy's pompous manservant (Chapter 3, 6). In addition, Elizabeth uses it to show disapproval of Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst (Chapter 1, 12) and of Mr. Darcy (Chapter 9). From the first paragraphs, then, transfictional echoes and word choices are used to indicate that Elizabeth's evaluative competence and *savoir-vivre* leave something to be desired, because she is not an impartial observer, as she likes to believe, and does not realise that she is actually condescending.

The dangers attached to Elizabeth's talent are also emphasized by means of Mr. Bennet. In *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, the narrator immediately notes that Elizabeth shares her discernment and wit with her father, "who was as misanthropic as his favorite daughter was otherwise sociable and friendly" (Chapter 1). Several scholars have discussed the thematic function of Austen's Mr. Bennet. Marilyn Butler notes that the

> moral exposure of Mr. Bennet is a further examination of the vices that Elizabeth, to
> a less culpable degree, has shared: for she is quite as much the product of her father's

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[16] I am aware that, in this context, "wit" can also stand for intelligence more generally (rather than the ability to use language in a clever way). However, I believe that Jack C.'s characterisation is based on Elizabeth's conversation with Jane, just as the first part is based on her epiphany (see Section 2.3.2.2). This is why I argue that Jack C. is referring more specifically to Elizabeth's ability to make clever remarks about other people.

influence as Darcy was of his. . . . Like Darcy, she [Elizabeth] emerges from a period of introspection concluding that, partly through a wrong upbringing, she has consistently over-valued herself. (210)

This supports Butler's claim that *Pride and Prejudice* is a conservative Christian tale about "the sin of pride, obnoxious to the Christian, which takes the form of a complacency about the self and a correspondingly lower opinion, or prejudice, about others" (206).[17] In *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, Mr. Bennet's detachment is enlarged. As I have noted, Elizabeth is forced to conclude that Mr. Benner is misanthropic, because he does not perform his duties as a host and turns his wit against the injured Mr. Darcy (see Section 2.2.1.1). Even more than in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Bennet becomes a foil for Mr. Darcy: his misanthropy and passivity contrast with Mr. Darcy's compassion and action. Ultimately, Mr. Bennet serves a double function. On the one hand, he makes the reader, and later Elizabeth, see the dark side of Elizabeth's tendency to observe the other characters. On the other, he serves to highlight Mr. Darcy's good qualities. This last function, in particular, draws attention to the fact that Elizabeth is remarkably reluctant to change her opinion of Mr. Darcy.

Jack C.'s Elizabeth is a lot less willing to change her mind about Mr. Darcy than Austen's Elizabeth. While Austen's Elizabeth condemns her vanity as soon as she reads Mr. Darcy's letter, Jack C.'s Elizabeth refuses to change her opinion of Mr. Darcy in the face of overwhelming evidence. As some fans point out in the comments, Jack C.'s Mr. Darcy is almost too good to be true. While Mr. Darcy only performs one act of goodness in *Pride and Prejudice* (namely, tracking down Lydia, and saving the reputation of the Bennets), Jack C.'s Mr. Darcy improves the lives of all the Bennet sisters. For instance, he encourages Mary to play pieces of music that fit her abilities, lets her join Georgiana's music lessons, and buys her sheet music (Chapter 10, 12). He encourages Kitty to develop her artistic talent, allows her to join Georgiana's drawing lessons, and buys art supplies (Chapter 11, 12). Finally, he discovers that Lydia is very fond of horses, and asks Colonel Fitzwilliam to bring one of his horses to Longbourn (Chapter 12). In addition, he finds Bennets' servant Sally and her family new positions, saving them from destitution (Chapter 11). Some fans have remarked that this makes Jack C.'s Mr. Darcy seem like "Santa Claus" (comments to Chapter 14). Mr. Darcy's development in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* is still linked to Elizabeth's reproofs (see below), but his improvement is taken to new extremes. This makes it even more striking that Elizabeth is unwilling to change her opinion.

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[17] There can be another "opinion on the subject" however. Robert Miles has argued that Mr. Bennet serves to show that "there is danger in the pleasure Elizabeth takes in making sport of her acquaintance," because in doing so she shows "her hubris" (Miles 19, 20). Using concepts and insights from Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, Miles argues that Mr. Bennet serves as a warning for the pitfalls of an "aesthetic" life, because he no longer approaches life as a narrative unity, but as a sequence of separate moments (18). This contrasts with the "ethical" life, in which a human life is held together by commitments, responsibilities, and obligations that originate in the past, shape the present, and influence the future (18).

To some extent, this reluctance can be explained by Elizabeth's "vanity." As in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's high opinion of her evaluative competence is undercut throughout the text, because the narrator regularly suggests that Elizabeth's mind keeps returning to Mr. Darcy's insult at the Meryton assembly. Even after Mr. Darcy has become more accommodating, for instance, and after he has defended Elizabeth and her family against Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine, Elizabeth decides that "Mr. Darcy's recent good behavior was the result of the gentleman finally remembering his manners" (Chapter 8). His good behavior signifies little more, because as far as she knows, she is "still the lady judged not tolerable enough to make an adequate dance partner. It was not easy to recover from such a blow to one's pride" (Chapter 8). Yet this is not the only reason for her reluctance. Even when Elizabeth begins to doubt her abilities, she finds it hard to give Mr. Darcy the benefit of the doubt. Eventually, she begins to realise that Mr. Darcy may not be the "snobbish," "proud," and "disagreeable" man she took him for, who "insulted her appearance" and who observed the faults of her neighbours with a "satirical eye" (Chapter 9). Yet she is still reluctant to change her opinion:

> To be so wrong in her opinions, when she was so certain, was a hard business with which to wrestle. Every time a small voice in her head said that Mr. Darcy was a good man, her darker feelings reasserted themselves. (Chapter 9)

I believe that, while the blindness of Austen's Elizabeth is due to vanity alone, the blindness of Jack C.'s Elizabeth is also due to her feelings for Mr. Darcy. This reframing of Austen's "vanity" is achieved in three major ways. First, the narrator of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* regularly indicates that Elizabeth fails to read her own mind, especially where her feelings for Mr. Darcy are concerned. These instances do not contain an explicit evaluation, but they confirm that Elizabeth is not as objective and perceptive as she likes to believe. When she hears that Mr. Darcy is engaged to Anne de Bourgh, for instance, the information troubles her "for some reason," and she can think of "no earthly reason" why she feels disappointed (Chapter 1). After Mr. Darcy's riding accident, moreover, she reasons away her feelings for him:

> The accident caused a jolt of pain in Elizabeth's breast of such intensity that she was astonished. . . . She told herself it was her Christian upbringing that gave her the ability to pity Mr. Darcy. (Chapter 2)

With "told herself," the narrator indicates that there is a discrepancy between what goes on in Elizabeth's mind (the fact that she cares about Mr. Darcy's well-being) and her reading of it (Christian pity). In other instances, even this rationalisation breaks down. When Jack C.'s Elizabeth realises, for instance, that Mr. Wickham has misrepresented Georgiana Darcy and Anne de Bourgh, and learns that Mr. Darcy is not engaged after all, she cannot figure out "why she even cared" (Chapter 6).

Second, the influence of Elizabeth's feelings is emphasised by the fact that the "Hunsford" of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* is split into two parts. In the first part of the story, Elizabeth's re-evaluation of her evaluative competence dovetails with a growing awareness of her feelings for Mr. Darcy. If she is reluctant to accept that she has been wrong about Mr. Darcy, however, she positively represses the idea that she is "protesting too much" (Chapter 9). This has important implications for the meaning of the first "Hunsford" of this story. Austen's Elizabeth accuses Mr. Darcy of un-gentleman-like manners, "arrogance," "conceit," and a "selfish disdain of the feelings of others," because she truly believes there is a flaw in his moral character. Jack C.'s Elizabeth, in contrast, actually expresses opinions that are "not necessarily her own" because Charlotte Lucas has suggested that Mr. Darcy admires her, and that she admires him (Chapter 9). The narrator makes it very clear that Elizabeth is rattled by the fact that "her own conscience and Charlotte" explain her "antipathy for Mr. Darcy" in similar terms, and speaks from a need to defend herself (Chapter 9). She tells Charlotte that Mr. Darcy only loves himself, because he has not taken the trouble to get to know his neighbours, has treated her father like a servant rather than a host, and has allowed his manservant to order the rest of her family about (Chapter 9). He has insulted her at the assembly, and "has done nothing but impress [her] with his conceit and selfish disdain for the feelings of others" (Chapter 9). These words are overheard by Mr. Darcy, and make him re-evaluate himself (Chapter 9). The fact of the matter is, however, that they do not reflect what Elizabeth is really thinking. Indeed, just as Mr. Darcy has moved out of earshot, Elizabeth admits to herself and to Charlotte that Mr. Darcy has also been good to her family and the servants. She grows "ashamed of her slights against Mr. Darcy's character," and resolves to be kinder in future (Chapter 10). In *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, then, moral concepts with Christian overtones, such as "conceit," are reframed and grounded in Elizabeth's mind. This changes their "ideological effect."

I have noted that, in the first part of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, Elizabeth has a low opinion of Mr. Darcy because he has insulted her and because she is in denial about her feelings for him. As Elizabeth's feelings grow, however, she begins to measure Mr. Darcy's behaviour by higher standards. The second "Hunsford" of this fic occurs when Elizabeth thinks that Mr. Darcy has not lived up to her expectations. In this Hunsford, Elizabeth storms into Mr. Darcy's recovery room at Longbourn and confronts him (Chapter 17). She accuses him of arrogance, conceit, and a selfish disdain of the feelings of others because he ruined the life of Sally, a devoted servant (Chapter 17). She demands to know if he only pretended to be kind to her and her family, since he dismissed one of her father's servants for spilling wine on his shirt (Chapter 17). Mr. Darcy coldly explains that Mr. Bennet and he found Sally another position because her widowed mother and invalid brother needed employment too (Chapter 17). He refuses to explain why he did what he did, and asks her to leave (Chapter 17). Elizabeth flees the room in tears (Chapter 17). Mr. Darcy concludes that Elizabeth does not care for him, since she assumed the worst about him, and decides to go to London (Chapter 17). Elizabeth's behaviour seems to jar with the "intelligence" that

has been attributed to her so far. In the previous chapter, she has seen first-hand that Mr. Darcy was not angry with Sally after the girl spilt wine on his shirt, and yet she is later swayed by the servants' gossip and by the suddenness of Sally's departure from Hertfordshire (Chapter 16). To make matters worse, her "evidence" is overshadowed by Mr. Darcy's extraordinary kindness in the previous chapters. After all, Mr. Darcy defended Elizabeth and her family against Mr. Collins, who attempted to kiss Elizabeth and resorted to threats after she refused his proposal (Chapter 7). He has also redoubled his efforts to be kind ever since he discovered how bad Elizabeth's opinion of him really was, and has nurtured the talents of Mary, Kitty, and Lydia—giving them the encouragement, education, and supplies they need to perfect their accomplishments (Chapters 10 – 15). Unlike Austen's Mr. Darcy, moreover, he has furthered the match between Mr. Bingley and Jane, taking away one of the main reasons that influence Elizabeth's reading of Mr. Darcy's mind in *Pride and Prejudice* (Chapter 14). Yet Jack's Elizabeth dismisses these good deeds, and lack of bad deeds, because she knows that some men are capricious and cruel (Chapter 17).

As I will discuss in greater detail in the next section, this discrepancy caused several fans to be damning about Elizabeth's "evaluative competence." In the narrative itself, however, this apparent inconsistency is explained with yet another "junction" of evaluation, mind reading, and character. In the following chapter, Mr. Bennet goes to the parlour to confront Mr. Darcy after Elizabeth has left the room in tears (Chapter 18). When he hears what has happened, he is confused, because his daughter is usually more sensible (Chapter 18). He concludes that Elizabeth would dismiss Mr. Darcy, rather than confront him, if she were indifferent to him (Chapter 18). He then tells Mr. Darcy an anecdote, in which Elizabeth defended Jane—to show how loyal she is to those she cares for (Chapter 18). He also remembers that she ignored one of her uncles after he broke his promise to her (Chapter 18). She only confronts people of whom she expects better things (Chapter 18). Considering how angry she was, she must care very deeply for Mr. Darcy (Chapter 18). Using Mr. Bennet, the implied author takes Elizabeth's "stupid" action, which seems to jar with the rest of the narrative, and relates it to a more positive reading of Elizabeth's motivations and character. In doing so, he argues that Elizabeth's "blindness" is due, not to vanity, but to love. Ultimately, in short, the second "Hunsford" confirms the first: it suggests that Elizabeth's ability to read minds is influenced as much by her feelings as by her vanity.

Finally, this "reframing" of Austen's moral concepts is strengthened by the fact that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are presented as sexual, desiring beings. While Austen's narrator only mentions blushes and brightened complexions, Jack C. homes in on sexual fantasies and thoughts.[18] In *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, for instance, Mr. Darcy is aroused by the

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[18] Notably, this is the case for many fics. In "Goodnight Elizabeth," for instance, William fantasises about Elizabeth's "soft skin" (Chapter 1). Elizabeth, on the other hand, initiates their first kiss—which results in a night of passion that takes place "off-screen" (Chapter 10). As my examples show, these passages are not sexually explicit. Every story on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* has a rating of PG-13, which means that they are suitable for children of 13 or older. Nonetheless, there is a measure of sexual tension in most stories.

mere thought of Elizabeth, to the extent that he is "glad for the blanket across his lap" (Chapter 8). After Elizabeth has seen Mr. Darcy's body through his shirt, which is drenched in wine, she begins to dream of Mr. Darcy's wet shirt and body (Chapter 16). In several fan fiction texts, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy each awaken the passionate side of the other. They tend to be presented as passionate people; more passionate, for instance, than Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley. In "Goodnight Elizabeth," for example, both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are characterised by their sisters as people who feel deeply (Chapter 21). Typically, however, they only become passionate in a sexual way, when they meet one another. The narrator of "Goodnight Elizabeth" tells us that Mr. Darcy "did not often find himself attracted to a woman. Let alone to one he just met" (Chapter 1). Arguably, this sexualisation is the logical conclusion of the novel, on the one hand, and the adaptations, on the other. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth regularly have heated debates and the narrator tells the reader, at one point, that Mr. Darcy has never been "bewitched" by any woman as he is by Elizabeth (51). In addition, Elizabeth claims that she is happier than Jane, because her sister only smiles while she laughs (361). It can be argued that sexual passion is the logical extension of these canonical character traits. On the other hand, several adaptations have emphasised the sexual dimension of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's relationship. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the filmmakers of the 1995 BBC/A&E adaptation famously added an "erotic charge" to Austen's storyworld, for instance by adding the famous "wet shirt" scene that is also mentioned in *Fitzwilliam Ebenezer Darcy* (*Section 1.3.3.2*). The passage in which Mr. Darcy is drenched in wine in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* is clearly reminiscent of this famous scene. In fact, one fan commends Jack for slipping a wet shirt scene into the story, and adds that it is "much appreciated" (comments to Chapter 16). Whatever their origins may be, however, the sexual elements in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* suggest that it is futile for the characters to resist their attraction to one another. Their feelings, in other words, are a force to be reckoned with. Because Austen's moral concepts are reframed in this way, the reader is no longer encouraged to evaluate the characters' behaviour in strictly ethical terms. Instead, they are invited to take a number of "mitigating" circumstances into account, such as personal feelings and desires.

Fan Readers Reading Minds: Elizabeth's Evaluative Competence

This "immanent" perspective is also reflected in the reader comments. This suggests that the writing and reading practices of this community are attuned to one another. I want to illustrate this with the debate that was sparked by the second "Hunsford" of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* (Chapter 17). This Hunsford led to a discussion on the message boards of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* about the "Elizabeths" and "Mr. Darcys" of Jack C. and other fans, on the one hand, and Jane Austen on the other. Several fans are damning about the evaluative competence of Jack C.'s Elizabeth, or her ability to read minds, because she bases her conclusions on very little evidence. Some fans remark that this jars with her supposed intelligence, and others go so far as to question what Jack C.'s Mr. Darcy sees in

this emotional, immature, and irresponsible Elizabeth (comments to Chapter 17). Other readers argue that Jack's Elizabeth is just as young, ignorant, and prejudiced as Jane Austen's is, and they support this claim with quotations from *Pride and Prejudice.* Still others argue that the circumstances of Jack's story are different and, as such, that Elizabeth's behaviour should be different too (comments to Chapter 13, 17; Jack C., "A word"). In this discussion, in short, readers evaluate Elizabeth's ability to read minds (and Mr. Darcy's mind in particular) as much as the narrator does. What is more, they tend to relate evaluations of Elizabeth's mind reading to particular readings of Elizabeth's mind. While Elizabeth's mind is a mitigating circumstance in some reader comments (e.g. when a fan points out that Jack C.'s Elizabeth is still very young), it is an aggravating circumstance in others (e.g. when a fan claims that Jack C.'s Elizabeth is stupid, emotional, immature, or irresponsible).

As I have noted, this discussion revolved around the fact that Jack C.'s Elizabeth thinks the worst of Mr. Darcy even though she has every reason to give him the benefit of the doubt. Although I have no doubt that these fan readers know that Elizabeth is a creation by Jack C.,[19] most commenters discuss Elizabeth as if she were as complete as a "real" person, who is acting in response to a "real" situation. Several fans evaluate Elizabeth's personality, motives, and behaviour, for instance. Some fans point out and discuss attributes of Jack's Elizabeth, for instance: they point out that she was / is stupid, that she jumps to conclusions, lets her prejudices dictate her behaviour, tries to gather some evidence, is motivated by her inner struggle, and so on. In these comments, fan readers "read" Elizabeth's mind to make sense of her behaviour. This gives even more weight to Elizabeth's mental life. Other fans link these attributes to the "context." By this, I mean everything that has already happened,

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[19] Several reader comments concern what Phelan calls the "synthetic" dimension of character—that is, the level on which the character is a textual construct created to achieve a particular effect (Phelan 15). On the one hand, several fan readers refer to the story's relation to canon (e.g. the implicit claim that Jack's version of Elizabeth is like or unlike canon) and the story's relation to fantextual conventions about Elizabeth's character (e.g. Elizabeth is usually represented as an intelligent person in fan fiction). Several fans discuss the similarities and differences between Jack's characters and the characters of *Pride and Prejudice*. Indeed, they regularly support their claims with quotations or paraphrases of particular scenes from the source text, as literary critics would (see comments to Chapter 17). In the "Tea Room," the discussion shifts even more clearly to readings of the source text. Jack C. explains his reading of Austen's Elizabeth as a way to explain his representation of Elizabeth in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*. As I have noted, he argues that, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth is forced to change much more than Mr. Darcy (Jack C., "A word"). Other fans contest this reading, arguing that Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth both change ("A word"). Finally, several fans discuss the relation between Jack C.'s characterisation and characterisations that occur in other fics—often referring to conventional, fantextual representations ("A word"). Some fans point out, for instance, that *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* is not the only fic in which a selfish or demanding Elizabeth, or a rakish Mr. Darcy, is presented as "perfect" or worthy of admiration, respect, and a happy ending (Jack C., "A word"). Phelan's concept also highlights an additional dimension, namely references to the (implied) author's design. Some fans are simply curious about the author's intentions, and speculate that Jack C. is trying to create an equivalent of Jane Austen's proposal scene, or that he is purposely making Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy more flawed or farcical (comments to Chapter 17; Jack C., "A word"). This is, after all, the prerogative of fan writers (Jack C., "A word").

everything that is going on or exists at that particular moment, and everything that is expected to happen in the rest of the narrative. One of the reasons why Elizabeth's behaviour created a stir is because it does not follow naturally from what happened in the previous chapters. Considering everything that has happened before the second Hunsford of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, Elizabeth has every reason in the world to give Mr. Darcy the benefit of the doubt—which she does not. Nor does her behaviour fit into the current context. It seems to be incompatible with Mr. Darcy's good opinion of her abilities, for instance. Finally, her behaviour does not seem to be a good basis for future events. It is difficult to understand, for instance, why Mr. Darcy would trust Elizabeth with the management of his households. As these examples show, the focus is, once again, on the mind. After all, several fan readers try to "read" Mr. Darcy's thoughts about Elizabeth. These comments do not change the meaning of Jack C.'s text. However, I believe that their focus on the "mimetic" dimension of Jack C.'s characters, rather than the thematic dimension, imply something about the preferences of this community. I believe that reader comments such as these indicate which dimensions fan readers pick up on, and which dimensions are most "important" to the community—much as a listener's responses do in conversations. In this case, the fact that fan readers tend to refer to "mimetic" elements, and particularly to Elizabeth's mind, rather than "thematic" elements such as the "lessons" about pride that can be drawn from the characters' development, suggests that there is a strong preference in this community to approach characters from a sociopsychological perspective.

2.3.2.4   Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth"

In Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth," too, Austen's moral concepts are reframed and grounded in the characters' mental life. Just as in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, moreover, the "Hunsford" of this narrative is split into two stages. These are the climaxes of two parts. The first part of the narrative is devoted to the love story between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. Here, William's insult and poor manners are explained away. This implies a shift away from Austen's "pride." In addition, the epiphany of Austen's Elizabeth is reframed in such a way that it becomes an epiphany about Elizabeth's feelings for William. In the second part of the story, Elizabeth's development as a "mind reader" is projected onto William, just as Mr. Darcy's "pride" is reassigned to Elizabeth. This reassignment is emphasised with quotations that revolve around Austen's moral concepts of "vanity" and "pride." While these concepts are presented as norms for the characters' *savoir-vivre* in theory, however, they are not used as such in practice. Ultimately, the reader is not invited to evaluate the "wrongness" or "rightness" of the characters' behaviour according to a single, ethical norm. Instead, the seriousness of a character's behaviour can be "mitigated" by their intentions or feelings, or it may be at once right according to the rules and regulations that govern business relations and wrong according to regulations that govern romantic relationships. This is suggested by the reader comments to this narrative, where the behaviour of the characters is evaluated with reference to their personal desires, to the different sets of guidelines that regulate their

professional life and love life, or, on a meta-level, to the way Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are "supposed" to behave according to the members of this community. This suggests that Austen's moral concepts lose some of their "absolute" resonance.

From Pride to Shyness and from Vanity to Love

As I have noted, an analysis of the plot of Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth" can be divided into two parts, each of which has a "Hunsford." As in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, that is, Jane Austen's "Hunsford" is split into two stages. In the "Hunsford" of the first part, the words of Elizabeth's epiphany are reframed, so that they are almost entirely grounded in Elizabeth's emotional life. In the "Hunsford" of the second part, the moral concepts of Elizabeth's epiphany are reassigned to William, but he measures his *savoir-vivre* by non-ethical norms in practice.

The first part of "Goodnight Elizabeth" (Chapters 1 to 11) is devoted to the love story between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. This love story deviates from *Pride and Prejudice* in two important ways, however: William does not interfere in the relationship between Jane and Mr. Bingley, and the love story unfolds without the interference of Mr. (or in this story, Miss) Wickham. This means that the circumstances that make Austen's Elizabeth question Mr. Darcy's "humanity," and which make her accuse him of "the worst kind of pride," are taken out of the equation. In "Goodnight Elizabeth," Elizabeth's dislike of William is solely based on his insult and his poor manners. Notably, however, even these circumstances are explained away. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy's insult and his poor manners are presented as very real indications of his pride. The narrator uses his social behaviour (especially his refusal to dance with Elizabeth) to say something about his principles (namely, the idea that he is selfish and proud). This is no longer the case in "Goodnight Elizabeth." As in canon, Elizabeth and William meet when he visits the neighbourhood with Charles Bingley (Chapter 1). I have already noted that, after their first meeting, Elizabeth concludes that William is "haughty," "stubborn," that he does not have "a good sense of humour," and that he is not "nice" (Chapter 1). This evaluation is later qualified by William himself, who attributes his social awkwardness to "shyness" rather than "pride" and "arrogance" (Chapter 4; Section 2.2.1.3). Notably, this shift in emphasis from "pride" to "shyness" is also indicated by the first direct characterisation that Karen Apenhorst's narrator gives of William. The narrator of "Goodnight Elizabeth" remarks that "William Darcy was tall, dark, extremely intelligent, handsome and dreadfully uncomfortable among strangers." (Chapter 1). This characterisation is based on, but deviates from, Austen's first characterisation of Mr. Darcy, whose narrator says that "Darcy was clever. He was at the same time haughty, reserved, and fastidious, and his manners, though well bred, were not inviting" (Austen, *Pride* 18). At least two concepts that are related to the "sin" of pride ("haughty" and "fastidious") are written out of the text and replaced by concepts that do not carry the same moral weight (such as "dreadfully uncomfortable among strangers"). In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy's lack of social skills is first revealed at Rosings, when Mr.

Darcy tells Elizabeth that he does not have "the talent which some people possess . . . 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" (Austen, *Pride* 171). Elizabeth and Colonel Fitzwilliam believe that he will not go to the trouble of practicing (171). This implies that they attribute Mr. Darcy's unsociable behaviour to his innate pride. This moral evaluation seems to be confirmed by the rest of the novel. After Mr. Darcy is "humbled," for instance, he is friendly to the Gardiners (244), even though he has never met them and they do not belong to his social sphere. In "Goodnight Elizabeth," however, Mr. Darcy's lack of social skills is represented as a very real problem, which has little or nothing to do with being proud.[20]

In much the same way, William's insult turns out to be a misunderstanding. William and Elizabeth meet again at a party, where William is entranced by Elizabeth's singing, her expression, and her beauty (Chapter 3). Caroline Bingley does not agree, and she dismisses Elizabeth's singing as "tolerable"—pronouncing the insulting words that Mr. Darcy uses in *Pride and Prejudice* (Chapter 3). In "Goodnight Elizabeth," William merely repeats Caroline's comment, making Elizabeth think that *he* thinks her singing is only tolerable. (Chapter 3). As a result, the root of Austen's "Hunsford" (Mr. Darcy insults Elizabeth, wounding her vanity and making her predisposed to dislike him) is turned into a misunderstanding. As in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, that is, Mr. Darcy's words are reframed. While Austen's Mr. Darcy insults Elizabeth because he is proud and thinks "meanly" of everyone beyond his own circle (Austen, *Pride* 349), Karen Apenhorst's William does not actually mean what he is saying. This implies that, in "Goodnight Elizabeth," there is a shift away from Austen's "pride." This is confirmed by other deviations from Austen's text. Unlike Austen's Darcy, for instance, Karen Apenhorst's William refuses to confirm Caroline Bingley's claim that she sees "no society or breeding what so ever" at the Philips's party (which is the equivalent of the Meryton assembly) (Chapter 3). This is significant, because the narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* explicitly presents Mr. Darcy's evaluation of the Meryton assembly as an illustration of his "haughty" and "fastidious" character:

> The manner in which they spoke of the Meryton assembly was sufficiently characteristic. Bingley had never met with pleasanter people or prettier girls in his life . . . Darcy, on the contrary, had seen a collection of people in whom there was little beauty and no fashion, for none of whom he had felt the smallest interest, and from none received either attention or pleasure. Miss Bennet he acknowledged to be pretty, but she smiled too much. (Austen, *Pride* 18)

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[20] This is not uncommon in Austen fan fiction. An excellent example of this is Suze's "Performing to Strangers," in which Mr. Darcy travels to the future to work on his social anxiety issues in group therapy sessions (Chapters 1-3).

Other events are "softened" in a similar way. In Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth is incredulous when Mr. Darcy, with some help from Miss Bingley, tells her what ladies must know and be able to do before they are "accomplished" by his standards (39). Karen Apenhorst's William repeats Mr. Darcy's observations about female accomplishments, but the narrator takes some of the sting out of them. She makes it very clear that Mr. Darcy feels that Elizabeth meets his "impossible" standards, by showing his thoughts (Chapter 4). Throughout the first part of "Goodnight Elizabeth," in short, the narrator reframes Austen's words, grounding them in William's mental life. As a consequence, there is no longer any need for the narrator to condemn William's behaviour. While the insult of Austen's Mr. Darcy serves to illustrate his fastidious and haughty nature, William consistently displays his good taste, a strong attraction to Elizabeth, and impeccable discernment. While Austen's Mr. Darcy *is* disdainful, and *needs* to change, Apenhorst's Mr. Darcy *appears to be* more disdainful than he actually is.

This "softening" of Mr. Darcy is not unusual in popular representations of *Pride and Prejudice*, but very few adaptations take it to the same extremes as Karen Apenhorst's narrative. As Ellen Belton notes, "[e]ven the most seemingly faithful 'transposition' also functions as a 'commentary' on the original, since every choice made by the filmmakers . . . implies an interpretative reading of the prior text" (176). As I have noted in Chapter 1, Belton argues that the BBC/A&E miniseries softens Mr. Darcy because it is "attuned to the sensibilities of a 1995 audience" (Belton 186; Section 1.3.1). In effect, the BBC/A&E adaptation uses Darcy's behaviour and clothes to show his development, while it goes through the motions of the plot from Elizabeth's viewpoint. Although Elizabeth, then, is still the main focaliser of the story, Darcy is occasionally "given the floor"—for example when he is riding with Bingley (Sc. 1), when he writes his letter (Sc. 19), or when he looks at Elizabeth throughout the series. Ultimately, this alternating focalisation makes it "a story about Elizabeth and Darcy, rather than a story about Elizabeth" (Davies, qtd. in Birtwistle and Conklin 4). Yet this relative emphasis on Mr. Darcy's viewpoint does not change his character—it may make him seem more passionate and infatuated, but he is still haughty, fastidious, and proud. This is much less the case for Karen Apenhorst's Mr. Darcy.

This shift also has implications for the character of Elizabeth. The Elizabeth of "Goodnight Elizabeth" comes across as more judgmental than the Elizabeth in canon. After all, while some of her conclusions are justified in canon, they are no longer justified here. It is striking, then, that Elizabeth does not actually become aware of this prejudice during the first "Hunsford" of "Goodnight Elizabeth." Instead, she becomes aware of her feelings for Mr. Darcy. As in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, Elizabeth's dislike for Mr. Darcy is at war with her fascination for him, from the very beginning of the story (Chapter 3). One day, William hears that Mr. Bennet's bookshop, Longbourn Books, is about to go out of business. Being the CEO of Pemberley Books and Press, he offers to buy the shop and put Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth in charge (Chapter 4). While William is going through Mr. Bennet's accounts, he comes across a manuscript that is written by Elizabeth (Chapter 4).

She is furious when she catches him reading it. She accuses him of wanting to turn them out, so he can turn Longbourn Books into just another, impersonal shop (Chapter 4). He explains the situation, and tells her that he likes her a lot; she replies that she does not like him (Chapter 4). Afterwards, Elizabeth is confused about her feelings for William, and realises that "she never knew herself" (Chapter 5). While Austen's Elizabeth "never knew herself" because she has allowed herself to be blinded by vanity, Karen Apenhorst's Elizabeth "never knew herself" because she never realised how important William's opinion is to her. In this fic, that is, Elizabeth's epiphany does not involve a moral self-evaluation. She does not draw conclusions about her ability to read people. She does not attribute her blindness to "flaws" in her character—character traits that are "wrong" according to ethical, Christian norms. Instead, she simply becomes aware of her feelings for William. Once again, then, Austen's words are reframed, and given much less moral weight. The emphasis lies, almost exclusively, on Elizabeth's emotional life. As a result, "Goodnight Elizabeth" no longer invites readers to interpret Elizabeth's self-evaluation in ethical terms.

Once her feelings for William begin to change, the love story can unfold without another hitch. Over the next few days, Elizabeth and William become closer. When they run into each other one morning, he manages to explain that he never insulted her and that he actually thinks she is beautiful and has a lovely singing voice (Chapter 5). They also go shopping for Sinterklaas presents together (Chapter 6). At a party at Chattersworth, they can't keep their eyes off each other, especially when William sings "Goodnight Elisabeth" by the Counting Crows for her (Chapter 7). They dance, and William begins to hope again. They spend the holidays apart with their families, although William gives Elizabeth a Sinterklaas present (Chapter 8). William finds out that his cousin's fiancée, Charlotte, is Elizabeth's best friend (Chapter 8). Charlotte writes a letter to Elizabeth, and clearly approves of William (Chapter 8). After the holidays, Elizabeth and William exchange emails, since she is now his employee. Elizabeth and her father organise a team building event, and William is more at ease than he has ever been (Chapter 9). Sometime later, William hosts a charity auction at Pemberley, and he invites the Bennets (Chapter 10). He finally reads Elizabeth's manuscript, with her father's blessing, and tells Elizabeth that she may be able to get it published. That night, William escorts Elizabeth to her room and, at her request, they sleep together for the first time (Chapter 11). The next few months are blissful, and the narrator's summary of the characters' happiness forms a resting point in the story (Chapter 11). This is where the first part of the narrative ends.

The second part of the narrative is entirely devoted to the "Wickham affair." In this part, too, the narrator reframes the concepts that are key to Austen's "Hunsford": pride and vanity. In "Goodnight Elizabeth," the narrator reassigns Mr. Darcy's character flaws to Elizabeth and vice versa. It is Elizabeth who has a history with Miss Wickham, and William who allows himself to be blinded by Miss Wickham's flattery. William is having a difficult time at work due to the financial crisis, and Elizabeth convinces him to hire a personal

assistant (Chapter 12). All goes well, until Elizabeth finally meets William's PA and recognises her as Cherie Wickham (Chapter 13). William is confused by the cold greeting between Elizabeth and Cherie, and Cherie later tells him that her father used to be a partner in Mr. Bennet's business, but that the latter refused to give Mr. Wickham his share of the profits (Chapter 13). In actual fact, the Wickhams stole the money of Mrs. Bennet's life insurance (Chapter 16). This reversal of circumstances has important implications for the characters of Elizabeth and William. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy's letter reveals that Mr. Wickham tried to seduce Georgiana, to gain control over her fortune and to exact revenge on Mr. Darcy (Austen, *Pride* 196). Yet Mr. Darcy does not publicly disgrace Mr. Wickham, which puts girls like Lydia Bennet in danger. He later attributes this to pride:

> The motive professed, was his conviction of its being owing to himself that Wickham's worthlessness had not been so well known, as to make it impossible for any young woman of character, to love or confide in him. He generously imputed the whole to his mistaken pride, and confessed that he had before thought it beneath him, to lay his private actions open to the world. (Austen, *Pride* 304-5)

In "Goodnight Elizabeth," the phrase "mistaken pride" is reassigned to Elizabeth. Elizabeth is afraid that Cherie is stealing from William, and that she is going to lose him (Chapter 14). Encouraged by Jane, she decides to warn him. When she is mentally preparing herself to do exactly that, the narrator writes: "She had to tell him. It was her fault he was being robbed by Cherie. *Through my mistaken pride*" (Chapter 15). Both the sentiment and the quote establish a link between Elizabeth's character in "Goodnight Elizabeth" and Mr. Darcy's character in *Pride and Prejudice*. Notably, however, the phrase is disconnected from the idea of humility, because Elizabeth uses the phrase *before* the story's second "Hunsford." Like the "un-Hunsfordised" Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth warns William about Cherie in veiled terms, asking him to take her word for it. In the course of the argument that follows, she uses words that are pronounced by Austen's Mr. Darcy ("You seem to take an eager interest in the young woman's concerns!") and he uses words that "belong" to Austen's Elizabeth (such as "And yet you can treat the mention of their misfortunes with contempt and ridicule!") (Chapter 15). While the accusations of Austen's Elizabeth ultimately make Mr. Darcy condemn his pride, they do not have the same effect on Karen Apenhorst's Elizabeth. In fact, towards the end of the story, William constructs mitigating circumstances for Elizabeth's pride, presenting her reaction as "acceptable" and "understandable" rather than wrong:

> As a result of the death of their mother and wife, the Bennet family had become a very close family. Elizabeth being the strong, intelligent and stubborn woman she was, was sure to defend her family against any accusation made. He had, by giving credit to Cherie's account of her dealings with the Bennet's, questioned the goodness of her beloved family. (Chapter 17)

Ultimately, then, Elizabeth's "pride" is reframed and grounded in her mental life. This changes the moral overtones of the term.

Something similar happens with regards to William's "vanity." At first, William has blind faith in Cherie, even after his sister Gina tells him that she has found inconsistencies in the accounts (Chapter 14). When Elizabeth tells William that Cherie is not to be trusted, therefore, they have an argument and end their relationship (Chapter 15). Elizabeth is hurt and writes him a letter before she leaves, in which she explains that the Wickhams embezzled the money of Mrs. Bennet's life insurance (Chapter 16). William feels "blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd," checks his accounts, and contacts the police (Chapter 17). The phrase "blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd" is lifted from Elizabeth's epiphany (Austen, *Pride* 201). Unlike Austen's Elizabeth, however, William attributes his behaviour to pride *and* vanity:

> Yes, Elizabeth should have been more open about her family history, but the blame was as much his as it was hers. He had played the offended party too well himself. He knew very well that he was considered a proud man, but where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will always be under good regulation, or at least that was what he had thought before.
>
> He, Fitzwilliam Darcy of Pemberley in Derbyshire possessed a superiority of mind and had his pride under good regulation. He could not have been more sorely mistaken. As soon as Elizabeth had informed him his employee was not to be trusted... No! Even before that he was somewhat annoyed with her for advising him, him, Fitzwilliam Darcy of Pemberley, to hire a personal assistant. She had been right of course, he should have hired a personal assistant long ago, but to be told how handle his business affairs by her, a person so wholly unconnected with the business, was not to be borne!
>
> Given that Darcy was having a moment of total honesty with himself, it seems inevitable that he would also consider his having been so totally incapable of recognizing Cherie Wickham's true character. He had been blinded by what a remarkable handsome appearance and the appealing figure of a woman could bestow. Yes, Cherie Wickham was a beautiful woman, he would not deny that. He had been flattered by her flattery. But she had nothing to Elizabeth, his Elizabeth. (Chapter 17)

At first sight, this epiphany resonates with a Christian discourse, and the principles that regulate a Christian *savoir-vivre*. In practice, however, William does not evaluate his behaviour by "absolute" norms, because the norms he uses only apply to particular circumstances and particular spheres of life. As the quote above suggests, he actually puts his actions down to professional pride, which caused him to resent Elizabeth's advice about his business affairs, and to personal vanity, because he was influenced by Cherie's beauty and attention (Chapter 17). With this epiphany, the final obstacle between Elizabeth and William is removed. With William's help, Cherie and her accomplice are brought to trial (Chapter 18). It turns out that Cherie wanted to take revenge on Elizabeth, whom she blames

for her difficult childhood (Chapter 19-20). Encouraged by Richard, William goes to see Elizabeth on one of her book signings (Chapter 22-3). They both want to take the blame for what happened, and their discussion ends with a kiss and a proposal (Chapter 23-4). The narrative ends with a wedding and the expectation of a child (Epilogue). The point I want to make, however, is that the "wrongness" of Mr. Darcy's behaviour depends for a large part on his situation, at that point in time. If Elizabeth had not been his girlfriend but, say, a woman at a party who was equally unconnected to his business, it would not have been as "wrong" for him to be annoyed by her advice; if he had been a single man, his interest in Cherie Wickham would not have been as "wrong" as it is in his current situation. The passage quoted, in other words, does not draw attention to William's pride, and the "sin of pride" more generally, but to the fact that William's behaviour is governed by various, at times contradictory sets of rules and regulations, which are related to his capacity as a businessman, boyfriend, or heterosexual man. This reading is thrown into relief by the reader comments to this story.

Fan Reading and Mitigation

Even though Karen Apenhorst's text still uses moral concepts that have ethical, Christian connotations, the reader comments are much more concerned with the mental life of the characters. These readers do not evaluate the behaviour of Elizabeth and William by means of "absolute" moral concepts, such as "vanity" and "pride." They attribute the characters' behaviour to a complex collection of circumstances and psychological motivations, and base their evaluations on that context.

Like the second Hunsford of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, the second "Hunsford" of "Goodnight Elizabeth" caused quite a stir on the boards of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. This debate revolved around two instances of "Out of Character" behaviour: the fact that Elizabeth does not simply tell William about her history with Cherie Wickham, and the fact that William seems to have more faith in Cherie than in Elizabeth. Like in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, moreover, the comments to "Goodnight Elizabeth" are focused almost exclusively on the "mimetic" dimensions of the characters.[21] Many fans comment that Mr. Darcy's blind faith in Cherie, rather than Elizabeth and even Gina, is implausible. Some remark, for instance, that William's faith in Cherie suggests that he is "dense" or stubborn while he is supposed to be madly in love with Elizabeth (comments to Chapters 15 and 16). Another fan remarks that, while Austen's Elizabeth believed Wickham because she was

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[21] As was the case for *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, however, some fans discuss the "synthetic" dimension of character. One fan examines Elizabeth's behaviour on a synthetic level. He notes, for instance, that the tone of Elizabeth's letter is too formal—or too "Darcyish"—for Elizabeth's voice, and he attributes this to the fact that the author needed "an argument, a Hunsford, and Wickham as the focal point for it" (comments to Chapter 15 and 16). Another fan emphasises that it is a fan writer's prerogative to write what they want, and the readers' lot to agree with them (comments to Chapter 15 and 16). In fact, this fan suggests that comments that challenge the writer's views may be taken from the boards (comments to Chapter 15 and 16).

young and angry with Mr. Darcy, Karen Apenhorst's Mr. Darcy has no such excuse: he is a mature, competent businessman, who knows that Elizabeth loves him (comments to Chapters 15 and 16; comments to Chapter 17, 18, and 19). Yet another fan believes that William should have given Elizabeth the benefit of the doubt and, while he should not have fired Cherie on so little evidence, he could at least have kept a closer eye on her (comments to Chapters 17, 18, and 19). Yet another fan notes that Elizabeth's behaviour is odd too, because does not simply explain what happened between her family and Cherie while she was very outspoken in the previous chapters (comments to Chapters 15 and 16). These comments are clearly focus on the "mimetic" aspect of Elizabeth and William, and particularly on the relation between their minds and behaviour.

In fact, some fans go even further, creating their own "readings" of the minds of William and Elizabeth in an attempt to explain their odd behaviour. One fan wonders, for instance, if William has a "tendre" for Cherie Wickham (comments to Chapters 15 and 16). Another fan believes that the behaviour of William and Elizabeth is gendered. William behaves like a certain type of business man, namely the kind that takes any advice about business matters as criticism of their competence (Chapter 15 and 16). She points out that Austen's Mr. Darcy would have reacted in a similar way if Elizabeth had questioned his judgment about an employee on the estate, unless she was actually involved in the management of the estate (comments to Chapters 15 and 16). She points out that William (and Mr. Darcy) would want Elizabeth to see him as steady, competent, and able to take care of her (comments to Chapter 15 and 16). She also points out that, like Austen's Elizabeth with Mr. Wickham, William is flattered by Cherie's trust in him—even more so because she is an attractive female in need (comments to Chapter 15 and 16; comments to Chapter 17, 18, and 19). This makes him very protective of Cherie and reluctant to hurt her without proof (comments to Chapters 15 and 16). This means that William's reluctance is also due to the fact that Elizabeth does not prove that Cherie is not to be trusted (comments to Chapters 15 and 16; comments to Chapters 17, 18, and 19). According to this fan, Elizabeth also does a "typical female thing," because she is actually setting William a test: she believes that, if he truly cared for her, he would accept her warning without proof (comments to Chapters 15 and 16; comments to Chapter 17, 18, and 19). The fan, for her part, believes that this is unfair because Elizabeth cannot ask him to trust her if she does not trust him enough to tell her story, so that he can make an informed decision (comments to Chapters 17, 18, and 19). She concludes that Elizabeth is as much to blame as William (comments to Chapters 17, 18, and 19). Another fan disagrees with this reading, saying that William should only be swayed by trusted employees, such as Mrs. Reynolds, and that his relationship with Elizabeth is doomed if he is so easily distracted by other women (comments to Chapter 15 and 16; comments to Chapter 17, 18, and 19).

As in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner,* these analyses are related to the entire "context"—not just to what happened in the previous chapters, but also to speculations and hopes about the chapters to come. Notably, these hopes concern the mental life of the characters. Several

fans agree that both Elizabeth and William need "some serious self-examination" (comments to Chapters 17, 18, and 19). One fan adds that this is what makes the characters so likable and compatible in canon: they are both willing and able to "honestly examine their problems, admit their faults and learn from their mistakes" (comments to Chapters 17, 18 and 19). This does not mean that there is a consensus about the "lessons" the characters should learn. One fan argues that, while it is normal for William to be affected by other women, he should admit his faults and apologise; another fan hopes that William will "redeem himself" and never again let his attraction to another woman drive a wedge between him and Elizabeth (because, to her, Mr. Darcy is not like other men) (comments to Chapters 17, 18, and 19). These reader comments suggest that it is reductive to say that these fans disapprove of the behaviour of Elizabeth and William because they are "proud" or "vain." They do not just disapprove of William's behaviour because it suggests he cares what other people think of him, but because it suggests that he cares about what *Cherie* thinks about him, which in turn suggests that he does not love Elizabeth as much as the previous chapters suggest, or that he does not respect her opinion, or that he is not as mature and intelligent as the previous chapters suggest. Similarly, these fans do not disapprove of Elizabeth's behaviour because she is proud while she should be humble, but because there is no reason not to share her history, or because it suggests that she does not trust William as much as the previous chapters suggest. While it is possible to relate these specific motivations to "absolute" moral concepts, these fan readers do not explicitly do so. Ultimately, the norm that makes the *savoir-vivre* of these characters acceptable or unacceptable, "understandable" or "incomprehensible," "appropriate" or "misplaced," "logical" or "odd" is not a clearcut ethical norm that is embedded in a Christian ethics, but a complex set of circumstances and rules that influence the behaviour of men, women, and couples—and in some cases even this particular couple, in Jane Austen fan fiction.

2.4   Conclusion

My analysis suggests that there is an important difference between the way in which textual "intersections" of evaluation, mind reading, and character are used in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, on the one hand, and Jack C.'s *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth" on the other. More specifically, these three texts tend to frame evaluations of the *savoir-vivre* of the characters in different ways, inviting the reader to understand those evaluations in terms of different norms. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's confrontation with Mr. Darcy makes her evaluate her own behaviour by an ethical, Anglican norm for human behaviour. Starting from what she feels to be an unquestionable truth, namely that vanity is a sin and humility a virtue, she condemns her

past attitude towards other people, in general, and Mr. Darcy in particular. Mr. Darcy undergoes a similar development. Because Austen refers repeatedly to concepts that have a similar, ethical connotation, the reader is invited to interpret the novel's evaluations by ethical norms. It is true that these norms are qualified to a certain extent on the level of the text's "ethos." However, Austen's novel never undercuts them completely, and ultimately presents their "outline" as a valuable standard for behaviour that contributes to personal happiness. This is no longer the case in *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and "Goodnight Elizabeth." In these fan fiction texts, Austen's seemingly "absolute" moral concepts are reframed, so that they are more clearly grounded in the minds of the characters. In *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, the behavioàur of Jack C.'s Elizabeth is influenced by vanity, but also by her feelings for Mr. Darcy. In fact, the text suggests that Elizabeth's feelings are the bigger force to be reckoned with. The narrator draws attention to Elizabeth's feelings by noting that she first fails to recognise that her feelings influence her behaviour; he presents the two "Hunsfords" of the narrative as a direct result of her struggle against, and the strength of, her feelings for Mr. Darcy; and he highlights the "uncontrollable" sexual dimension of the relationship between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. In "Goodnight Elizabeth," this increased emphasis on the individual mind is even more striking. In the first part of the story, William's poor manners are attributed to shyness rather than pride, while his insult is presented, not as a direct result of his selfish nature, but as a misunderstanding. In much the same way, Elizabeth has an epiphany about her feelings for William, rather than her vanity. In the second part of "Goodnight Elizabeth," Austen's "pride" and "vanity" are also reframed in such a way that they lose some of their "absolute" resonance. Elizabeth's "pride" is connected to her love for her family, and her need to protect them. Similarly, William does not evaluate his behaviour by norms that regulate his relation to every human being, at all times, but by norms that only apply to his specific relations with Cherie (as an attractive employee who is not his girlfriend) and Elizabeth (who is the love of his life, but unconnected to his business). This emphasis on the individual mind, circumstances, and relatively "immanent" norms, is reflected in the reader comments to *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and "Goodnight Elizabeth."

Ultimately, in short, the fan fiction texts and reader comments under discussion point to similar "preferences." The "rightness" or "wrongness" of the characters' savoir-vivre is not usually measured by a single, ethical yardstick, but depends on a wide range of circumstances. In the case of *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, Elizabeth's severest misreading is presented as "understandable" because it springs from her love for Mr. Darcy (by the text) or as "unacceptable" because it springs from a stupidity, immaturity, or irrationality that jars with the supposed intelligence of Elizabeth Bennet (by the reader comments). In "Goodnight Elizabeth," the rudeness of Karen Apenhorst's William is presented as "acceptable" because it springs from his shyness or his feelings for Elizabeth. Similarly, the "pride" of Elizabeth is "acceptable" because it is grounded in her love for her family (according to the text). The debate about William's blind faith in Cherie, or Elizabeth's

reluctance to share her history, unfolds in a similar way (in the reader comments). This suggests that the "discourse domain" that shaped these texts has a higher degree of "individualisation" than the "discourse domain" that shaped *Pride and Prejudice*.

Chapter 3
Jane Austen Fan Fiction and Manners

3.1 Introduction:

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is a prime example of the novel of manners. It evokes a storyworld that revolves around the social behaviour, customs, and moral values of a sophisticated and complex society. In the previous chapter, I have noted that the behaviour of Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet is firmly grounded in her dispositions and morals. This makes the "manners" that are presented in *Pride and Prejudice* similar to the "manners" that are prescribed in courtesy literature and conduct books, which were immensely popular between 1760 and 1820. It is difficult to tell to what extent these didactic works were actually put into practice, but they were certainly meant to teach young people, especially women, how to conduct themselves with "propriety." In *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774), for example, John Gregory sets out to do the following:

> While I explain to you that system of conduct which I think will tend most to your honour and happiness, I shall, at the same time, endeavour to point out those virtues and accomplishments which render you most respectable and most amiable in the eyes of my own sex. (5)

While "conduct" refers to the niceties of social intercourse, "virtues" relates more to ethics. In this respect, the manners described here are similar to Elizabeth Bennet's. However, *Pride and Prejudice* produces a distinctive set of "categorisations and classifications," to use the phrasing of Leavenworth and Isaksson (see Section 1.2.2.2). In Austen's novels, manners are only "sincerely good" when they are "bound up with goodness of heart"— when a character's "good" behaviour is the result of a "good" character of mind, "good" morals, and "good" habits (Byrne 300; cf. Fritzer 6-7; Margolis 24, 25, 36). This is suggested by the narrator's representation of Elizabeth Bennet's moral mind-reading. As I have shown, Elizabeth is constantly trying to determine the reasons for Mr. Darcy's behaviour, such as his abilities, inclinations, and morals. In addition, she evaluates these

traits, classifying them as "good" or "bad" by means of ethical norms. Eventually, however, she is forced to examine her own manners. In the previous chapter, I emphasised that she realises that her judgment has been coloured by vanity. It is worthwhile to note, however, that Elizabeth also realises that her behaviour towards Mr. Darcy lacked "civility," because she never spoke to him "without rather wishing to give [him] pain than not" (Austen, *Pride* 147, 359). She sees "impertinence" where Mr. Darcy sees "the liveliness of [her] mind" (359). Elizabeth's manners are only fully developed, in other words, when she has changed her disposition (by curbing her vanity) and her behaviour (by treating Mr. Darcy with goodwill and civility).

As the previous chapter suggests, Elizabeth's "moral mind reading" does not exist in a vacuum. Her thinking is influenced by the thoughts of other characters, or rather what she believes those thoughts to be. Although Mary Bennet's reflections are generally ignored by the other characters, she is right to point out that "vanity," unlike pride, relates "to what we would have others think of us" (Austen, *Pride* 21). Elizabeth is vain precisely because she is influenced by what she believes others think of her. When she exclaims that she was pleased by the "preference" of Mr. Wickham and offended by the "neglect" of Mr. Darcy, she is actually saying that she acted on the assumption, or the idea, that Mr. Wickham admired her and Mr. Darcy did not.[1] It is important to note, however, that Elizabeth's behaviour is also influenced by what she believes groups of people are thinking, such as the inhabitants of Meryton. When Elizabeth tells Mr. Wickham that she thinks Mr. Darcy is "very disagreeable," he suggests that most people would be astonished to hear her opinion, and that she would probably "not express it quite so strongly anywhere else" (Austen, *Pride* 76). Elizabeth replies that she feels free to express her opinion about Mr. Darcy in "any house in the neighbourhood, except Netherfield," precisely because "[e]very body is disgusted with his pride" (76). Here, Elizabeth's behaviour (namely, her talking freely about Mr. Darcy) is clearly influenced by what she believes the inhabitants of Meryton are thinking. Elizabeth's mind, in short, is very much influenced by her social environment.

To analyse how fans represent this aspect, I will extend my heuristic toolbox with Alan Palmer's work on the "social mind" (*Fictional*; *Social*). Palmer's theories are compatible with the model of narrative evaluation I have developed so far, but they also draw attention to the "social" dimension of norms. In the previous chapter, I used the insights of David Herman, Catherine Emmott, and other narrative theorists to shed light on evaluations. I argued that readers use "schemata" to make sense of textual cues that describe moments when characters evaluate the storyworld or are evaluated, either by other characters or by the narrator. When a passage of text contains cues that relate to an evaluation, in other words, readers will construct a "contextual frame" that contains the character's act of

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[1] Like Alan Palmer, I believe that there is a "thought-action continuum"—that is, that there is "a continuum rather than a simple dichotomy between action descriptions and descriptions of consciousness" (Palmer, *Social* 136, 137). While "preference" and "neglect" are nouns that describe the act of preferring and neglecting, they also imply something about the frame of mind that underpins those actions.

evaluation, and they will use general knowledge about evaluations to reconstruct that act. In addition, they may draw conclusions about the character's "evaluative competence"— that is, the character's ability to make evaluations. That is why I placed my discussion of evaluations in the context of Alan Palmer's "continuing consciousness frame." I did not point out, however, that Palmer's work also highlights the "social" dimension of norms. That is, it suggests that norms, such as the ones Elizabeth uses to evaluate Mr. Darcy, tend to be shared, developed, and maintained by groups of people who think similarly on certain issues. In this chapter, I use Palmer's discussion of the "social mind" to examine how the relation between individual characters and such groups are presented in *Pride and Prejudice* and in four fan fiction texts. I demonstrate that, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy learn to revise their relationship with such "intermental units" as the inhabitants of Meryton and Lambton. Crucially, they also found an "intermental unit" of their own at Pemberley, with members who think similarly on certain issues. This implies that, at the end of the novel, several norms are taken for granted, especially those that are fundamental to class, gender roles, and other "established" categories that give structure to the social order of Austen's storyworld. These fundamental norms are "denaturalised" in several Jane Austen fics. This becomes apparent when you analyse them with Palmer's concepts. In Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears*, GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and hele's *Not Every Gentleman*, Austen's characters are aligned or juxtaposed with new "intermental units," each with their own distinctive group norms. These groups are based on the "lateral resonance" of Austen's storyworld. They are not based, in other words, on the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice*, but on the "encyclopaedia" of knowledge that can be collected about it. Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears* builds on inferences about the high society of Regency London; GraceCS's *Given Good Principles* uses references to the Georgian Anglican Church as a jumping point; Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy* is based on references to norms that relate to status and standing; and hele's *Not Every Gentleman* makes use of the gender norms that are implied by Austen's storyworld. In each fan fiction text, these groups make Austen's characters think about "group norms" that are taken for granted at the end of *Pride and Prejudice*. This makes the norms in question more optional than they are in Jane Austen's storyworld. After all, the fics under discussion evoke storyworlds in which different sets of norms exist, advocated by different groups of characters, or existing in a different hierarchy. Ultimately, it is up to individual characters to deal with this array of possibilities, importing certain norms into their own biography and giving them force in the process. Although Linnea Eileen, GraceCS, Jamie, and hele all introduce a different "units" into the storyworld of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, in short, all of their stories ultimately change the degree of "individualisation," in Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's sense of the word, of Austen's storyworld.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

3.2.1 Intermental Thought

Up to now, I have examined Elizabeth's mind from what Alan Palmer calls an "internalist" perspective. Seen from this vantage point, the mind is comprised of aspects that are "inner, introspective, private, solitary, individual, psychological, mysterious, and detached" ("Social" 160; *Fictional* 130). Palmer calls thinking that is grounded in this plane of the mind "intramental" thought (*Fictional* 161). As my theoretical chapter suggests, it is this individual type of thinking that is usually studied in cognitive narratology. Palmer, in contrast, takes an "externalist" perspective, in accordance with several studies of the real mind. In this view, the mind is also comprised of aspects that are "outer, active, public, social, behavioural, evident, embodied, and engaged" ("Social" 160; *Fictional* 130). Palmer believes that, just like real cognition, fictional cognition is closely related to the character's social environment:

> Fictional minds, like real minds, form part of extended cognitive networks. We will never understand how individual minds work if we cut them off from the larger, collective units to which they belong. . . . The study of the presentation of consciousness in fiction should take place not only *within* individual characters but also in the spaces *between* them. (*Social* 26-7)

I have already given a few examples of this in my introduction. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's thinking is not just influenced by her idea of Mr. Wickham and Mr. Darcy's thoughts, but also by the collective "thoughts" of groups, such as the inhabitants of Meryton. Palmer defines a "group" as "any aggregate of characters, including a pair and even including people who may not be particularly close, but who are, for however short a period, thinking intermentally" (*Fictional* 219). Here, "intermental" thought refers to thinking, but also problem solving, decision making, evaluating, and other instances of mental functioning that are shared by groups of people (*Fictional* 161, 218; *Social* 41, 44). In what follows, I will illustrate the finer points of these concepts with the "ton," even though I will also focus on other "groups" in my case studies.

The "ton" refers to the most fashionable set of London society, typically headed by peeresses. It is a prototypical instance of "fanon," or fantextual convention, because the members of London high society are hardly mentioned in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. At most, the "ton" is part of the "lateral resonance" of Austen's novel. Mr. Darcy has the largest income and the best connections of all of Austen's heroes.[2] His estate returns an estimated income of ten thousand pounds a year, which is roughly the equivalent of four

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[2] Although there are some minor characters who outshine him: Mr. Rushworth (twelve thousand a year) and Miss Tilney's husband (a Viscount) (Austen, *Mansfield* 38; *Northanger* 234).

hundred and ninety thousand pounds in today's money (Nisbet). His maternal uncle is an earl (Austen, *Pride* 166, 179), and his "great uncle" a judge (51). His aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, emphasises that both Mr. Darcy and her daughter Anne are "descended on the maternal side, from the same noble line," that their fathers' families are "respectable, honourable, and ancient, though untitled," and that their "fortune on both sides is splendid" (336-7). This may explain why many fans infer the "ton" is a part of Mr. Darcy's life. The very fact that fans use the term "ton" while it is not mentioned in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* indicates that the "lateral resonance" of Austen's text is as important to fans as the actual words on the page. After all, the word *was* used in the late eighteenth century, in two senses. On the one hand, it referred to "fashion" or to a "fashionable air or style" ("Ton"). On the other, it was used to refer to people of fashion, or to fashionable society ("Ton"). This is the sense in which Austen fans tend to use the term. In addition, they often refer to the "encyclopaedia" of knowledge that exists about the "ton," referring to Almack's Assembly Rooms in London or to the peeresses of London high society.[3] The "ton" is a force to be reckoned with in many Regency fics. This explains why it is parodied in Katharina's "A Story for Everyone":

> Darcy, Lizzy, the Gardiners, Lady Catherine & Anne: *travel to London*
>
> Darcy: *leads Lizzy to a barrel*
>
> Lady Catherine: Elizabeth, this is the ton. My grandfather fashioned it with his own two hands.
>
> Lizzy: Huh?
>
> Anne: It's a family tradition. You have to take it by storm.
>
> Lizzy: *takes the ton by storm*
>
> Darcy: *is very proud of his wife* (Part 4)

As this parody suggests, there are a number of interpretive conventions about the ton. Apart from common plot points, such as Elizabeth taking the "ton" by storm, there are also several conventions about its "group norms." Members of the "ton" tend to be fixated on manners, for instance, and they are usually overly concerned with rank (see Section 3.3.2.2).

Palmer approaches intermental thought as a "subframe" of the continuing consciousness frame (*Fictional* 218). This subframe—which Palmer sometimes calls a "group frame"— allows readers to ascribe thoughts and actions to the collective consciousness of a group of people, rather than the consciousness of an individual (*Fictional* 218; "Social" 163). When

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[3] For more information on the Almack's and other facts related to the "ton," see Fullerton 61 and Cole.

a group is "stable," "fairly long-lasting," and when its members employ intermental thinking "regularly," they become "intermental units" (*Social* 46, 41). Palmer distinguishes between small units, such as couples; medium units, such as a party of people; and large units, such as "society" ("Social" 163; *Social* 47-8). The "ton" is typically presented as such an "intermental unit," which may or may not be comprised of smaller units. This is not just indicated by fan fiction texts, but also by the way fans discuss the "ton." In 2009, for instance, a number of fans had such a discussion in the "Tea Room" of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. The discussion was sparked by one fan, who asked the community about a trope that is closely related to the fantextual convention Katharina satirises, and to conventions about the group norms of the "ton." Many fan fiction texts recount how Elizabeth Darcy takes on fashionable but disdainful members of the "ton." This made the fan in question wonder why there is "such an emphasis in P&P ff on Elizabeth being accepted by the ton," and why so many fics "assume that Darcy is involved in that social set to enough of a degree that he cares" (*Dwiggie.com*, "Random"). One fan argued that "our interest in the ton is because it has a sort of elegant and dramatic appeal and is a potential source of conflict for a story" ("Random"). Another fan added:

> . . . Elizabeth is also one of the most vivacious, witty and impertinent Austen heroines, and I think many authors like to see her challenging society, or the 'ton' (in the same graceful way she handles Caroline Bingley in canon, since there seems to be much ff portraying Caroline and her evil cronies---or people similar to Caroline---as the main antagonists preventing Elizabeth's entry into the ton). ("Random")

This fan distinguishes Elizabeth Bennet from a particular group, namely "Caroline Bingley and her evil cronies—or people similar to Caroline." This group is an intermental unit because its members share a way of thinking.

3.2.2   Intermental Units, Group Norms, and Character Development

Palmer believes that a "particularly important function of intermental thinking and communicative action is the formation and maintenance of group norms and conventions" (*Fictional* 227). "Communicative action" is very closely related to intermental thinking. In accordance with James Wertsch, Palmer defines communicative action as an interaction between at least two people who "seek to reach an understanding about the present situation and future plans in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement" (Palmer, *Fictional* 167). According to Palmer, many descriptions of this type of action actually imply instances of intermental thinking (*Social* 136, 137; cf. *Fictional* 212, 222). After Charlotte Lucas has told Elizabeth that she is engaged to Mr. Collins, for instance, Austen's narrator writes: "Elizabeth quietly answered 'Undoubtedly;'—and after an awkward pause, they returned to the rest of the family" (*Pride* 123). Although "returned" describes an action, it

implies that Elizabeth and Charlotte silently agree to end the conversation. This is an instance of intermental thinking.

In my case studies, I do not just use Palmer's concepts to analyse how intermental thinking and communicative action help to form and maintain "group norms," but also how they can change an individual's attitude towards such norms. In this context, the question becomes: how do intermental units fit into the overall organisation of the narrative, and what do they contribute to the "meaning" of the character's development? In Palmer's view, readers ultimately construct what he calls "cognitive narratives" (*Social* 12).[4] He defines these as:

> the whole of a character's mind in action: the total perceptual and cognitive viewpoint, ideological worldview, memories of the past, and the set of beliefs, desires, intentions, motives, and plans for the future of each character in the story as presented in the discourse. . . . The results of an analysis of a single fictional mind can then be enmeshed with those of the other minds in the storyworld, with their own [cognitive] narratives, their own motives, intentions, and plans. The combination of all of these forms the plot of the novel. (*Social* 11-2; cf. *Fictional* 15)

Palmer argues, in other words, that readers do not just reconstruct the minds of characters, but also use that structure to organise the events of the narrative into a coherent story (Palmer, *Fictional* 176). Readers use their idea of a character's consciousness to relate "the present event or action to past regularities and patterns of events and to expectations regarding future patterns" (178). Indeed, the relation between individual characters and groups is a major means to advance the plot. Palmer believes that "a large amount of the subject matter of novels is the formation, development, and breakdown of . . . intermental systems" ("Social" 161).[5] In what follows, I argue that the relation between individual

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[4] Palmer originally referred to these as "embedded" narratives, but dropped the term in favour of "cognitive" narratives to avoid confusion with existing terms (*Social* 12).

[5] In this respect, Palmer's work resembles that of possible-worlds theorist Thomas Pavel. Pavel has argued that authors can create "various narrative stylistic effects" by dividing the imaginary worlds of plot-based narratives into contrasting "narrative domains" (113). From a syntactic point of view, a narrative domain is a set of crucial actions performed by the same character. From a semantic point of view, however, a narrative domain is the system of rules that a character follows when he or she assesses a particular situation and decides how to react to it. According to Pavel, this semantic dimension can be described in modal terms, because the predicates that name actions are often modified by modal operators. He concludes that

> a plot is split into *more than one* narrative domain, and is accordingly divided into several distinct sets of propositions. The nature of these propositions is heterogeneous. A domain contains ontological, epistemological, axiological and action propositions, summing up, respectively, what is the case in that domain, what is known in it, what is good/better/bad/worse, and what may/has to be done in that domain. (106)

Pavel illustrates this with a discussion of the ontological and epistemic rules that govern a small corpus of English Renaissance dramas. He argues, for example, that the imaginary world of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* is

characters and group norms is more stable or certain in *Pride and Prejudice* than in *No More Tears*, *Given Good Principles*, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and *Not Every Gentleman.*

3.3 "Group Norms" in *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Austen Fan Fiction

3.3.1 Manners in *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Austen Fan Fiction

In *Jane Austen and the Eighteenth-Century Courtesy Books*, Penelope Joan Fritzer analyses the eighteenth-century notion of manners into "surface" manners and "deep" manners. While "surface" manners are dictated by fashion, as is often the case for matters of style and etiquette, "deep" manners reflect a person's character and principles (4-5). Fritzer believes that this distinction is present in all of Austen's novels (4-5). In effect, the only time Jane Austen uses the word "ton," it serves to make precisely this distinction. In *Mansfield Park*, Mary Crawford is surprised that Edmund Bertram would choose to be a clergyman, because the profession does not give him the chance to distinguish himself (86). Edmund answers that, while it is true that clergymen must not "head mobs" or "set the ton in dress," they gain a situation

> which has the charge of all that is of the first importance to mankind, individually or collectively considered, temporally and eternally,—which has the guardianship of religion and morals, and consequently of the manners which result from their influence. (86)

Later in the conversation, Edmund explicitly contrasts these manners, which are grounded in "religion and morals," with manners that are not. He notes that the impact of clergymen is the smallest in London, because clergymen are "lost there in the crowds of their parishioners," making it difficult for the "parish and neighbourhood" to understand their

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divided into domains on an epistemic level, because some characters possess crucial knowledge while others do not. This is not uncommon in Elizabethan plays, which tend to be set in a world where a slap in the face or a vague suspicion of infidelity is enough to kill. This forces the characters to behave in a circumspect, secretive, and cunning manner. Kyd's play is also divided into two ontological sections, because there is a clear boundary between the "supernatural" realm of the spirits of Andrea and Revenge, and the "natural" realm of the play's other characters (108). Because Palmer's model is based on the cognitive sciences rather than analytical philosophy, his "domains" are governed by a wider range of "rules," namely group norms. I believe that this allows me to describe a wider range of aesthetic effects.

"private character" or to observe their "general conduct" (87). He is speaking, rather, of their impact on the manners of "the nation at large":

> And with regard to their [clergymen] influencing public manners, Miss Crawford must not misunderstand me, or suppose I mean to call them the arbiters of good-breeding, the regulators of refinement and courtesy, the masters of the ceremonies of life. The *manners* I speak of might rather be called *conduct*, perhaps, the result of good principles; the effect, in short, of those doctrines which it is their duty to teach and recommend; and it will, I believe, be everywhere found, that as the clergy are, or are not what they ought to be, so are the rest of the nation. (87; cf. Duckworth 62)

Arguably, Edmund is implicitly contrasting this "conduct" with the manners of the ton, who were based in London and were the "undisputed arbiters on all things style" (Cole). In any case, Edmund suggests that, ideally, "primary social gestures (manners) incorporate moral intentions, which are themselves founded in religious principles" (Duckworth 62). He uses an evaluating norm, in short, by which "deep" manners are of greater importance than "surface" manners.

As I have noted, "sincerely good manners" tend to be "bound up with goodness of heart" in Austen's novels (see Section 3.1). This is precisely what makes Elizabeth Bennet different from Caroline Bingley. As Paula Byrne notes, the "polite society" Austen portrays was "predicated upon strict standards of decorum, particularly for women" (300). For one thing, young women of a marriageable age were not allowed to walk alone in a public place, unchaperoned (301). Yet, as I noted in the previous chapter, the reader is invited to approve of the fact that Elizabeth walks three miles to see her sister at Netherfield, "crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping overs stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity" (Austen, *Pride* 33). Elizabeth's display ultimately serves to discredit the Bingley sisters, who cannot enter into Elizabeth's reasoning and see that Jane's well-being is more important—to Elizabeth, to Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy, and, it is suggested, to the narrator—than "decorum" (see Section 2.2.1.1). What is more, they show bad "deep" manners because they start "abusing" Elizabeth "as soon as she was out of the room" (Austen, *Pride* 36). Conduct books of the time are uniformly damning about gossip. The *Young Ladies Conduct*, for instance, advises young ladies to let their "Conversation be free from Scandal, Envy, or Detraction; for there are several Ways to keep up Discourse upon different Subjecks . . . rather than to talk of what may happen to be prejudicial to any Body" (qtd. in Fritzer 52). The Bingley sisters clearly sin against this precept.

The question is: which "categorisations and classifications" does this representation of manners, and the principles that underpin them, establish? Over the past two centuries, Austen's representation of manners has been examined through various critical and philosophical lenses. Early reviewers did not usually question Austen's representation of the mores and social structures of Regency society. This is particularly striking in James Edward Austen-Leigh's *Memoir of Jane Austen* (1870), in which Austen's nephew praises

the fidelity with which they [Austen's novels] represent the opinions and manners of the class of society in which the author lived early in this century. They do this the more faithfully on account of the very deficiency with which they have been sometimes charged—namely, that they make no attempt to raise the standard of human life, but merely represent it as it was. They certainly were not written to support any theory or inculcate any particular moral, except indeed the great moral which is to be equally gathered from an observation of the course of actual life— namely, the superiority of high over low principles, and of greatness over littleness of mind. (153-4)[6]

Austen-Leigh acknowledges that Austen's representation of manners is structured by a particular norm, which determines what is "high" and "low," "great" and "little," but he suggests that this hierarchy is natural rather than sociocultural. This "natural" superiority of one set of principles over another is, of course, challenged by twentieth-century theories on the nature of power, ideology, and identity politics. This shift in thinking is already visible in Lionel Trilling's "Manners, Morals, and the Novel" (1948), where manners are defined as

a culture's hum and buzz of implication. I mean the whole evanescent context of its explicit statements. It is that part of a culture which is made up of half-uttered or unuttered or unutterable expressions of value. They are hinted at by small actions, sometimes by the arts of dress or decoration, sometimes by tone, gesture, emphasis or rhythm, sometimes by the words that are used with a special frequency or a special meaning. They are the things that for good or bad draw the people of a culture together and that separate them from the people of another culture. (12)

Trilling emphasises—in a way that seems to anticipate the insights of Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, and others—that "in any complex culture there is not a single system of manners but a conflicting variety of manners, and that what we mean by a culture is the adjustment of this conflict" (13). This ideological dimension of manners is more fully explored by feminist Austen critics.[7] In *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that Austen's acceptance of society's image of the "proper lady" undercuts the development of her heroines, who become more critical and independent in their judgment (Nazar 146). In "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl"

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[6] It seems, then, that James-Edward Austen-Leigh assumes that his aunt endorsed the mores and social structures of the society she lived in. This assumption fits into a distinctly Victorian image of Jane Austen that was first developed by her brother Henry. After Austen's death in 1817, Henry saw to it that *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were published in one volume. Although his sister had always published her novels anonymously, he decided to preface this volume with a "Biographical Notice of the Author" (1817). In this "Notice," he presents his sister as "a kind of domestic saint," as "a sweet-tempered recluse who wrote novels of limited scope but great insight" (Mazzeno 13-4; cf. Johnson, *Cults* 25-6).

[7] For an overview of the influence of feminism in Austen studies between 1976 and 1990, see Mazzeno 107-130. Also see Dow and Hanson 8-9.

(1991), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick examines *Sense and Sensibility* through the lens of Michel Foucault's notion of social disciplining. She sheds new light on the behaviour of Marianne Dashwood by discussing it against the background of the disciplinary discourses that grew up around onanism in the nineteenth century (820, 825, 826-7). Barbara K. Seeber (1999), finally, takes Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogism as a point of departure, and points out that the ideology that underpins Austen's novels cannot be equated with the moral of the life story of her heroines (224). She argues that *Sense and Sensibility* "explores the struggle to achieve ideological dominance" (223). The novel does not side with Elinor Dashwood or with Marianne Dashwood, but "illuminates a world of contesting ideas and shows that in this war of ideas, it is the strongest, those who can make others 'submit' . . . , who survive" (223). Unlike Austen-Leigh, these scholars assume that Austen's novels contain more than one set of "manners," each of which establishes different classifications and categorisations. As I will demonstrate, *No More Tears*, *Given Good Principles*, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and *Not Every Gentleman* amplify this tension. They introduce new "intermental units" into the world of *Pride and Prejudice*, creating a struggle for dominance between the "group norms" of these groups and "group norms" that are accepted as fact in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

3.3.2 Group Norms in *Pride and Prejudice*, *No More Tears*, *Given Good Principles*, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and *Not Every Gentleman*

3.3.2.1 *Pride and Prejudice*

As I have already noted, Elizabeth's thinking is influenced by the thinking of the inhabitants of Meryton. In "Community and Cognition in *Pride and Prejudice*," William Deresiewicz discusses this influence in some depth. I would therefore like to use his argument as a point of departure. Deresiewicz shows, very convincingly, that *Pride and Prejudice* deals with Elizabeth's "struggle to wake herself out of a community in which she is all too comfortably embedded" (504). Most importantly, he shows that the community of Meryton does not just function as "a set of social activities and behavioral norms," but also "as a set of cognitive processes, or in other words, mental habits" (504). Although Deresiewicz does not use the concept, this shared way of thinking makes the community of Meryton into what Alan Palmer would call a medium-sized intermental unit. Examining descriptions of intermental thought, Deresiewicz concludes that the community of Meryton has a tendency to use the "deductive logic of the syllogism," is not concerned about "scrupulousness" of report or observation, and resists contradiction once its mind is made up (505-6). He also shows that, even though Elizabeth has a tendency to expose and mock conventions, her judgment of Mr. Darcy is still shaped by the community in which she is embedded (507). Most

importantly, the "movement of the word 'pride' through the narrative and into Elizabeth's voice and mind follows the course . . . from community to family to individual" (507). In effect, when Mr. Darcy first insults Elizabeth at the Meryton assembly, she has "no very cordial feelings towards him," but she still tells her story "with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in any thing ridiculous" (Austen, *Pride* 14; cf. Section 2.3.2.2). It is the "gentlemen" and "ladies" present who are first disgusted with Mr. Darcy's manners, declaring him "to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased" (Austen, *Pride* 12). Mrs. Bennet then brings this opinion into the Bennet household (15, 21). When the ladies of Longbourn and Lucas Lodge discuss the assembly the following morning, she remarks that "every body says he is ate up with pride" (20). This opinion is echoed by Charlotte Lucas (who feels that "he has a *right* to be proud") and then by Elizabeth (who notes that she could "easily forgive *his* pride, if he had not mortified *mine*") (21). Deresiewicz approaches this conversation as an important instance of communicative action, even though he does not use the term:

> A consensus . . . is being formed about Darcy's character; whatever the individual women had thought about him going into the conversation, each leaves knowing that he suffers from 'pride.' But it is also clear that none of them (except Mrs. Bennet) had much known what she thought of him. The conversation serves to evoke, shape, and strengthen their opinions. (511)

He concludes that, for all her witty repartee, Elizabeth "assimilates the characterological assessment without a thought" (508).

Elizabeth's thoughts are not exactly the same as Mrs. Bennet's or Charlotte's by the end of this conversation. There is still room for debate about the degree and significance of Mr. Darcy's pride, for instance (513). However, the conversation clearly establishes "the circle of common judgment and the permissible limits of difference," and the group's "official version of the events of that night" (513). Elizabeth may approach the community of Meryton and its conventions with "ironic detachment," but in this instance her opinion stays well within the limits that it sets up (513). What is more, like the inhabitants of Meryton, Elizabeth does not let evidence to the contrary "stand in the way of what she wants to believe" (509). Deresiewicz concludes that Elizabeth's "mode of response" is "modification, not rejection," and that she plays the role "of the person who is not fully included" in "a community that includes everyone by allowing each a slightly different role" (514). This changes when she is confronted with Mr. Darcy. As Deresiewicz notes, Mr. Darcy's mental habits are very different from those of Elizabeth's community:

> For Darcy, quite unlike the good people of Meryton, there is no such thing as compromise and no such thing as dropping the subject. His conversations with Elizabeth, particularly those in which they engage during her stay at Netherfield, are fundamentally different from the others we have seen. (522)

When Elizabeth reads Mr. Darcy's letter at Rosings, she is faced with evidence she cannot ignore or reason away with her sister (Deresiewicz 523). This forces her to "break free from the cognitive constraints of her community," and to use introspection and induction instead (520-1, 523-4).

I believe that it is also worthwhile to look at the relationship *Mr. Darcy* has with the communities he encounters. Deresiewicz does not go into this. Based on Mr. Darcy's conversation style, he simply concludes that Mr. Darcy is "the product of a different community," and displays flaws of "behavior, not of thought" (509). He also notes that

> Elizabeth's love for Darcy crystallizes only after he has symbolically identified himself as a member of her community. The man who lost his first chance for Elizabeth's love by disdaining her 'connections' now welcomes her uncle and aunt to his estate and then, in an outright act of self-humiliation, becomes the agent for connecting himself to those very connections. (526)

What Deresiewicz does not fully explore, however, is the fact that Mr. Darcy's coming to tolerate Elizabeth's community, to some extent, *implies* that he changes his way of thinking as much as Elizabeth does. There are only a few references to the community of Lambton, Pemberley's equivalent of Meryton. Still, these few references show that their ways of thinking are very similar. The voice of Lambton is first introduced via Mrs. Gardiner, who grew up in the village before she married Mrs. Bennet's brother (Austen, *Pride* 140, 231). When Mrs. Gardiner hears Mr. Wickham's tale of woe, she

> tried to remember some of that gentleman's reputed disposition when quite a lad which might agree with it, and was confident at last that she recollected having heard Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy formerly spoken of as a very proud, ill-natured boy. (141)

The phrase "at last" suggests that the opinion of the inhabitants of Meryton is colouring Mrs. Gardiner's memory, making her feel "confident" about information she was not certain of before, just as the conversation between Mrs. Bennet, Charlotte Lucas, and Elizabeth shaped and solidified *their* opinion. In effect, Mrs. Gardiner, like Elizabeth, begins to rely on induction once she hears a glowing character reference by Mr. Darcy's housekeeper, meets Mr. Darcy at Pemberley, and begins to suspect that he is in love with Elizabeth (Austen, *Pride* 236-47, 249, 252). Spurred on by their desire to think well of Mr. Darcy, the Gardiners consider the opinion of "their Lambton friends" in a more critical way:

> They [the people of Lambton] had nothing to accuse him of but pride; pride he had, and if not, it would certainly be imputed by the inhabitants of a small market-town, where the family did not visit. It was acknowledged, however, that he was a liberal man, and did much good among the poor. (252)

The phrase "where the family did not visit" suggests that Mr. Darcy and his family are as much detached from the community of Lambton as Elizabeth and her family are embedded in the community of Meryton. This seems to be confirmed by Mr. Darcy's development.

Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, readers have to work hard to reconcile the evaluations of the narrator, the other characters, and Mr. Darcy himself with their own evaluation of his behaviour and reasons for action. However, it seems safe to say that Mr. Darcy keeps his distance from people he does not count among his friends and family. Although the omniscient narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* is not exactly forthcoming with information about Mr. Darcy, she discloses early on that Darcy is "clever," "haughty," "reserved," "fastidious," and ill-mannered in a well-bred way (18). At the Meryton assembly, he only dances with Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst and refuses to meet new ladies; he also spends the rest of the night walking about the room, and ends up insulting Elizabeth (13). This is why he makes a bad impression on the community of Meryton. Miss Bingley tells Jane that Mr. Darcy "never speaks much, unless among his intimate acquaintance" and that he is "remarkably agreeable" with *them* (Austen, *Pride* 20). In fact, Mr. Darcy's detachment from the people of Meryton is very similar to the Bingley sisters', and especially Caroline. Very early on, Elizabeth dislikes Mr. Bingley's sisters because she sees "superciliousness in their treatment of everybody, hardly excepting even her sister" (22). Miss Bingley certainly thinks she is on the same wavelength as Mr. Darcy. During a dinner party at Lucas Lodge, she tries to read his mind:

> "You are considering how insupportable it would be to pass many evenings in this manner—in such society; and indeed I am quite of your opinion. I was never more annoyed! The insipidity and yet the noise—the nothingness, and yet the self-importance of all those people!—What would I give to hear your strictures on them!" (Austen, *Pride* 27).

It is likely that Miss Bingley is trying to stay in Mr. Darcy's good graces. Considering Caroline's attentions to Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth concludes that she is doing everything in her power to make Mr. Darcy propose to her (Austen, *Pride* 116-7). Even more than Mr. Darcy, Miss Bingley looks down on Elizabeth and Jane's "inferior" connections (188). The narrator remarks that the "Netherfield ladies would have had difficulty in believing that a man who lived by trade, and within view of his own warehouses, could have been so well-bred and agreeable" as Mr. Gardiner (136). This is ironic, because the Bingleys do not yet belong to the landed gentry (17). While Mr. Bingley has inherited a fortune, and is ready to buy an estate, he has not done so yet (17). The narrator draws attention to the discrepancy between the sisters' attitude and their family history:

> They were rather handsome, had been educated in one of the first private seminaries in town, had a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, were in the habit of spending more than they ought, and of associating with people of rank, and were therefore in every respect entitled to think well of themselves, and meanly of others. They were of a respectable family in the north of England; a circumstance more deeply impressed on their memories than that their brother's fortune and their own had been acquired by trade. (17)

Elizabeth has a similar opinion of Mr. Darcy. After she has spent some time with him at Netherfield, she concludes that he has "a propensity to hate every body" (Austen, *Pride* 57). She clearly sees Mr. Darcy's "propensity to hate every body" as a "defect," a flaw in his character (57). This does not necessarily mean, however, that she believes that, ideally, a person has to *like* everybody. She thinks, for instance, that her sister is "too apt to like people in general" and she marvels at Jane's ability "to take the good of every body's character and make it still better, and say nothing of the bad" (16-7). While she praises Jane's sweetness several times (132, 182), she is also amused (84, 217) and even exasperated by it (270). For instance, when Mrs. Gardiner tries to reassure Elizabeth after Lydia's elopement by pointing out that Jane does not think that Mr. Wickham is capable of the worst, Elizabeth exclaims: "Of whom does Jane ever think ill?" (270). This suggests that, at this point in the story at least, Elizabeth's "norm" is a kind but critical attitude towards other people (cf. Butler 212; Section 2.3.1). Elizabeth finds fault with Mr. Darcy's *savoir-vivre* because he has not shown such kindness in his dealings with her and the people of Meryton. As I have noted, Elizabeth comes to believe that this behaviour is rooted in pride. This is why Mr. Darcy does not manage to convince Elizabeth that he truly does not have "the talent . . . of conversing easily" with "strangers," because he "cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns" (171; Section 2.3.2.4). She and Colonel Fitzwilliam feel that his unwillingness to practice is rooted in pride. This would suggest that his pride prevents him from acquiring the skills he needs to engage with the intermental thoughts of a community like the inhabitants of Meryton.

Although Elizabeth jumps to conclusions and refuses to think well of Mr. Darcy, her assessment is not entirely false: Mr. Darcy's character is flawed, but he is not aware of it. He knows that he is not without weaknesses, because "that is not possible for anyone" (Austen, *Pride* 56). With regard to his temper, Darcy knows that he cannot easily forgive the "follies and vices of others" (56). At the same time, however, he is "cautious" to have such resentment created and tries not to be "blinded by prejudice" (92). He actively tries to avoid "weaknesses" such as vanity, which "expose a strong understanding to ridicule" (56). However, he does not count pride among those weaknesses (56). He believes that pride cannot make a truly intelligent man look foolish, because such a man keeps his pride "under good regulation" (56). While this statement proves to Elizabeth that his mind is not "superior" at all (56), it also suggests that Mr. Darcy feels he is not inordinately proud. His behaviour during the proposal suggests otherwise, however. Mr. Darcy's "countenance" expresses "real security" because he is in no doubt of a favourable answer: he believes that Elizabeth must be "wishing, expecting" his addresses (185, 349). After Elizabeth's refusal, Mr. Darcy is forced to re-evaluate himself (347, 349). Having been accused of ungentlemanlike behaviour, "arrogance," "conceit," and a "selfish disdain of the feelings of others," he revisits his convictions to gauge the truth of Elizabeth's reproofs (188, 347). Ultimately, he comes to the following realisation:

> I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. As a child I was taught what was *right*, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Unfortunately an only son, (for many years an only *child*) I was spoilt by my parents, who though good themselves (my father particularly, all that was benevolent and amiable,) allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing, to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to *wish* at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own. Such I was, from eight to eight and twenty; and such I might still have been but for you, dearest, loveliest Elizabeth! What do I not owe you! You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled. I came to you without a doubt of my reception. You shewed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased. (349)

This passage clearly suggests that Mr. Darcy's pride prevented him from engaging with a community beyond his "own family circle." In the rest of the novel, he works hard to remedy his faults, and this shows in his behaviour. When Elizabeth visits Pemberley, he treats her aunt and uncle from trade respectfully (244, 349-50). He also sets out to rescue Lydia in an attempt to alleviate the suffering his "mistaken pride" has caused (305). By the end of the novel, in short, Mr. Darcy is "humbled" by Elizabeth, and able to act on his "good principles" (349). This includes engaging with a community that extends beyond his "own family circle."

Deresiewicz does acknowledge that, eventually, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy create a community of their own. This is an "imagined community" of like-minded people who visit occasionally, rather than a community of neighbours who live in each other's pocket (530). The final chapters of the novel suggest that this community will revolve around a different type of conversation, because Mr. Darcy's "insistence" and Elizabeth's "wit" help them see themselves for what they truly are, leading "each other towards truth" (528). However, this new intermental unit also produces what Palmer would call "group norms":

> [W]hile the cognitive component of judgment becomes more vigorously debated, more open, than in Meryton, the evaluative component—the standards by which what is known is judged—becomes less so. Pemberley is far less tolerant of vice and stupidity than Meryton is (Mrs. Bennet is made to feel unwelcome; Wickham is excluded), and thus far less tolerant of differences in values. . . . In this sense, the boundaries of permissible dissent are far narrower than in Meryton, and it is not the business of conversation to draw them. (530)

Pride and Prejudice, in short, is very much concerned with the individual's relation to intermental units. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's confrontation with communities like Meryton, as well as each other, help them to question their mental habits and to create new ones. At the same time, however, the intermental unit of Pemberley naturalises certain "standards," and the "categorisations and classifications" they produce. In *No More Tears*, *Given Good*

Principles, *Pride Prejudice, and Prodigy*, and *Not Every Gentleman*, some of these core values are "denaturalised," because new intermental units are introduced into the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice*. These turn a number of standards that are accepted without question in Austen's storyworld into options rather than certainties.

3.3.2.2   Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears*: "Denaturalising" Parental Norms

Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears* begins a year before *Pride and Prejudice*, when Mr. Darcy receives word that his sister Georgiana has died in a carriage accident (Chapter 1). This causes a stir in society, because many mothers hope that Mr. Darcy will marry to produce an heir, and safeguard the family line (Chapter 1). During the Meryton assembly, Elizabeth notices Mr. Darcy's despondency, and she makes an effort to talk to him (Chapter 1). They become intrigued by each other (Chapter 1). Mr. Darcy is attracted to her, and confident about her ability to hold her own in his social sphere, but he does not love her (Chapter 1-2). This suits him very well, and he makes Elizabeth an offer of marriage (Chapter 2). He explains that, because of Georgiana's death, he has to produce an heir. None of the women who have tried to capture his attention, because of his wealth, his estate, and his connections, interest him. He is convinced, however, that she is ideally suited to become Mrs. Darcy. That is why he offers her his hand in marriage (Chapter 2). Elizabeth is astonished, and points out her social inferiority, lack of connections, and the improper behaviour of her mother and younger sisters (Chapter 2). When she is satisfied that he has thought everything through, she accepts his offer even though she does not love him (Chapter 2). As Mr. Darcy expected, his aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and his uncle, the Earl of Perryton, disapprove of the match (Chapter 4). He refuses to be their pawn, however. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth marry, determined to offer each other companionship (Chapter 6, 7). As time goes on, however, they come to love one another (Chapter 18-20). With the help of Mr. Darcy's other aunt, Lady Victoria, Elizabeth manages to establish herself as Mrs. Darcy (Chapter 20).

This story avoids some common fantextual conventions. Indeed, Linnea Eileen makes it very clear that she consciously tries to avoid "fanon":

> I made a real effort to NOT use fanon names for my characters. Colonel Fitzwilliam's first name is Andrew, not Richard. His father's earldom is Perryton, not Matlock. And names are not the only thing I resisted from fanon. There are just so many things we get used to using in writing fanfiction that is not in the original book. I won't say that something slipped in, but I made a concerted [effort] to keep fanon out of this story. (comments to Chapter 5)

This is also reflected in the narrative's treatment of the "ton." On the one hand, this fan fiction text confirms some of the conventions relating to the "ton." As I will demonstrate, it presents the "ton" as a disciplinary force that judges and punishes members who do not belong to their "group." This helps to maintain the "group norms" that set members of the

"ton" apart—norms that make Elizabeth Bennet, Mr. Darcy, and others feel that the "ton" is "shallow." On the other hand, *No More Tears* also challenges fantextual conventions about the group membership of Mr. Darcy's mother. Using a complex system of intermental units, *No More Tears* questions the "good" principles of Mr. Darcy's mother—principles that are not specified but accepted in *Pride and Prejudice*. After all, while Mr. Darcy criticises the guidance of his mother and father, he does not criticise their principles. Indeed, his development comes down to a *rediscovery* of parental norms. While the family is still an important and positive source of "group norms" in *Pride and Prejudice*, the characters of *No More Tears* are forced to evaluate those norms first. In this fan fiction text, it is the active selection of parental norms, rather than their rediscovery, that forms the basis for Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's new family unit. While the family is still an important resource for principles that prepare the individual for a life in society in *Pride and Prejudice*, it predominantly fulfils the individual's need for companionship and affection in *No More Tears*.

To some extent, Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears* builds on a contrast between intermental units that is also present in *Pride and Prejudice*. I am referring to the contrast between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, who have "deep" manners, and Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who values connections over other considerations. In Austen's novel, Lady Catherine famously levels a number of threats at Elizabeth Bennet when she is trying to dissuade her from accepting Mr. Darcy's hand in marriage. When Elizabeth refuses to make such a promise, Lady Catherine tells Elizabeth that she will not be "noticed" by Mr. Darcy's family and friends, that she will be "censured, slighted, and despised, by everyone connected with him," and that her name will never be mentioned by any of them (Austen, *Pride* 336). In Lady Catherine's book, that is, the just punishment for Elizabeth Bennet's determination to "have" Mr. Darcy, when "honour," "decorum," and "prudence" tell her to refuse him, is expulsion from Mr. Darcy's social sphere. Here, Austen's narrator clearly sets up a contrast between the way of thinking of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, on the one hand, and Lady Catherine, on the other. In *No More Tears*, this contrast is developed into a contrast between the intermental unit of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, on the one hand, and the intermental unit of the "ton," on the other. This becomes apparent when Elizabeth is being prepared for her presentation at Court and for the ball that will be held in honour of that presentation. As the narrator describes these preparations, the reader is invited to approach the "ton" as a large-scale intermental unit that subsumes two smaller intermental units, namely Mr. Darcy's extended family and Mr. Darcy's immediate family. These three group frames are needed to understand the characters' behaviour. Mr. Darcy's aunt and uncle, Lady Catherine de Bourgh and the Earl of Perryton, are furious when Mr. Darcy announces that he wants to marry Elizabeth Bennet, despite her lack of fortune or connections (Chapter 4). The Earl declares Mr. Darcy has disgraced "us all," and that the family will be "laughed at, ridiculed behind our backs by our peers" (Chapter 4). He assumes that, because Elizabeth has no fortune and is of "inferior birth," she will not be able to "live up to the honour of the position

of Mrs. Darcy of Pemberley" or to "uphold the Darcy and Fitzwilliam names" (Chapter 4). Mr. Darcy chastises his uncle for judging Elizabeth before he has met her, and argues that her "aptitude for learning" will enable her "to assimilate herself into her new world" (Chapter 4). This discussion invokes three groups that subsume each other, like Russian dolls: Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy's family, and their "peers." The thoughts of "the family" are clearly dictated by the Earl and, to a lesser extent, Lady Catherine. The Earl announces, for instance, that Mr. Darcy's wife "will not be recognised by any of us" (Chapter 4), and practically orders the rest of the family to stay away from the wedding (Chapter 10). To some extent, then, *No More Tears* builds on Austen's system of intermental units.

Initially, Linnea Eileen's Earl seems to share the beliefs of Austen's Lady Catherine, and he forces the individual members of his family to behave according to "group norms" they do not necessarily share. Colonel Fitzwilliam, for instance, follows his father's orders because he is dependent on him, but he would have attended his cousin's wedding if he could (Chapter 10). The Earl fails to impose his norms on Mr. Darcy and one other character, however. Lady Victoria, who was similarly scolded by the family for marrying below her station, refuses to come and listen to the Earl's instructions (Chapter 4, 10). As my summary suggests, she will become the closest ally of Mr. and Mrs. Darcy. The group norms that are imposed by the Earl are made explicit by Mr. Darcy. Mr. Darcy is unmoved by the threats of his uncle and aunt, and reads their intermental thoughts as follows:

> When he pondered his future, one thought, one word, came to mind repeatedly: companionship. He wanted it, he needed it, and in Elizabeth Bennet he had found a woman who could provide it. . . . His uncle, the Earl, and his aunt, Lady Catherine, would never be able to comprehend this. Suddenly and unexpectedly Darcy felt pity for them. Both married and with children of their own, yet they both were still very much alone. Just as he had been until he met Elizabeth. (Chapter 4)

Taken together with the Earl's objections to the marriage, this attribution sets up a contrast between the group norms of Mr. Darcy's extended family—who believe that marriage is first and foremost about fortune and connections—and Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth—who believe that marriage should be about companionship.

The collective mind of the family is also influenced by the larger intermental unit of the "ton," however. The Earl changes his mind because he anticipates what the "ton" will think if his family snubs Elizabeth. After the wedding, his son visits the Darcys and tells Mr. Darcy that the Earl and Lady Catherine have decided to go for indifferent acceptance, rather than shunning. The Darcys will be acknowledged in public, but nothing more (Chapter 10). Ultimately, the Earl goes even further, and decides it is best if Elizabeth meets the entire family in private first, rather than in a public space (Chapter 12). When the Darcys call on Lord Perryton, his wife, and children, the Earl announces that they will attend Elizabeth's presentation ball:

> "Darcy, I know what I said to you at Rosings, but our failure to attend your wife's ball would reflect poorly on us as well as on you. Despite what you may believe, I am a reasonable man. That is another reason I asked you to come here today. It is far better for the family to meet your wife for the first time here, now, than elsewhere. People might think it odd, and I do not condone gossip." (Chapter 12)

In this passage, the Earl anticipates the thoughts of the "ton," as an intermental unit, and adjusts the behaviour of the family accordingly. This response suggests that the "ton" has a tendency to observe, judge, and value manners, whether or not those manners truly reflect a person's feelings or principles.

While the Earl is right to believe that the "ton" is fixated on manners, the narrator introduces a fault line that splits the "ton" into two smaller intermental units. During Elizabeth's presentation ball, the "ton" is separated into people whose way of thinking is more like Mr. Darcy and those who think more like the Earl. About the guest list, the narrator says: "The individuals chosen were those who would be more disposed to accept Elizabeth than to dismiss her without taking the trouble of forming an acquaintance" (Chapter 13). This suggests that Lady Victoria and Elizabeth have analysed the ton into smaller intermental units, and invited a group of people whose way of thinking seems to resemble their own. However, this subgroup still assesses if Elizabeth is "acceptable" on the basis of her manners:

> All the planning coalesced in one moment when the musicians began playing for the first dance, and Darcy led Elizabeth to her rightful place at the head of the set. Within minutes, the approving nods of some of the onlookers could be seen. The Darcys made an elegant picture as they moved in harmony with the music and with each other. At least the new Mrs. Darcy knew how to dance. (Chapter 13)

The narrator also introduces a group of members who, like the Earl and his family, assume that Elizabeth is not like "them" because she was not raised in their sphere. As these members discuss the matter among themselves, they reaffirm their collective judgment of Elizabeth in an act of "communicative action," perpetuating the "group norms" that underpin it:

> As many favourable opinions as Elizabeth made, there were others who had come strictly out of curiosity to see Darcy's country-bred bride. Their invitations were matters of form; certain people simply had to be invited, no matter Darcy's preferences. A number of these were not disposed to like the new Mrs. Darcy on principle and would not allow one ball to sway their opinion too favourably. Lady Victoria overheard snippets of conversations of several of these ladies.
>
> 'She is pretty enough, but not as handsome as I expected to turn Darcy's head ...'
>
> 'We shall see how she handles the rest of the season ...'

'Mrs. Darcy seems at ease in her own house. Will she be as confident at Lord and Lady Westlings' ball?'

'I heard he took her to Pemberley to teach her proper manners ...'

'Lady Victoria probably planned everything for the poor woman ...'

It was nothing more than expected. Women like that would always populate their society. She was thankful that there were others, like her friend Charlotta Atkins, who were more substantial than the shallow creatures she had just overheard. (Chapter 13)

Unlike most Austen fics,[8] *No More Tears* puts Mr. Darcy's mother, Lady Anne, in the last subgroup of the "ton." The narrator does this by juxtaposing Elizabeth's presentation ball with the last ball Lady Anne ever hosted. It is Lady Victoria who recalls this ball and a discussion she had at the time with her sister about Mr. Darcy's future wife. Mr. Darcy's mother remarks:

"He can do so much better than my niece, like his father before him. My namesake, while rich, was not born a daughter of a peer."

"I would hope that he would marry a woman he could respect and hold in affection."

"Not everyone chooses your path, Victoria."

"You chose it."

"No [not] entirely. We both know I did not. I did well for myself, and I wish my son and my daughter to do better. You must hold these same hopes for Michael, at least."

"I wish him to be happy, Anne, whoever his choice may be. Is that not what you wish for Fitzwilliam?"

"I wish to see my son dancing in this very house with his wife-a woman of beauty and intelligence, an accomplished woman who will make the other ladies envious. I want the men to look at my son and wish they were in his place. That is what I wish." (Chapter 13)

Lady Anne's fixation on titles, and the judgments of members of "ton," makes her more like the Earl than Lady Victoria. Indeed, Lady Victoria suspects that her sister would not have approved of Elizabeth, just as Mr. Darcy would probably not have married her if his circumstances had been different (Chapter 13).

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[8] For a good example, see Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble.*

In the course of *No More Tears*, Mr. Darcy breaks free from the "group norms" of his family and his mother. Mr. Darcy's development, which is one of the driving forces of the plot, is centred around his complex relationship with the "ton." Like the Earl, Mr. Darcy initially persuades his "unit" to respect the standards of the "ton" or, rather, what he believes those expectations to be. Alan Palmer would call this version of the mind of the "ton" that exists in Mr. Darcy's mind a "double cognitive narrative" (Palmer, *Social* 12). The influence of this "double cognitive narrative" is particularly apparent during the presentation ball, when Elizabeth and the Bennets are first confronted with the "ton." Mr. Darcy feels, for instance, that Mrs. Bennet's manners pose a threat to Elizabeth's acceptance into the first circles of Regency society, and he makes sure that her behaviour is curbed by the other characters:

> The Bennets were under good regulation. He had spoken with his new brother, Bingley – now there was a benefit to his marriage that he never would have imagined – about the importance of the evening not only to Elizabeth, but to Jane as well. It went against his friend's nature to think ill of his new family, yet he was in agreement that checking Mrs. Bennet's behaviour was to everyone's benefit. Thus, they had worked together to blunt that lady's silliness. The Gardiners had become unsolicited allies. Mrs. Gardiner spent considerable time with her sister, guiding the conversation and calming the woman when she became agitated. Darcy recognised all of these machinations; it was exactly the type of scheme the Earl used when he wished for decorum from his own wife. (Chapter 13)

While Mr. Darcy distances himself from his family and especially the Earl, in other words, he still works hard to have Elizabeth accepted by the "ton"—even though the ton tends to prioritise appearances rather than companionship. This paradox is pointed out by the narrator, who indicates that "[t]he irony – that he now assiduously sought the approval of the very society he despised for its hypocrisy – escaped him" (Chapter 13). When Lydia elopes with Mr. Wickham and taints the Darcy name with scandal, he demands that Elizabeth break all ties with the Bennets (Chapter 16). It is only when Elizabeth gives birth to their first child that Mr. Darcy can no longer suppress the love he feels for Elizabeth (Chapter 18). He cries because he has a family again, who will always love him (Chapter 18). He realises that Elizabeth has given him that since the day of his marriage, and that he has been a heartless, ungrateful idiot (Chapter 18). His tears of joy become tears of self-recrimination, and he vows that his daughter, Anne, will have two parents to take care of her, unlike himself (Chapter 18). He then realises that, for all intents and purposes, he has orphaned Elizabeth (Chapter 18). He made the choice that society told him was prudent, but also the one that cost his wife everything (Chapter 18). His selfish desire to protect his good name has forced her to sacrifice her family (Chapter 18). Painfully aware of his pride, he vows to make everything right again (Chapter 18). Because Mr. Darcy cuts the final ties between himself and the "ton," including his own mother, the passive inheriting of parental norms is replaced by an active selection of norms.

Overall, this "individualised" focus is also reflected in the reader comments to *No More Tears*, even though explicit references to group norms are scarce. The readers of *No More Tears* do not comment on the unusual group norms of Mr. Darcy's mother, for instance, although they do clearly group the Earl and Lady Catherine together (comments to Chapters 1, 2, 4). Instead, they describe the family in terms of connectedness, affection, and companionship. When Mr. Darcy tells Elizabeth about his family's history, and invites her to read the journals of his ancestors, one fan remarks that this is "a lovely way to connect all the generations, and, as she says, for Elizabeth to learn of Darcy's family" (comments to Chapter 5). Later comments suggest, however, that the most important "connections" to family members—whether of a different or the same generation—are deeply emotional. This appears when Lydia and Mr. Wickham elope. One fan pities Elizabeth because she is being denied the "familial company" she is "desperate" for (comments to Chapter 15). Another fan cannot adopt "the Regency way of thinking" about Lydia's scandal, represented by Mr. Darcy (comments to Chapter 16). She dislikes Mr. Darcy because he forces Elizabeth to treat her family as if they are dead, and because he will not even accept Jane for Elizabeth's sake—only for Mr. Bingley's (comments to Chapter 16). This emphasis on the intimate side of the family is clearest, however, in comments about the moment when Mr. Darcy holds his child for the first time. One fan enjoyed "Darcy's transformation and the realization of what unconditional love can accomplish" (comments to Chapter 18). Another fan calls this

> a positive Hunsford, that is, his [Mr. Darcy] being overwhelmed by the emotional connection with his newborn child, rather than the usual, negative Hunsford, in which someone verbally tears him to pieces . . . . (comments to Chapter 19)

Indeed, Linnea Eileen suggests that the plot of her narrative revolves around this moment of emotional connection:

> The scene where Darcy held his daughter in his hands for the first time and wept was what this entire story was built upon. I could picture the scene in my mind so vividly that I felt like I was there. I didn't allow myself to write it until I got to that point in the story. It was the reward for crafting all that came before. Everything that came before then was leading to this moment.
> . . . He [Mr. Darcy] was totally unprepared for the change his daughter's presence would trigger in him. In short, it blew away his previous attempts at detachment and shredded his emotional defenses. It was his "Hunsford" if you will. (comments to Chapter 18)

This emphasis on the family as an intimate unit is confirmed by at least one reaction to the epilogue. One fan notes that the epilogue is her favourite part, because it is

> so tender and true. It touches a nerve in me, making me recall my own parents, their love for their children, and how much I miss them. I can only hope that the happiness

we see in that last scene describes how you see the Darcys living out the rest of their lives. (comments to Chapter 18)

The focus of these readers, in short, is not on the "principles" that a family passes down to the next generation, but on the love that a family can—and, this narrative suggests, should—provide.

3.3.2.3   GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*: Questioning "Good" Principles

GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*[9] similarly calls into question the "certainty" of parental norms. This fic explores what would have happened if there had been someone there to help Mr. Darcy act on the "good principles" he was given by his parents. In this version, Mr. Darcy has the guidance of Mr. John Bradley, a clergyman. Mr. Bradley teaches the young Mr. Darcy how to apply Christian principles in his everyday life, and he also corrects his temper in other ways. In this fan fiction texts, in other words, Austen's "good" principles are specified and represented as (modern) "Christian" principles. As Juliette Wells notes in *Everybody's Jane*, this is also a trend in other areas of the "popular imagination"—that is, the collection of "thoughts about and perceptions of Austen" that "ordinary" readers express in a wide variety of modes (4). Wells notes that Jane Austen's novels and life have been appropriated by evangelical Christians (191). Following Laura Mooneyham White, she points out that there are considerable differences between "the foundational worldview of the Georgian Anglican Church and that of contemporary Christians," and even more between their presumptions about "the social and cultural role of the church" (White, qtd. in Wells 191). Wells discusses the Austen rewrites of Christian author Debra White Smith, a Christian guide to dating, a film adaptation from 2003 that transposes *Pride and Prejudice* to a modern-day Mormon context, and a Christian autobiography inspired by Jane Austen (192-7). GraceCS's *Given Good Principles* clearly resonates with this trend.

As my summary suggests, this fan fiction text preserves the scope of Austen's notion of "manners." Indeed, like Austen's narrator, the narrator of *Given Good Principles* explores the tension between manners that are supported by principles (that is, "deep" manners) and manners that are not ("surface" manners) by means of the character of Caroline Bingley. As in many other fan fiction texts, she associates Caroline Bingley with "people like her"—presumably members of the "ton." The narrator uses focalisation to achieve this:

> The first thing Darcy noticed about her was her gown. He knew it to be the latest fashion and very expensive. However, it failed to suit her. The elaborately made garment seemed to wear the young woman rather than her wearing it. *I have seen far too many women dress like that for me to fail to recognize what it means. . . . The*

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[9] An edited version of this fan fiction text appeared in print in three volumes as Maria Grace's *Darcy's Decision* (2011), *The Future Mrs. Darcy* (2012), and *All the Appearance of Goodness* (2013). My discussion is based on the online version.

second thing Darcy noticed about Caroline Bingley was her voice. Outwardly it was pleasant enough, but there was a note behind it that made him uneasy. *She sounds too much like an actress offering lines that have been rehearsed. She lacks sincerity. She says the right things and yet I cannot be sure what she means by them.* . . . The third thing Fitzwilliam noticed about Caroline Bingley was that she smiled far too much. (Chapter 3)

The narrator uses Mr. Darcy's evaluation to suggest that Caroline Bingley's manners are not supported by "good principles"—that she does not have the same priorities as Mr. Darcy on a deeper level. In effect, it is not long before cracks begin to show in Caroline's façade. She gives Mr. Bingley a set-down in front of Mr. Darcy, and makes her brother's manners more coarse than they are otherwise (Chapter 3). When Mr. Darcy tells his guests that he is having a dinner party in honour of Mr. Bradley, moreover, she replies:

> "How magnanimous of you, Mr. Darcy, giving a curate such notice. He must be very grateful of your attentions to him." The tone of Caroline's praise made Darcy wonder whether if it indeed was praise at all. (Chapter 3)

This suggests that Caroline Bingley's manners are not "bound up with goodness of heart," and that she looks down on those who do not belong to her sphere. In this respect, GraceCS's story clearly builds on Austen's novel and on fantextual conventions.

However, *Given Good Principles* also imposes a new configuration of intermental units on Austen's storyworld. While Austen's Mr. Darcy simply rediscovers the principles he was taught by his father, some of Mr. Bradley's principles are directly opposed to the principles of the late Mr. Darcy. As in *No More Tears*, the intermental thinking of Mr. Darcy's father and extended family is influenced by the "ton." In *Given Good Principles*, Mr. Darcy's father, uncle, and aunt have taught him that a man is great because of his birth, not because of his abilities or merits (Chapter 1). Mr. Darcy believed this until he went to university, and saw men of great birth behave just as dissolutely as men of lower birth, such as George Wickham (Chapter 1). Since he has succeeded his father as master of Pemberley, he has tried to put Mr. Bradley's sermons into practice, in order to become more liberal than his father (Chapter 1). Presenting Mr. Darcy as an involved and considerate landlord, GraceCS builds on a fantextual reading of Austen's novel. Commenting on one of the later chapters, one fan notes that

> Of course, many husband and wives leave most things to servants, but I rather doubt this Darcy would put up with that. I think JA gives a hint to that attitude with Mrs. Reynold's words to Elizabeth and the Gardiners on their tour of Pemberley about what a good master he is. I translate that into caring, fair and involved. (comments to Chapters 6-7)

This opinion is shared by another fan reader:

As for the duties of a responsible master and mistress of an estate—it's good to have them emphasized, I think that's what JA had in mind in her portrayal of the well run estate of Pemberley and Mrs Reynolds' praise of Darcy and his father—they took their duties seriously. I don't very much like stories in which Darcy and Elizabeth after their marriage became triumphant in the fashionable society of the ton—JA did not care for fashionable society (eg. her portrayal of it in Mansfield Park as idle and full of temptations). It is much more likely that Darcy and his wife will devote themselves to caring for their estate and the people involved. (comments to Chapters 6-7)

Given Good Principles takes this fantextual reading one step further, because Mr. Darcy does not just accept the way in which his father ran Pemberley. This earns him the disapproval of his aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and his uncle, Lord Matlock, because they feel that Mr. Bradley has too much influence over him and the way he handles his affairs (Chapter 1). Lady Catherine believes that it is wrong to give someone of the lower classes power over his wealth, while Lord Matlock believes that he should not question tradition and should uphold the social order as much as possible (Chapter 1). Mr. Bradley, in contrast, challenges Mr. Darcy to break entirely with this way of thinking:

> Our savior, the Good Book says, came to us in the form of a servant,** did He not? The same book tells us He said the first would be last and the greatest would be the servant of all.*** So, perhaps, young master, you were born a Darcy because you were not strong enough to be born a Martin. (Chapter 1—author's asterisks)

The asterisks in this quotation refer to the relevant chapters and verses of the Bible, namely Philippians 2:7 and Matthew 20:26, 23:11 (notes to Chapter 1). This clearly adds emphasis to the "ethical" weight of Mr. Bradley's teachings. He later explains that it is servitude, rather than birth, that makes men great (Chapter 2). Mr. Darcy is aware that this jars with the intermental thoughts of the "ton":

> "I have been taught," Darcy sighed heavily, "to love my family and to protect them and our reputation with everything that I have. Father and my Uncles have long schooled me to protect our name and our legacy, to love that above all else. Now you tell me what I must love are those very people the Ton would declare insignificant." (Chapter 2)

This discussion sets up a contrast between the group norms of the "ton" and the Christian norms of Mr. Bradley. In the view of the "ton," as well as Mr. Darcy's father, a gentleman should act out of family pride and a desire to keep the Darcy name untainted by scandal. By Mr. Bradley's standards, taking other people into consideration out of servility is more "right" than doing the same out of family pride, because this is the hierarchy of values that, he feels, is described in the Bible. This makes *Given Good Principles* different from Austen's novel, where the narrator does not specify what the "principles" of Mr. Darcy are, or question why he is "a liberal man" who does "much good among the poor." By

introducing Mr. Bradley into Austen's storyworld, it becomes possible to explore these questions, and to make them a subject of debate.

In *Given Good Principles*, Mr. Darcy's reformation is largely complete by the time he decides to accompany Mr. Bingley to Hertfordshire. By this point, Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bradley form an intermental unit, in which conversations are used to evoke, shape, and strengthen Mr. Darcy's opinions. Although Mr. Darcy draws many conclusion on his own, through introspection, these conclusions are clearly shaped by his connection with Mr. Bradley. It would be incorrect to say that Mr. Darcy thinks of them by himself, or that they are purely Mr. Bradley's idea: because Mr. Darcy's conclusions grow out of his conversations with Mr. Bradley, it is most accurate to say that they come up with them together, as an intermental unit. The introduction of this small intermental unit changes key events in the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, such as the first meeting of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet. During the carriage ride into Hertfordshire, Mr. Darcy tells Mr. Bradley that he dreads meeting new people outside of his circle of friends (Chapter 24). Mr. Bradley admonishes him, and tells him to practise the skills he needs to find a wife (Chapter 24). Mr. Darcy argues that it would be a punishment to stand up with the girls of Meryton (Chapter 24). Mr. Bradley correctly assumes that this comment is born from shyness rather than pride, and warns his pupil that strangers may not draw the same conclusion, because they did not in the case of Mr. Darcy's father (Chapter 24). He also suggests that shyness is a form of pride, because it is an "excuse to remove yourself from situations uncomfortable for you, regardless of what might be best for others, placing yourself above them" (Chapter 24). Mr. Darcy protests, but he fears that Mr. Bradley may be right (Chapter 24).[10] Mr. Darcy decides to walk the rest of the way and collects his thoughts. Eventually, he concludes that Mr. Bradley is right, and that he should practise his social skills so he may become known as a quiet man rather than a proud one (Chapter 25). This intermental thought has a direct impact on the narrative's plot, because it changes Mr. Darcy's first meeting with Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy makes an effort and finds it surprisingly easy to talk to her, to the extent that he wonders if it is *"being out of doors and away from the drawing rooms that makes it so. Or is it something about her?"* (Chapter 25). Their conversation soon reveals that, in actual fact, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth have much common ground in their way of thinking. When they are discussing Mr. Bradley and Mr. Pierce, the curate of Meryton, for instance, it turns out they are both founts of wisdom for their respective parishes (Chapter 25). This leads Elizabeth to ask: "Is it possible that I am not the only one who is challenged by a parson's wise words?" (Chapter 25). Unlike Caroline Bingley, in short, Elizabeth shares the same "good" principles as Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bradley.

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[10] Notably, this teaching is grounded in Christian principles even though it is not indicated with asterisks. The first chapter of the third volume of *Given Good Principles* is entitled "Time to leave childish things behind," and Mr. Bradley uses this phrase when he is considering Mr. Darcy's attitude to strangers like the people of Meryton (Chapter 24). This phrase echoes 1 Corinthians 13:11, where the narrator recounts how he gave up "childish" things when he became a man (*Kingjamesbibleonline.org*).

Elizabeth's reformation is the focus of the second volume of *Given Good Principles*, which starts some time before the timeline of *Pride and Prejudice*. This part starts when the Carvers, who held a lease on Netherfield, suddenly depart because Mr. Carver believes that the youngest Bennet sisters have a bad influence on his sisters (Chapter 14). He informs Elizabeth of this, who suddenly realises how bad the reputation of her sisters really is, as well as how improper and lax her parents have been (Chapter 14-6). This ordeal brings her closer to her sister Mary. Notably, the introduction of a Christian intermental unit into Austen's storyworld changes Mary's character dramatically.[11] In *Pride and Prejudice*, it is unclear if Mary Bennet is a part of the community of Pemberley. The narrator merely remarks that:

> Mary was the only daughter who remained at home; and she was necessarily drawn from the pursuit of accomplishments by Mrs. Bennet's being quite unable to sit alone. Mary was obliged to mix more with the world, but she could still moralize over every morning visit; and as she was no longer mortified by comparisons between her sisters' beauty and her own, it was suspected by her father that she submitted to the change without much reluctance. (Austen, *Pride* 365)

Mary Bennet's tendency to "moralise" is mentioned and mocked throughout the novel. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Bennet is the first to characterise his middle child, saying that she is "a young lady of deep reflection" who reads "great books and make extracts" (9; cf. 59). However, this characterisation is undercut in the very next line, because the narrator remarks that "Mary wished to say something very sensible, but knew not how" (9). In what follows, it becomes apparent that Mary prides herself on her accomplishments and on the "solidity of her reflections" (14, 21), and that she is always eager to display either. The narrator indicates that she works "hard for knowledge and accomplishments" because she is the "only plain one in the family" (25). However, unfortunately, Mary does not have the talent to support her pursuits. About her performance on the pianoforte, the narrator says the following:

> Mary had neither genius nor taste; and though vanity had given her application, it had given her likewise a pedantic air and conceited manner, which would have injured a higher degree of excellence than she had reached. (25-6; cf. 98)

In much the same way, Mary Bennet's "sententiae" are usually ignored by the other characters (33, 214). Mary seems to parrot wisdoms from "great books," and she does not always support these with a "good heart." When Elizabeth is about to walk to Netherfield to nurse Jane back to health, for instance, Mary remarks: "I admire the activity of your benevolence, . . . but every impulse of feeling should be guided by reason; and, in my

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[11] Something similar happens in Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, in which Mary and her "fervent religious beliefs" are likewise humanised (Chapter 25, 26).

opinion, exertion should always be in proportion to what is required" (33). About Lydia's elopement, she says:

> "[W]e must stem the tide of malice, and pour into the wounded bosoms of each other the balm of sisterly consolation. . . . Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we may draw from it this useful lesson: that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable; that one false step involves her in endless ruin; that her reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful; and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behaviour towards the undeserving of the other sex. (274-5)

At one point, the narrator, possibly focalising through Elizabeth, refers to Mary's wisdoms as "thread-bare morality" (59). As a consequence, Mary is isolated from the other characters, and spends most of her time studying or practising on the pianoforte.

In *Given Good Principles*, however, this characterisation is softened, and Mary becomes an integral part of a Christian intermental unit. While Austen's narrator sets up a contrast between the heartfelt manners of Elizabeth and the empty wisdoms of Mary, GraceCS's narrator emphasises that there is more to Mary than meets the eye. While Elizabeth is initially annoyed by Mary's tendency to practise on the pianoforte, Jane suggests that she is playing because she is disturbed by Kitty and Lydia's quarrelling (Chapter 14). Jane also feels that Mary can do more than "sermonizing" and that she "has much more insight" and a better understanding than everyone thinks, but that she is too shy to make her voice heard (Chapter 14). Elizabeth observes Mary closely the next morning, and sees a girl who is as embarrassed by her younger sisters as she is, and desperate for some attention (Chapter 15). In effect, the narrator qualifies Mary's "moralising." While Austen's Mary takes comfort in the "useful lesson" quoted above, GraceCS's Mary offers the same reflection "timidly," "shrinking further into her chair" (Chapter 15). When Elizabeth talks to her sister, she realises the following:

> *I cannot believe how thoughtful Mary is. I truly believed all she ever read was Fordyce and sermons. But it seems she is a great reader and takes delight in many things. I believe she only quotes Fordyce to test and see if her audience will really listen. She is far more clever than I imagined. (Chapter 15)*

While they help Charlotte Lucas bring a charity basket to a sickly tenant of Netherfield, Elizabeth realises that Mary is actually hurt when someone accuses her of "sermonising" (Chapter 15). By the end of the visit, Mary's begins to realise what it is like to put Christian wisdom into practice:

> I have read many sermons that remind us that the Good Book says 'blessed is he who is kind to the needy.'* Therefore, I have known it to be true. But today, I think I understand it for the first time." Lost in her thoughts, Mary failed to notice her sister staring at her with a new respect in her eyes. (Chapter 15)

In *Given Good Principles*, Mary eventually learns to convey her thoughts in another way:

Jane sighed, brushing stray curls back from Mary's forehead. "You are not disturbing dearest. But not everyone wishes…"

"To hear a sermon?" Mary glanced at Lizzy, the hurt still evident in her eyes.

"It is not so much what you are saying," Elizabeth protested, "but how you are saying it."

"Perhaps if you could find a different way to express yourself you might find your thoughts more welcome," Jane carefully suggested. (Chapter 17)

Ultimately, Mary fulfils a function that is very similar to Mr. Bradley's. Indeed, the sisters slowly begin to form an intermental unit that is perfectly compatible with the unit of Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bradley. They are determined to visit the tenants of Longbourn, even though their mother never has and their father does not approve of the scheme (Chapter 16). To Elizabeth's great disappointment, Mr. Bennet cares more about the "social standing" of his daughters than about their "character," and does not want his daughters "taking on their responsibility in the community" (Chapter 16). Eventually, the sisters decide not to correct their parents outright, but to set a good example for their younger sisters (Chapter 17). With the help of the spiritual guidance of their aunt Gardiner and Mr. Pierce, household manuals, their own good judgment, and other means they try to become women who are worthy to be mistresses of an estate (Chapter 17, 19, 21, 22, 23). Ultimately, they come to a better understanding of their parents, grow closer to Kitty, and get the family's estate back on the rails. By the time Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth meet in Hertfordshire, their manners are dictated by similar principles. As one fan puts it: "Charlotte as well as the four elder Bennet sisters appear to be the young ladies with good principles in that neighbourhood" (comments to Chapters 26-7). Though they develop independently, in other words, they both arrive at a point where they are of one mind, and ready to form an intermental unit of their own—a unit that is based on Christian norms, rather than the "good" principles of Mr. Darcy's parents.

3.3.2.4 Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*: Questioning the "Established" Social Order

I have noted that, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth manages to break free from the cognitive constraints of the community in which she is embedded, thanks to her confrontation with Mr. Darcy. In Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, Elizabeth becomes aware of norms that relate to standing and respectability, because she is confronted with the Darlingtons. Like GraceCS's Mr. Bradley, the Darlingtons are a family of "original characters." When Lord Darlington dies, his eldest son cuts off his stepmother, sister Julia, and half-brother James. The family asks for Mr. Bennet's help, and becomes close with the rest of the Bennets. Elizabeth befriends Julia and is fascinated by James. The first part of

the narrative focuses on Elizabeth, who is torn between James Darlington and Mr. Darcy; the second part revolves around Georgiana, who "struggles against the demons of her youth to blossom into a unique heroine" (Author's Note to Prologue). As was the case in *Given Good Principles*, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy* preserves and draws attention to Austen's notion of manners. Indeed, observation and "physiognomy"—the art of judging a person's character from their outer appearance (Chapter 4)—are important motifs in both parts of the narrative. James Darlington, for instance, uses his painting skills to capture people's characters. When he paints Elizabeth Bennet during their very first meeting, and reveals her "innermost" being:

> She could not help but acknowledge to herself that it was a very fine painting, and there was something in the expression, particularly the eyes, which seemed to reflect her heart – her innermost being. She was shocked that this stranger had seemingly penetrated to her very soul, and succeeded in representing it so faithfully. (Chapter 3)

He does the same with Georgiana in the second part of the narrative. His portrait captures something of Georgiana's character, moods, and feelings as well as her appearance (Chapter 10). In this respect, he is very similar to Georgiana herself, who is introduced as someone who reads other people (Chapter 10). She explains that she is used to observing people, and is fascinated by the discrepancies between words, intended meanings, and feelings and beliefs (Chapter 10). *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, in short, preserves Austen's focus on "mind reading," moral or otherwise, and explores the entire spectrum of meaning that is implied by the notion of manners.

In this fan fiction text, however, conversations about manners do not alter the key events of the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*. In the first part of the narrative, for instance, Mr. Darlington warns Elizabeth about Wickham and about her mistaken opinion of Mr. Darcy. In an attempt to demonstrate his skill at physiognomy, he exposes Mr. Wickham as a liar and a scoundrel who happens to be a good actor and a master of deception (Chapter 4). When Elizabeth defends her friend, Mr. Darlington says that he is surprised that Mr. Wickham managed to take her in too (Chapter 4). She accuses him of envy, and refers to Mr. Wickham's misfortunes (Chapter 4). Mr. Darlington laughs at the idea that Mr. Darcy is evil (Chapter 4). He says that he and Fitzwilliam Darcy have moved in the same circles, although they were never friends. Elizabeth says that Mr. Darcy is the most disagreeable man she has ever met (Chapter 4). He replies that this may be true, but that Mr. Darcy is also honourable, honest, and trustworthy (Chapter 4). He is amused by her refusal to believe him, and advises her not to base her judgments on personal preferences and prejudices (Chapter 4). Elizabeth is mortified, accuses him of ungentlemanly behaviour, and leaves (Chapter 4). A few days after this conversation, Elizabeth goes to Hunsford to visit her friend Charlotte. The narrator uses an ellipsis, skipping to Elizabeth's brief stay in London on the journey back, from Kent to Longbourn. This technique draws attention to the fact

that the introduction of the Darlingtons does not alter the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*. In fact, the author stresses this in response to a number of reader comments:

> The first part of my story is interwoven with P&P, and I am assuming we all have the story (the book version) down pat, so there is no reiteration of the main storyline. I leave it to the reader to fill in the blanks. If anything significant happen that deviates from canon it will be made very obvious/explicit. (comments to Chapter 5)

This emphasises that, in spite of Mr. Darlington's warning, the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* pans out exactly as in Austen's novel.

Ultimately, the key events of the first part of *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy* are the same as the key events of *Pride and Prejudice*. The author is keenly aware of this:

> You will notice that I have been at great pains to avoid rewriting any scenes from the book (or altering the plot in any significant way). I do not imagine myself capable of improving on our dear Jane, and have far too great an esteem for her art to attempt it. (comments to Chapter 8)

This does not mean, however, that the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice* is unaffected by the arrival of the Darlingtons. By introducing the Darlingtons into Austen's storyworld, the implied author is able to reveal, question, and comment on norms that are, apparently, assimilated by Austen's characters. This is achieved in a number of ways, but I will examine the way Mr. Darlington's thinking forces Elizabeth to question the notions of "status" and "respectability." James Darlington is shown to be unconventional from the start. The author, Jamie, sums up his character as follows:

> He is a young man who has been sequestered for many years in a university (all male in those days). He is both ignorant and disdainful of the intricate subtleties of social conventions and sensibilities - particularly regarding the courting game, where he has not been a player, and it entirely artless.
>
> OTOH, he is a keen observer of human nature, and tends to respond to what he perceives people are really feeling/thinking... rather than what social etiquette demands that they pretend to feel/think. This is an important theme in part two of the story. (comments to Chapter 6)

This is clearly appreciated by fan readers. One fan notes, for instance, that she "liked how JD, with his disregard for social convention, brought a more straightforward tone to the story" (comments to Chapter 8). I believe Mr. Darlington adds more than a "straightforward tone" to *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, however. By confronting Elizabeth Bennet with Mr. Darlington, the narrator reveals how willing she is to accept the "group norms" of the class into which she was born. In *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, it becomes apparent that Elizabeth is initially acutely aware of what determines a person's standing and makes or breaks their reputation. This is revealed through her confrontations with Mr. Darlington who, as Jamie's characterisation suggests, is not a stickler for social conventions. When he sees Elizabeth

for the first time, for instance, he is engrossed in a painting he is making, and refuses to greet her. It is made very clear that he is aware of social conventions, but chooses not to follow them:

> Elizabeth was shocked at this gross lack of civility; and fixing her eyes on the road ahead, determined to pass behind the rude stranger – certainly he was no gentleman – ignoring both him and his painting. . . . She had barely passed him when, without looking up or pausing from his labours, he addressed her, "Miss Bennet, pray tarry a moment; indulge me please for just a minute or two, while I give this fine old oak tree its due. I shall then be delighted to observe all the required formalities, and to introduce myself in the approved manner." (Chapter 3)

The phrases "certainly he was no gentleman" and "in the approved manner" imply that Mr. Darlington is not just referring to the manner that is approved by Elizabeth, but to the "group norms" of the gentry, as a large intermental unit. Elizabeth does not know what to make of him. He, on the other hand, immediately remarks on Elizabeth's concern with "respectibility":

> "You are an acute observer of respectability, I surmise, Miss Bennet; and of course you are perfectly correct. Until my recent impoverishment, painting was an entirely acceptable pastime; and if on occasion, I chose to sell my work, there was nothing un-gentlemanly in that – because I had no need of the money. But now that I am in need of money, to sell my paintings is considered low and mean, and not at all gentlemanly behaviour. Is it not ironical, Miss Bennet?" he asked with a wry grin.
>
> "No, it is entirely rational and understandable," replied Elizabeth. "A gentleman, by definition, does not need to earn his living. Therefore no significance is attached to his selling anything: be it a painting, a horse, or any other possession. But a man who labours for his living cannot be a gentleman."
>
> "And is to be despised?"
>
> "I said no such thing, sir. I am not the author of the rules of social propriety and what constitutes respectability. I am merely making an observation about those rules. You must know that if you earn your living as an artist, no matter how great your talent, you will cease to be considered a gentleman." (Chapter 3)

As I have noted in the previous chapter, *Pride and Prejudice* is very much concerned with Mr. Darcy's "gentlemanlike" manners. His status as a gentleman, in terms of social rank—that is, a man of "gentle birth" who holds a "superior position in society" without belonging to the nobility, and has the means "to live in easy circumstances without engaging in trade" ("Gentleman")—is never questioned. In Austen's novel, the complexities of the social order are introduced in different ways: through the Bingleys, who made their fortune in trade but are preparing to enter the gentry, and through Elizabeth's connections. While Mr. Darcy

mentions Elizabeth's "inferior connections" during his proposal, however, he ultimately cares more about "deep" manners than social rank. In this respect, he is different from Lady Catherine (who wants to shun Elizabeth from Mr. Darcy's social sphere) and Caroline Bingley (who has difficulty believing that a tradesman could be well-mannered). As a consequence, Austen's novel does not draw attention to the arbitrariness of the "rules" that underpin the "established" social order. This is precisely what happens in *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*. Throughout the first part of *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, Elizabeth walks a fine line between acceptance and defiance of social convention. Before she meets Mr. Darlington, it seems that she has fully assimilated the "rules" that underpin the social order of her world. This becomes clear when Julia Darlington has gone to London to work as a music tutor (Chapter 2). Elizabeth asks Lady Darlington whether there is no other way, considering how this will damage Julia's marriage prospects (Chapter 2). Even though she has not met Mr. Darlington yet at this point, she feels he should be the one to find employment to support his mother and sister:

> "What of your son, James? Why is he not endeavouring to support you and his sister? For a gentleman there are occupations which not only might provide a good income, but to which no shame would be attached."

> Lady Darlington sighed and shook her head. "It is not quite that straightforward, my dear. You do not know James. He tried very hard to dissuade Julia from her intended course. Indeed, he offered to go as a music tutor or an art master himself, but Julia would not have it."

> "But why need he go as a tutor or a master? That would be equally demeaning for a gentleman as it would for a lady."

> "I suppose you are thinking of a profession such as the church; or an officer in the militia or the navy; or perhaps a career at the law?"

> "Yes, exactly," replied Elizabeth. "These are all respectable professions suitable for a gentleman without fortune."

> "But not my son," answered Lady Darlington, smiling fondly. "In any case, all of these professions require either a lengthy period of preparation or a substantial sum of money – or both." (Chapter 2)

Phrases such as "no shame," "equally demeaning," "respectable," and "suitable" show that Elizabeth is aware of the "group norms" that determine what is respectable and what is not. At the same time, however, she begins to question these norms:

> Not for the first time in her life, Elizabeth found herself questioning the rigid forms that governed society – and found them wanting; and more than that, unjust.

Respectability seemed to come down to money, she reflected unhappily. Just a few months ago, Julia was the daughter of a wealthy lord, and far more elevated in society than herself. But because of the actions of a cruel and dishonest brother, she now found herself impoverished, and having to earn her bread like some common person. (Chapter 2)

Once Elizabeth meets Mr. Darlington, she begins to feel the influence of his "free thinking" on her own (Chapter 5). The narrator emphasises these doubts by setting up a contrast between Elizabeth and her sister Jane. Elizabeth is frustrated because it has taken a while before Julia accepted her invitation to visit (Chapter 5). This leads to the following discussion with her sister:

> "She is probably as eager to see us as we are to see her," reflected Jane, "but she will have felt it impossible to visit Gracechurch Street before this time, knowing that she is unable to reciprocate the courtesy. However, as we both depart for Hertfordshire tomorrow, she is now able to visit without that embarrassment."
>
> "I am certain you are right, Jane, but, sometimes I find all these conventions a trifle oppressive and vexing. Do you not?"
>
> Jane looked at Elizabeth with surprise. "I see what you mean, Lizzy; it is indeed sad when social etiquette keeps true friends apart; but generally speaking, it does no good to trouble oneself over matters one is powerless to amend, such as social forms and rules of behaviour. It is a little akin to learning a new dance: one does not question the value of its movements, or why one must execute this or that step – one simply attempts to become as proficient as possible in its performance." (Chapter 5)

Jane's explanation resonates in interesting ways with Deresiewicz's analysis of the "community" of Pemberley. Austen's characters do not openly criticise the norms that underpin the social order. At most, the "good" characters pay little attention to them, and form a community across the lines that divide gentlemen from tradesmen—leaving the lines themselves intact. The criticism of Jamie's characters is at once more explicit and harsher, because they expose the lines themselves as arbitrary and unjust.

3.3.2.5 Hele's *Not Every Gentleman*: Questioning Gender Norms

Hele's *Not Every Gentleman* can be defined as a "genderfuck" fic, because it plays with gender and presents a "challenge to static sex/gender identity" (*Fanlore.org*, "Genderfuck"). More specifically, it challenges a number of norms for gender-specific behaviour that underpin Austen's storyworld. In *Not Every Gentleman*, this challenge is more pronounced than in some other stories that feature cross-dressing. In Beth AM's

"Some Like it Wild,"[12] for instance, gender bending is used for comic effect. It is much more light-footed than *Not Every Gentleman*, because it is inspired by Billy Wilder's *Some Like it Hot*, "Shakespeare's gender bender comedies" and Georgette Heyer's *The Corinthian* (Author's Note to Chapter 1). In *Not Every Gentleman*, in contrast, Elizabeth Bennet is raised as "Edward" to break the entail on Longbourn after the death of her infant twin brother. The family tells everyone that Elizabeth is living with a guardian in Scotland. Mr. Darcy arrives in Hertfordshire, and he and Edward develop a profound friendship. When the entail is almost broken, Mr. Bennet begins to put pressure on Edward, forcing him to choose between life as a gentleman and life as a lady. Edward confesses everything to Mr. Darcy, and his secret puts a strain on their relationship. In the end, Edward goes to the continent, returns as Elizabeth, and finds love with Mr. Darcy. Like *Given Good Principles* and *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, *Not Every Gentleman* preserves the basic notion of "deep" manners—that is, behaviour that is grounded in a "deeper" self—but it explores different aspects of that self—namely, the relation between gender identity and biological sex. Through his conversations with other characters, Edward develops a hybrid gender identity that is anchored in Elizabeth's female body but preserves some of Edward's masculine gender traits. Edward/Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy ultimately become an intermental unit, in which Edward/Elizabeth can fully be herself.

This development spans the entire narrative. When Edward confesses his secret to Mr. Darcy, he feels that his gender identity has nothing to do with his sex. He feels that, if Elizabeth had died in infancy instead of Edward, things would not have been different: "Had not Elizabeth died after all? To say that he, that *she*, was Elizabeth, was not that a lie as well?" (Chapter 11). When he sees how deceived and angry Mr. Darcy feels, he tries to convince him that, while he lied about his sex, he is "unchanged in every other regard" (Chapter 11). Mr. Darcy, however, does not see it that way (Chapter 11). This confrontation makes Edward realise that Mr. Bennet has a similar view on the matter:

> He [Mr. Bennet] acted as if now, turning back presented only the logistical problems of the disappearance of one personae and the appearance of another; of just changing costumes behind a curtain, as it were.
>
> It was not so, it was so clearly not so to Edward, that his mind could not wrap around the idea of his father—of his own dear father and mentor—knowing him so little. (Chapter 12)

This is confirmed during the final discussion between father and son. Mr. Bennet forces Edward's hand, by telling Jane that her brother will be taking a Grand Tour of the continent (Chapter 13). When Edward confronts him, Mr. Bennet replies: "Do not be irrational, you cannot change who you are, of course this is the best decision" (Chapter 13). Edward counters:

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[12] This fan fiction text was published as Beth Massey's *Mr. Darcy Likes it Wild*: A Pride and Prejudice *Diversion* (2013).

"That is what you keep repeating, what I have always believed; 'I am who I am, nothing more, and nothing else'. But now I am beginning to think that I am what my father deems appropriate for me to be, at his sole whim. You cannot change me so easily." (Chapter 13)

When he realises that Mr. Bennet does not want Edward to end up bitter and alone, like him, Edward is defeated and agrees to go (Chapter 13). In France, Edward meets a Countess at a fencing club (Chapter 14). She does not conform to the female gender stereotypes Edward believed up to that point. She is "wickedly impertinent" and a great fencer (Chapter 14). In addition, she is the one who is in control of their relationship, requesting the initial introduction and seeking him out for sparring sessions (Chapter 14). The Countess tells him that he reminds her of a female, English friend of hers (Chapter 14). She adds that "[p]articular personalities… are not really confined to the sexes" (Chapter 14). The conversation soon turns to the differences between English and French ladies:

"You have yet to tell me anything about England. Are your ladies so very different from me?"

He looked at her. "You can not imagine how much."

"Is that true? How so? How do I compare?" He knew she probably had known plenty of English people before and that she was agreeing to be distracted and distract him from a painful subject, but he could find only gratefulness in himself.

"English ladies would never speak politics, never fence, and never invite young English gentlemen to call, but we have already covered that." (Chapter 14)

It is the Countess who opens his eyes to the joys of being female:

"I find being female very superior, despite all that talk of women being the weaker sex, but as a man, you *cannot* imagine it, I know. No man has ever believed me on this; I do not think even one of them would chose to be a woman if they could."

. . .

"Why *do* you find being a female so superior?"

She gave a short little laugh, as if she had not expected to be asked that. "Many reasons, of course. My answer would be perhaps that I *am* a woman, and I am *myself*? That is quite obvious. . . . It is not a matter of female or male being superior to the other." (Chapter 14)

When Edward asks her what to do if you are not happy with your lot in life, she advises him to find a way to be happy (Chapter 14). It is suggested that the Countess is happy in her

own relationship, because the Count loves her enough to let her have friends—to be herself (Chapter 14). She adds:

> "But you do not see what I mean—I do not say that happiness is being content with our lot. Or at least not if we say 'lot' to mean 'how nature or God have made us.' It is finding a way to be—happily—*who we are*."

> At his silence, she continued, "I do not want to lecture. I will say only one more thing: no one else can make us happy but ourselves." (Chapter 14)

This makes Edward realise that it "is useless to think how I could have been," and that he must "try only to imagine what I could become now" (Chapter 14). When he is alone, he goes sea-bathing, and connects with his body for the first time:

> Here he was. Here *she* was. He knew this body in an abstract sense, and at the same time, he knew he did not. He had never really though about it, tried not to, except for a time some years back, when he could only resentfully tighten the wrap over his traitorously growing breasts as if the pain could erase them.
> Her breasts. Skin met trembling skin, and it was real. (Chapter 14)

When Edward returns to England as Elizabeth, she works hard to assimilate the behavioural norms of ladies (Chapter 15, 16). At Pemberley, however, Mr. Darcy also takes Elizabeth fishing, as they used to do as men (Chapter 17, 5). Although it is more awkward than before, and more erotically charged, it seems to hold the promise of a hybrid life (Chapter 17). This seems to be confirmed by a conversation Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth have while they are dancing at an assembly. Talking about the similarities between dancing and marriage—using some of the words spoken by Mr. Tilney in *Northanger Abbey* (Austen, *Northanger* 74)—Elizabeth observes:

> "You have to agree the parallels are blatant: in both the man has the advantage of choice, the woman only the power of refusal, in both it is an engagement between man and woman, formed for the advantage of each; and that when once entered into, they belong exclusively to each other till the moment of its dissolution ."

> He laughed. . . . "I was thinking how it would apply in a case such as ours, where *you* are protecting *me*. It is a queer marriage, the one in which the wife must protect her husband."

> He did not lose his smile, but his was an expression she could not quite recognize, and even as she spoke, she was not sure she knew what she was answering.

> "I should think that in a true marriage of the minds, any and each of the members of it respond equally for the safety of the other." Uncertain, she continued, trying to

lighten the tone, "Though, indeed, I fear no wife ever has courage to protect her husband from dancing with unknown young ladies."

"Indeed, few women could," he said, his gaze intense on hers. (Chapter 17)

This idea is also reflected in Mr. Darcy's proposal: "My beautiful champion; my most precious friend; my dearest Elizabeth, will you marry me?" (Chapter 17). The word "champion" suggests that, within this intermental unit, the individual can choose gender norms to suit their own personality. Several fan readers remark on this hybridity. One fan notes, for instance:

> I loved that they embraced for the first time while she was in men's clothes, but then the proposal was in women's clothes. I truly believe this love existed before the reveal, but traditions chains bound them much like her breasts were bound at her father's directive. (comments to Chapters 12-7)

This highlights the fact that *Not Every Gentleman* produces a distinctive relation between sex and gender, gender norms and gender identity. While this narrative focuses on "deep" manners, in other words, it focuses on different aspects of the self than Austen's novel.

Not Every Gentleman focuses on Edward/Elizabeth's self-discovery but, in the process, it also exposes and criticises the gender norms that regulate the behaviour of women in Austen's storyworld. Because Edward is male rather than female, he and Mr. Darcy spend more time together than Austen's Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. As I have noted, young women of marriageable age were rarely left alone in the company of gentlemen, unchaperoned (Section 3.3.1). Edward, in contrast, has the freedom to call on Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy when they first arrive in the neighbourhood (Chapter 1), to join the gentlemen for a shooting party (Chapter 3), a fishing trip (Chapter 5), games of billiards (Chapter 6), walks (Chapter 8), and a dinner with the officers (Chapter 9). He also joins Mr. Bingley on a trip to London, which includes a trip to Brooks' and to a fencing club (Chapter 10). This has an impact on the plot, because it gives him the chance to hear Mr. Wickham boasting about his conquests (Chapter 9), and to encourage Mr. Bingley in his pursuit of Jane (Chapter 10). Most importantly, however, it gives him the chance truly to get to know Mr. Darcy. As a consequence, there is no animosity between them.

Notably, Edward has as much control over his relationship with Mr. Darcy as Mr. Darcy does. This is reflected in the "unresolved sexual tension" that exists between them. The narrator does not reveal Edward's true identity to the reader until Edward reveals it to Mr. Darcy. In the chapters before this revelation, some readers speculate that Edward is actually Elizabeth (comments to Chapters 1, 4, 5, 7, 8-9). Many readers, however, hope or dread that this may be a slash fic, and that Edward and Mr. Darcy are falling in love with each other (comments to Chapters 1-5, 7, 9, 11). It is easy to see why. After Edward has called on Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy for the first time, Edward is interested in the latter, even though he tells his father and sister that Mr. Bingley's friend is a "very dull fellow" (Chapter 1). During

the shooting party, he sees that there is a different side to Mr. Darcy, and Mr. Darcy begins to look at Edward with an "inscrutable expression" (Chapter 3). When they are both standing by the window back at Longbourn, Edward feels his colour rise when Mr. Darcy looks into his eyes (Chapter 3). Mr. Darcy seeks him out to accept the invitation to go fishing while the ladies enjoy a picnic (Chapter 4). It is a hot day, and they strip down to their shirts and breeches; Edward blushes when Mr. Darcy talks about bathing in the stream (Chapter 5). During a game of billiards, Edward manages to discompose Mr. Darcy so much that he misses his shots, once when he asks Mr. Darcy why he will not marry and once when he tells Mr. Darcy that he is the handsomest of the two of them (Chapter 7). When they are walking in the garden of Netherfield during Jane's recovery, Edward becomes flustered when Mr. Darcy compliments him on his eyelashes, and he feels Mr. Darcy's eyes on him for the rest of the walk (Chapter 7). Because both men seem to affect each other, are pursuing and are pursued, they appear to be equals in their relationship.

This feeling of equality decreases after Edward confesses that he is a woman. This is one of the ways in which the introduction of Edward/Elizabeth into the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice* makes the norms that constrain the freedom of women visible and debatable. Eventually, Edward begins to feel that his conversations with Mr. Darcy are unlike anything he has ever experienced before (Chapter 10). This is why he decides to confess all to his friend (Chapter 11). Mr. Darcy is angry about Edward's deceit, and for a while all contact is severed (Chapter 11-2). When they finally talk, after the wedding of Mr. Bingley and Jane, Mr. Darcy is cold and distant at first, but they eventually settle back into their friendship (Chapter 13). When Edward visits Pemberley as Elizabeth, however, their friendship is much more constrained. Mr. Darcy warns Edward that they should not be too free with each other and they have to go fishing in secret (Chapter 16-7). *Not Every Gentleman* also draws attention to the relative freedom of men and women through conversations and moments of introspection. On a walk to Oakham Mount, first, Edward and Mr. Darcy discuss the differences between marriage for men and women (Chapter 8). This conversation occurs just after Mr. Bennet has pressured Edward for the first time to give up his life as Edward to become Elizabeth. Edward notes:

> "For men, I am sure it is all the same; life changes very little. Men are their own masters, before or after. Women, on the other hand, never govern themselves unless they have money and are *particularly* lacking in husbands and fathers; and even then, they are more constrained by propriety. . . . I would not wish to be a woman under those circumstances; would you? To be forever at the mercy of the decisions of others?" (Chapter 8)

Mr. Darcy points out that "[i]t is thought that they need the guidance, while we men do not" (Chapter 8); Edward replies that it

> it is only education that makes the sexes' minds different from one another. How can women be fully rational if the only thing expected from them is to play and sing, draw

and speak the modern languages, like trained animals taught to entertain to catch a husband? Their education does not equip them for anything else." (Chapter 8)

Mr. Darcy correctly deduces that Edward has "been reading Wollstonecraft," and Edward is astonished and relieved to hear that Mr. Darcy finds himself "of the same mind on many subjects" (Chapter 8). Edward also emphasises this comparative lack of freedom in his conversations with his father. When Mr. Bennet begins to put pressure on Edward, he emphasises that living as Edward means living without love, and that it is his destiny to be Elizabeth (Chapter 8). Edward, on the other hand, does not believe in destiny, and stresses that "it is only what we do with ourselves that matters" (Chapter 8). He wants to forget all about Elizabeth because he is "as happy in [his] life as any other gentleman living in the King's Lands," does not intend to marry, and is certain that he will not change his mind (Chapter 8). When Edward confesses everything to Mr. Darcy, however, he suggests that he also does not want to step into the constraints of a female lifestyle. He explains to Mr. Darcy that he feels passionately about the freedom of women because it concerns him personally (Chapter 11). Even when Mr. Bennet has forced his hand and convinced him to go to the continent, Edward is repulsed by the idea of being a gentlewoman. The narrator uses a counterfactual to contrast Edward's life in *Not Every Gentleman* with Elizabeth's life in *Pride and Prejudice*:

> It was initially unthinkable. He, a lady? He, netting purses? He, demurely lowering his eyes and blushing at polite praise? Sitting down, hands in his lap, maidenly waiting to be asked to dance? The idea was preposterous; he almost wanted to laugh!

> Then again, if he had been raised to it, perhaps it would not have been so bad. He would be used to it, the *idea* of being gentleman unthinkable. He smiled bitterly at the night.

> He would have, of course, a completely different relationship with every person he had met. No secrets kept from Jane, of course—that did not sound half bad. He would not be his father's favourite; his brother would hold that position. At that moment he could not bring himself to think he would regret it; his father's favouritism had not brought him much happiness lately. Bingley would have been perhaps only his sister's betrothed, later a brother. Darcy… they would have never been friends; no amount of self delusion could convince him otherwise. (Chapter 13)

Later, when Edward writes to Mr. Darcy from the continent, Edward still struggles with the same fears:

> I feel like a coward by obeying my father, but how can I not? I could hate him for what he is making me do; I partially do already. As his heir I would never have left his side, as his daughter I cannot but stay and obey. I hate that most of all, even if I am sure he has not even considered that point. (Chapter 14)

It is conversations such as these that make hele's *Not Every Gentleman* different from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. While Austen's Elizabeth pushes the boundaries of propriety, guided by a "good heart," hele's Edward openly criticises the norms that curb the freedom of women in Austen's storyworld.

3.4 Conclusion

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is often characterised as a novel of manners. In Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears*, GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and hele's *Not Every Gentleman*, this focus is preserved. This suggests that, to these fans at least, "manners" are felt to be an essential feature of Austen's storyworld. However, these fan fiction texts produce a notion of "manners" that is slightly different from the conceptualisation that is implied by Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. To demonstrate this, I have examined the five texts in question using Alan Palmer's notions of "group frame," intermental unit, and group norms. As I have demonstrated, both Austen's narrator and the narrators of *No More Tears*, *Given Good Principles*, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and *Not Every Gentleman* home in on the relation between individual characters and intermental units, such as the community of Meryton, the "ton," the "gentry," or "society" as a whole. However, because the fan fiction texts introduce different "groups" into the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice*, they can explore different aspects of the concept of "manners." On the one hand, *No More Tears*, *Given Good Principles*, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and *Not Every Gentleman* preserve the basic idea that behaviour is rooted in "deeper" dispositions. I have noted that, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the most important of these dispositions are a "good" heart and "good" principles. Austen's characters learn to break free from intermental habits: the thought patterns of the community of Meryton in Elizabeth's case, and the thought patterns encouraged by family members in Mr. Darcy's case. However, in the "community" of Pemberley that is depicted in the final chapters of the novel, some values are accepted without question as "good," such as the principles that Mr. Darcy inherited from his parents. Just like twentieth-century Austen criticism, the fan fiction texts under discussion "denaturalise" such values, making it possible to openly criticise them. While the basic idea of "deep" manners is accepted, these fan fiction texts focus on highly particular "dispositions." In *No More Tears*, Mr. Darcy learns to break free from the intermental unit of his mother, his extended family, and the "ton." This turns the "good" principles of Mr. Darcy's mother, in particular, into options rather than certainties. In the end, the family unit of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth is not founded on a "heritage" of parental norms, but on norms that are actively chosen by the individual characters. In *Given Good Principles*, Mr. Darcy forms an intermental unit with Mr.

Bradley, and the "good" principles of Mr. Darcy Sr. and the "ton" are explicitly contrasted with, and replaced by, Christian morals. Elizabeth's dispositions undergo a similar development, because she is influenced by the thoughts of her sister Mary and other Christian characters. As a consequence, the small intermental unit they form at Pemberley produces a different value system than the "community" of Pemberley that is depicted in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. In *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, Elizabeth feels the influence of the "freethinking" of Mr. Darlington. This makes her more critical of the social norms that, according to the "gentry," determine status and respectability. In *Not Every Gentleman*, finally, Elizabeth's experiences as Edward make her aware of the gender norms that govern the behaviour of women and men. Ultimately, she constructs a hybrid gender identity that is rooted, not just in the dispositions, but also in the body that makes her who she is. Taken together, these four fan fiction texts suggest that individuals do not, and should not, simply assimilate and live within the framework of existing "group norms." On the contrary, more than Austen's novel, they suggest that individuals can and should approach "group norms" as options and possibilities rather than certainties. In the "community" of Pemberley of Austen, there is no clash between the self of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy and the "core" values they have assimilated. The Elizabeths and Mr. Darcys of *No More Tears*, *Given Good Principles*, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and *Not Every Gentleman*, in contrast, use their sense of self as a point of departure as they pick and choose norms to live by. The reader comments to these narratives suggest that, in this community at least, this attitude is not felt to jar with Austen's storyworld. Indeed, if it was, there would be more comments calling the authors out on their decision to include it in their storyworlds. By using the technique of the intermental unit in a different way than Austen—according to the aesthetic preferences of this community, if you like—these fan fiction texts produce a different conceptualisation of the relation between the individual and "established" social categories, which is shaped by and helps to maintain the community's discourse domain.

Chapter 4
Jane Austen Fan Fiction and Space

4.1 Introduction

For the fans who posted fan fiction on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, Jane Austen's fictional estates, country lanes, and villages are springboards for creativity. Most "Dwiggies" recreate and expand Austen's spaces in their fan fiction, taking their readers to inns, master bedrooms, dining rooms, breakfast rooms, libraries, gardens, tenant houses, and other spaces that are not or hardly mentioned in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. While Austen's narrator only dwells on the countryside, moreover, many fans also explore the townhouses, gentlemen's clubs, shops, parks, opera houses, and theatres of Regency London. Other fans go even further, and drop Austen's characters into "alternate" worlds, such as modern-day Philadelphia or London during World War II. In accordance with the two previous chapters, I posit that these rewritten spaces are charged with meaning, because their expansions and modifications are attuned to and help to maintain the "discourse domain" of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*.

   To pinpoint this ideological meaning, I will use recent postclassical theories on narrative space, and particularly Marco Caracciolo's work on the subject ("Virtual"; "Narrative"). Like other postclassical narratologists, Caracciolo posits that narrative spaces are always "experienced" by the reader, a character, or both ("Virtual" 120-1). What sets him apart, however, is that he also assumes that, in some cases, the reader's experience of narrative spaces is not just shaped by the text and the "immediate experience of reading," but also by "the interplay between what goes on during the act of reading and what goes on afterwards, as a result of social interactions centered on the reading experience" ("Narrative" 427-8). As such, a part of his theoretical toolbox is based on a corpus of online reviews of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. This is important, because the impact of social interaction is particularly significant in the context of fandom (see Section 1.3.5). Fans can look up details about Austen's narrative spaces or discuss them with friends; they can explore the hidden depth of spaces or add new ones; their mental images and emotional responses may be

influenced by adaptations and other fan fiction texts; they may develop vague feelings, thoughts, and evaluations further in reader comments; finally, they may return to Austen's descriptions again and again, discuss them with friends, write up ideas, or indeed, represent or develop her spaces in fan fiction texts. This makes Caracciolo's work exceptionally well suited for the analysis of fan fiction and reader comments.

In what follows, I will home in on two meaningful differences between the "experience" that is evoked by Austen's descriptions of Pemberley, on the one hand, and the estate's representations in JessicaS's "So Gradually," Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, and Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*, on the other. These four fan fiction texts expand Jane Austen's Pemberley with rose gardens, and rewrite Mr. Darcy's social roles. I believe that this changes the ideological implications of Austen's space. First, I will demonstrate that Austen's description of Pemberley calls attention to Pemberley's relation to the landscape, while the fan fiction texts in question also focus on the rose gardens that were written into Austen's narrative space. Second, I will elaborate on the idea that Austen's Pemberley is what Henri Lefebvre calls a "social space." More specifically, I will home in on the immaterial side of Mr. Darcy's estate, and particularly on his position as a "brother," "landlord," and "master." I contend that, while Austen's novel draws attention to the social responsibilities that come with Mr. Darcy's position, Austen fans tend to home in on his personal relationships. Both in terms of form and content, that is, the "fantextual" version of Pemberley is underpinned by, and helps to reproduce, a different, more "individualised" discourse.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

In recent years, several narrative scholars have criticised the structuralist idea that space plays a very minor role in storytelling, arguing that spaces are more than static, meaningful backdrops for the characters and events. They are more, in other words, than sceneries that exist independently from the events and characters, and potentially reflect or qualify the meaning of those events and characters in a symbolical, metonymical, or metaphorical way.[1] Instead, scholars like Marie-Laure Ryan (*Virtual*) and Marco Caracciolo ("Virtual"; "Narrative") have posited that narrative spaces are "experienced" spaces: they cannot be divorced from the ways in which they are perceived by narrators, characters, and readers. As my choice of adjective indicates, the notion of "experienced" space is related to the

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[1] Marco Caracciolo notes that narrative theorists have traditionally approached narrative spaces as "containers": as backdrops that are "external to (and detachable from)" the existents and events of the narrative ("Narrative" 429). See Herman and Vervaeck, *Handbook* 56-59 for an overview of structuralist and formalist approaches to setting (that is, to time and space in in narrative).

concept of "experientiality" that I discussed in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3.4.2; cf. Herman, "Spatial" 520). However, it also resonates with the theory of evaluation I developed in the two previous chapters. I have approached Philippe Hamon's theoretical toolbox as a cognitive template that shapes the way we make evaluations. In this view, concepts like the evaluating norm and the evaluated process actually describe basic assumptions about the way in which people "evaluate." In the case of "moral mind reading," these basic evaluations are related to motivations (that is, the reasons why people do what they do) and to ethics (that is, a coherent system of values that is closely related to rightness and wrongness, guilt and shame, and similar "moral" connotations). I have argued that this cognitive template shapes the narrator's representation—and the readers' interpretations— of the evaluations of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* and in fan fiction, as well as the readers' representations—and other readers' interpretations—of evaluations in reader comments.

Both on the level of the character and the level of the reader, then, the cognitive template I have discussed gives structure to experience. Several scholars have emphasised, however, that the experience of characters and readers is not just shaped by sociocultural knowledge, such as conventions about evaluation or knowledge of specific systems of belief and value (see, for example, Ryan, *Virtual* 91; Fludernik 43-50). In "The Reader's Virtual Body: Narrative Space and its Reconstruction," for instance, Marco Caracciolo argues that readers can only comprehend a passage of narrative text when they run a mental simulation of the fictional situation based on some of the neuronal pathways which they use for actual perception (119). He specifies this with recent research into the psychology of text processing and into "enactivism," a relatively young branch of cognitive science. Enactivists distinguish several levels of experience: pre-reflective self-consciousness (such as the awareness of our own bodies), perceptual and emotional experience (such as sensory patterns), higher order cognitive functions (such as long-term memory and imagination), and sociocultural practices (such as the beliefs and values we draw on when we interact with other people) (Caracciolo, "Insane" 232-3). The cognitive template of evaluation I have discussed so far, in short, only shapes one aspect of the reading experience.

I will first expand this theoretical framework, because several discussions of the experience of narrative space suggest that readers draw on every level of experience when they work to make sense of narrative spaces. Readers use the ability to locate their (virtual) body in space, the ability to respond emotionally to (fictional) people, the ability to (imaginatively) perceive sights, flavours, textures, or smells, and they access their personal store of memories (see, for example, Ryan, *Virtual* 120-72; Caracciolo, "Virtual" 118-9). Notably, this is reflected in the way characters (are shown to) experience space. I want to illustrate this with JessicaS's "So Gradually." In this fic, Georgiana Darcy and her aunt, Lady Matlock, tell Elizabeth about the rose gardens of Pemberley:

> Georgiana and Lady Matlock had spoken of the rose gardens as being incomparable
> – Georgiana had even gone so far as to sketch the layout, and her particular favourite

spot, a cul-de-sac by the water fountain, just a little stone bench under an archway of roses. (Part 3)

Notably, the characters who are present when this conversation occurs immediately associate this space with their personal experiences. Lady Matlock tells the girls that both the earl and Mr. Darcy's father proposed in that very spot (Part 3). On hearing this, Georgiana proclaims that the spot is "even more romantic than she had thought" (Part 3). Mr. Darcy, gazing at Elizabeth, remarks that he "always did consider it one of the most picturesque spots of the rose garden" (Part 3). In this passage, then, the image that is evoked by Lady Matlock and Georgiana's description of the rose garden, and particularly Georgiana's drawing of the cul-de-sac, is tied to memories (namely, Lady Matlock's recollection of her husband's proposal, and of Lady Anne's account of Mr. Darcy Sr.'s proposal), to emotional responses (namely, Georgiana's claim that it is a "romantic" spot), and to an aesthetic judgment (namely, Mr. Darcy's claim that it is the most "picturesque," or pretty and unspoilt, spot of the entire estate). These associations turn the rose gardens, and particularly the cul-de-sac, into an experienced space.

Marco Caracciolo builds on this link between the experience of readers and the representation of narrative space in "Narrative Space and Readers' Responses to Stories: A Phenomenological Account." He argues that narrative spaces may guide "readers' responses by 'tingeing' emotionally and evaluatively their engagement with the narrative text" (425). In line with the "experiential" turn mentioned, he emphasises that narrative spaces can become imaginary "places" if the combination of textual cues and the reader's predispositions or interests is right. In the phenomenological tradition of geography, the term "place" is used to refer to "space as experienced pre-objectively by living, embodied subjects" (429). Like phenomenological geographers,[2] Caracciolo believes that people make sense of their environment on two interrelated levels: "non-conceptually, through embodied forms of interaction such as perception, action, and basic emotions, or conceptually, through language and cultural practices" (429). He argues that readers approach narrative spaces in a similar way (430). That is why some narrative spaces have a "sense of place"—that is, an "experiential quality" that makes them different from other places (429-430, 437).

I believe that, in the context of fan fiction especially, the "sense of place" of a narrative space is influenced by three factors: the text's representation of spatial experience, the reader's personal experience of the narrative space, and discussions about these experiences, as expressed in reader comments (and crystallised in conventions on the level

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[2] Pioneers in this field include Yi-Fu Tuan, Anne Buttimer, and Edward Relph. Relph's *Place and Placelessness* (1976) was particularly influential. Approaching space in terms of how it is experienced, Relph argues that the experience of actual, physical spaces can be analysed into a continuum that ranges from immediate experience to abstract thought (Seamon and Sowers 44). For an overview of the impact and critical reception of Relph's work in geography, psychology, and other disciplines, see Seamon and Sowers 43-51. Here, I simply want to illustrate that Caracciolo's discussion of non-actual, narrative spaces builds on this tradition.

of the "fantext"). As I have noted, Caracciolo's categories are primarily based on the third dimension. He argues that the "sense of place" of certain narrative spaces can be analysed into four interrelated aspects ("Narrative" 426-7, 428, 430-1). These categories do not apply to the "immediate" reading experience, which we can only speculate about, but to reading experiences as they are reconstructed in the process of social interaction (427-8). Basing his conclusions on a corpus of online reviews of McCarthy's *The Road*, Caracciolo distinguishes between:

> 1) references to the visual imagery evoked by spatial descriptions; 2) references to mental imagery in other sensory modalities, including a sense of physical 'presence' in the storyworld; 3) emotional reactions triggered by the landscape; 4) thematic interpretations where the novel's setting plays an important role. (431)

This analysis resonates in interesting ways with the rest of my theoretical framework. The first three categories, for instance, are closely related to the experience of immersion (Section 1.3.5). Since this reading experience is primarily associated with mimetic texts, the references Caracciolo describes can be related to a "mimetic" core of meaning, not unlike the one I described in my discussion of character (Section 2.2.1.2). Similarly, the references to "thematic" meaning Caracciolo mentions here are very similar to the "thematic" dimension of characters, because they imply a link to a larger idea or theme (Section 2.2.1.2). Because Caracciolo's categories are tailored to the analysis of references to narrative space, however, I will use his categories in the case studies that follow.

Caracciolo's analysis suggests that the four categories mentioned "interact in important ways in the reading experience," or the experience that is evoked by the text ("Narrative" 436). His categories, however, are most obviously suited to the analysis of reader comments, rather than the text's representation of spatial experience. It is true that Caracciolo refers to "spatial descriptions" and that he discusses textual features in his case study, but these references are relatively rare. Several studies of space, however, including Caracciolo's earlier work, suggest that it is equally important to analyse how the text represents space and the way in which it is experienced by characters and other instances. Herman Meyer, for instance, distinguishes between the "factual" space, which is created by references to geographical names, street names, and other "empirical" information about the space, and the "symbolic" space, which is shaped by human experiences of space (211). Notably, Meyer emphasises that spaces may even have a "symbolic" charge when the text does not explicitly refer to it (211). Valentin Voloshinov and other members of the Russian Bakhtin Circle have developed a similar argument about the reader's evaluation of objects in space (Keunen, *Time* 5). This suggests that Caracciolo's discussion of the "thematic" associations of readers is grounded in the text, to a greater or a lesser extent. As a point of departure for my analysis, therefore, I will discuss two textual aspects from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* that are charged with "thematic" meaning: references to views and other "picturesque" aspects of Pemberley, and references to the social activities and roles

that make Mr. Darcy's estate into a "social space." I borrow this term from philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who has argued that a space is not a "passive backdrop of social life" but an "active medium" for it: for Lefebvre, social space does not "exist apart from the active practices that created, modified, and sustained it" (D'Arcus 384-5).[3] In what follows, I argue that these textual references to picturesque and social aspects of space can be related to one "thematic" meaning, which contrasts with the "thematic" meaning of the representation of space in fan fiction texts.

Other discussions do the same for Caracciolo's "visual" and "embodied" imagery. In *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, for instance, Marie-Laure Ryan discusses how the use of "visual" details and other narrative techniques is conducive to "spatial immersion"—that is, that they invite readers to feel like they can almost see, touch, or hear the narrative space (120-30). She also discusses, under the heading of "spatio-temporal immersion," narrative techniques that inspire the "embodied" imagery that is used by readers, such as the feeling of being "present" in the storyworld (*Virtual* 130). This type of immersion occurs when readers mentally take the perspective of the character—when they, in other words, are transported "onto the scene" of the storyworld (130). For spatio-temporal immersion to take place in literary texts, the reader must imaginatively adopt the narrator's position, or rather, that of the "virtual body whose perspective determines what is perceived," when that body gives direct access to the storyworld (132).[4] A number of narrative techniques can be used to achieve this. Authors may background "the act of telling," making it seem as if "the events inscribe themselves as they occur in a recording mind" (132). They may use various forms of focalisation, making it seem as though the recording mind is "a member of the textual world" (132, 133-4), or they may represent "phenomena" as they would be perceived by a random observer, rather than a specific character-focaliser (133). To some extent, then, Ryan examines how these techniques work on the level of the text (134). These discussions suggest that Caracciolo's distinction between "visual imagery," "embodied imagery," "emotional reactions,"[5] and "thematic" meaning can both be used to describe the spatial experience of readers and characters and linked to the textual representation of the narrative spaces in question.

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[3] I will not go into the Marxist overtones of Lefebvre's original concept (D'Arcus 384-5); rather, I use it to emphasise that social activities are a defining feature of Mr. Darcy's estate.

[4] For an alternative discussion of this phenomenon, which is also known as "deictic shift," see Herman, "Spatial" 521-4.

[5] Notably, Ryan also discusses "emotional" immersion. This type occurs when readers respond emotionally to the events portrayed, as if they were situations involving "real-life" people rather than characters (Ryan, *Virtual* 148, 121). Readers are emotionally immersed, in other words, when fictional events and characters feel "real" enough to inspire an emotional response—whether it be "sadness, relief, laughter, admiration, spite, fear," or "sexual arousal" (148). Ryan links this to such narrative techniques as the use of narratorial omniscience and internal focalisation (149). Although I will only go into this in the next chapter (Section 5.2.2), I believe that this theory has interesting implications about the experience of space. It may explain, for instance, why readers are likely to react negatively (e.g. in a fearful way, or with a sense of foreboding) to the representation of a Gothic castle.

I want to illustrate this with the way in which Mr. Collins's garden is presented in Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*. I will demonstrate that this narrative builds on the "factual" space of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, but invests it with a different "thematic" meaning. In the nexus between text, reader, and reading community, this results in a "sense of place" that is different from the "sense of place" evoked by *Pride and Prejudice*. While Jane Austen's narrator focuses almost exclusively on visual imagery, Juliecoop's narrator associates visual images with embodied images and emotional responses. The reader comments to this narrative suggest that this gives the space in question a distinctive, romantic "tinge." In *Nothing Wanting*, Elizabeth realises that Mr. Darcy is flirting with her in the drawing room of Rosings (Chapter 1). In addition, Colonel Fitzwilliam tells Elizabeth about Wickham's deceit, rather than Mr. Darcy's interference in the relationship between Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley (Chapter 1). Colonel Fitzwilliam also tells Mr. Darcy that Elizabeth dislikes him (Chapter 2). As a consequence, both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are confronted with their flaws before the proposal can take place. They cannot get to sleep, and happen to meet each other in Mr. Collins's garden (Chapter 2).

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Collins's garden is characterised as follows:

> At length the Parsonage was discernible. The garden sloping to the road, the house standing in it, the green pales, and the laurel hedge, everything declared they were arriving. Mr. Collins and Charlotte appeared at the door, and the carriage stopped at the small gate which led by a short gravel walk to the house, amidst the nods and smiles of the whole party. . . . Mr. Collins invited them to take a stroll in the garden, which was large and well laid out, and to the cultivation of which he attended himself. To work in this garden was one of his most respectable pleasures; and Elizabeth admired the command of countenance with which Charlotte talked of the healthfulness of the exercise, and owned she encouraged it as much as possible. Here, leading the way through every walk and cross walk, and scarcely allowing them an interval to utter the praises he asked for, every view was pointed out with a minuteness which left beauty entirely behind. He could number the fields in every direction, and could tell how many trees there were in the most distant clump. But of all the views which his garden, or which the country or kingdom could boast, none were to be compared with the prospect of Rosings, afforded by an opening in the trees that bordered the park nearly opposite the front of his house. It was a handsome modern building, well situated on rising ground. (Austen, *Pride* 153-4)

In this passage, the narrator draws attention to the *visual* aspects of the garden[6]: to its size and lay-out, to the walks and cross-walks, and especially to the views that are afforded from it.[7] In *Nothing Wanting*, by contrast, the garden is described as follows:

> So agitated was she, that she knew sleep would evade her, and despite the lateness of the hour wondered if she could escape to the garden, to breathe fresh air and allow the moonscape to calm her. She had occasionally done so at Longbourn, and felt it now to be the only way to soothe her current distress. Thus she quickly dressed, pulled on her coat and half boots, then quietly crept downstairs and out the kitchen door.
>
> The night was chilly, but the full moon reflected enough light for her to be confident of her steps within the near confines of Mr. Collins' garden. She breathed in deeply the crisp air and tried to put all disquieting thoughts aside, willing herself to calm as she found a bench where she might sit and enjoy the moonlight. (Chapter 2)

Although the narrator mentions visual images (the full moon, the light, the bench, the boundaries of the garden), she also draws attention to non-visual, embodied images (the "fresh air," the "chilly" night, the "crisp air") and Elizabeth's emotional experiences ("calm," "enjoy the moonlight").[8] When Mr. Darcy arrives at the scene, the narrator adds even more emotional and embodied connotations. First, the parsonage and the garden area behind it are the destination of Mr. Darcy's "heart," because he has walked towards it—towards Elizabeth—without thinking (Chapter 2).[9] Second, Mr. Collins's garden is presented as an isolated, "idyllic" space. In Austen's novel, Elizabeth's visit to the garden is a fundamentally social occasion. After all, Mr. Collins is showing Elizabeth and his other guests the garden, strongly encouraging them to admire its dimensions. In *Nothing Wanting*, in contrast, Elizabeth's visit is a solitary affair, and her desire is precisely for solitude. As a result, these two spaces have different affordances. While Austen's Elizabeth is as much

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[6] These visual images create a sense of "presence" (which I mentioned in my discussion of Ryan's spatio-temporal immersion). As Marco Caracciolo has argued, however, the reader's sense of presence seems to be more memorable when the text invites the reader to imagine "non-visual—gustatory, haptic, or olfactory—experiences" (see Caracciolo, "Narrative" 432). As I will demonstrate in a moment, this helps to explain why the garden of *Nothing Wanting* has a different "sense of place."

[7] I will discuss the thematic meaning of this emphasis in Section 4.3.2.1. Suffice to say, for now, that the narrator's emphasis on the openness of Mr. Collins's garden seems to be a metonym for Mr. Collins's relationship with Lady Catherine. The fact that the parsonage can boast a view of Rosings—a view that is afforded by an opening in the belt of Lady Catherine's estate—reflects the fact that Mr. Collins is eager to admire, and that she facilitates and encourages his admiration. It reflects, in other words, the power relationship between them—Lady Catherine controls the landscape, and Mr. Collins is only too happy to be a part of her "view" from Rosings Park.

[8] For another instance of this calming influence, see Juliecoop, Chapter 3: "The moon shone brightly still, and eventually a measure of peace calmed them."

[9] Notably, Mr. Darcy walks in the direction of the garden because the windows of the parsonage evoke sexual fantasies about Elizabeth—which he immediately represses (Chapter 2). He does the same in the garden, when he sees that Elizabeth's hair is unpinned (Chapter 3). Though these associations are linked to the parsonage and Elizabeth, rather than the garden itself, they help to strengthen the overall "romantic" atmosphere of the scene.

bound to social conventions as she would have been in a drawing room, Juliecoop's characters get the chance to walk to a different drum than in society at large. This is an important part of the characters' experience. Because Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth meet in the garden "during the hours when all decent folk are safely abed," Mr. Collins's garden becomes associated with an illicitness the characters experience as liberating:

> It seemed almost surreal to them both, that they should be having the most amiable conversation they had ever experienced, in such a setting. The strictures of propriety having been set aside eased the stiff formality that normally ruled their existence. (Chapter 3)

Ultimately, in short, Juliecoop's narrator adds two major features: unlike Austen's narrator, she pays more attention to the "atmosphere" of the garden than its visual characteristics, and she characterises it as an isolated, intimate space rather than a relatively open, social space.

Several comments suggest that these details "tinge" fan readers' engagement with this narrative space. One fan remarks that she loves "full moons" and Jane Austen fan fiction (comments to Chapters 1 and 2). Another fan "can't wait to see what happens in the moonlight" (comments to Chapters 1 and 2). Another fan sighs at the thought of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth "meeting in the moonlight" (comments to Chapters 1 and 2). Another fan envies Elizabeth, because she wants to meet Mr. Darcy "in a moonlit garden" too (comments to Chapters 1 and 2). The visual image of the moonlight, together with other story elements,[10] colours the expectations of these readers: it invites them to believe that the encounter between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth will be a romantic one. This is clearly reflected in Juliecoop's Author's Note to the next chapter, which reads: *Now, let's find out what a moonlit garden will do for D & E, shall we?"* (Chapter 3). This expectation is fulfilled in the chapter itself, and the romantic and erotic nature of their encounter is stressed by means of references to the narrative space. When Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth embrace after they have resolved their differences, the gesture is represented in terms of the narrative space:[11] "For long moments he held her, their two shadows combined into one silhouette in the moonlight" (Chapter 3). Later, the private nature of the moonlit garden makes Mr. Darcy give free rein to his desire, and kiss Elizabeth: "Here alone with her in the moonlight, he nearly groaned at the intensity of his desire" (Chapter 4). Ultimately, this combination of textual description and reader comments suggests that the overall effect of Juliecoop's

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[10] These expectations are also fed, for instance, by the fact that Elizabeth has just recognised Mr. Darcy's attentions for what they are, and has admitted to herself that she wishes for more (Chapter 2). In addition, the blurb suggests that the couple will come together much sooner in this story. Finally, the expectations of these readers are undoubtedly influenced by the fact that most Jane Austen fics are love stories. They would have very different expectations, for instance, if this moonlit garden featured in a narrative about werewolves.

[11] This is not the only association. When Mr. Darcy realises that his reasons for interfering in the relationship of Jane and Bingley were "preposterous," for instance, he blesses "the moonlight that hid his flushed countenance" (Chapter 4). Still, the moonlight tends to have romantic-erotic associations.

description, or "sense of place" of her version of Mr. Collins's garden, is a romantic-erotic atmosphere.

As I will illustrate in Section 4.3.2, this difference suggests that *Nothing Wanting* and the reader comments to this text display a preference for sociopsychological content and narrative techniques that draw attention to this content. This makes them different from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* which shows a preference for sociopolitical content and narrative techniques that highlight that aspect. This suggests the members of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* have developed distinctive reading and writing practices, which are embedded in a distinctive discourse domain. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the texts that result from these practices bear some resemblance to recent adaptations of Austen's novel. For instance, the "semantic charge" of Juliecoop's garden bears some resemblance to the first proposal scene of the 2005 film version of *Pride and Prejudice*, starring Keira Knightley and Matthew MacFadyen. While Austen sets this scene inside, at Hunsford parsonage, the 2005 adaptation sets the proposal in a folly at Rosings Park (Sc. 9). While the proposals themselves are comparable, the folly has a different "sense of place." Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth bump into each other in the folly because they are both wet from the rain, and are seeking shelter. Surrounded by the sound of the downpour, Mr. Darcy proposes and Elizabeth refuses. Her passionate reply is emphasised by a roll of thunder. What follows, however, is a moment of silence, in which Mr. Darcy exhales and gazes at Elizabeth's lips, longingly, while she moves closer and gazes at his. This moment of sexual tension is "unresolved," however: Mr. Darcy takes his leave and walks away, leaving Elizabeth alone in the folly. The "sense of place" of this narrative space is comparable to Mr. Collins's garden in Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting* (and, as I will demonstrate, several rose gardens) because of the scene's content and form. While the woods and grounds of Rosings Park are clearly visible in every shot, Elizabeth is also backed by the pillars that separate the folly from the rest of the park. This creates the impression that the folly is a separate, enclosed space.[12] This is emphasised by the rain, which is visible and audible in every shot and seems to isolate the characters even more. This isolation is emphasised by the photography. As Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy move closer, the camera shot changes from medium close up to close up. This highlights the characters' closeness, and gives the space an "intimate" feel.

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[12] Interestingly, Barbara Britton Wenner has argued that this type of space is very important in Austen's novels. She believes that Austen's heroines often seek out "a threshold—a zone of safety—between prospect and refuge" (Wenner 12). These thresholds, which afford a good view of the landscape but also a place to retreat (20-1), may be

> boundary walks, such as the one from which Elizabeth Benett learns so much, or they may be places near park palings, good places to hide and to seek, experienced by Fanny Price and Charlotte Heywood. The concept of liminality provides significant situations for the heroines to learn what is beneficial to them-- moments such as hiding in the hedgerow or encountering the sea. All these landscapes provide ways for women to control their lives. In these places, women find ways to both transgress and transform the [male- dominated] landscape. (sic) (9)

Notably, some fans use alternative formal strategies to amplify the "experiential feel" that this creates. I want to illustrate this with Vicky's "All in a Name." This story retells the proposal scene of the 2005 adaptation from Mr. Darcy's point of view. This is indicated in the Author's Note, but also with references to rain in the opening lines. In "All in a Name," the moment after Elizabeth's refusal is recounted as follows:

> Darcy's eyes drifted shut in reaction to the scent [of Elizabeth's perfume], and his hands completed their unseen journey, to land on Miss Elizabeth's hips. Then, with a deep, shaky breath, he leaned forward, so utterly intoxicated with her presence that he could not help but abandon all his sensibilities, his restraints. Even the lady's own objections, accusations, and insults could not deter him – for Darcy was aware it was only *they* that would allow him to do this.
>
> . . .
>
> Their lips touched; *Lizzy.*
>
> ---
>
> Darcy's eyes drifted shut in reaction to the scent – but at the last second, using will he had not known he had – nor would he ever know where it came from – he drew them open again and pulled back slightly. (my ellipsis)

First, the narrator of "All in a Name" uses the image of Elizabeth's scent to emphasise Elizabeth's proximity. As Marco Caracciolo notes, this "embodied" image encourages the reader to imagine that they are at the scene of the folly, because "taste, touch and to some extent smell are proximal senses—which means that we need to be close to an object in order to perceive it in those sensory modalities" ("Narrative" 432). Second, the narrator amplifies the sexual tension of the scene, only to defuse it after the line-break. Before the line-break, there is absolutely no indication that the kiss described is not actually happening in the storyworld of this fic—there are no typographical markers, such as italics, there is no narratorial commentary, there are no discontinuous or implausible elements. Anyone who is familiar with the adaptation knows that "All in a Name" deviates from the film, but they only realise that the narrator is describing a fantasy when she repeats the sentence "Darcy's eyes drifted shut in reaction to the scent," which effectively resets the scene. In this passage, the text takes the reader by the hand, setting up a temporary contrast between what happens in Mr. Darcy's fantasy and what happens in the adaptation. By building up the reader's hopes only to dash them again, this text invites readers to feel a sense of loss. This adds even more depth to the emotional charge of the narrative space.

4.3 "The Shades of Pemberley"

As the example of *Nothing Wanting* suggests, Jane Austen fans do not just recreate the spaces of Jane Austen's world; they also recast them. In Section 4.3.2, I will discuss what the "recastings" of Mr. Darcy's estate, Pemberley, imply about the fan community's reading and writing practices and the discourse domain in which those practices are embedded. As I will demonstrate, the preference for non-visual and emotional cues is also apparent in rewritings of Pemberley. I believe that Jane Austen's narrator tends to use visual imagery that is charged with a thematic meaning that seems to be rooted in an ideology that is similar to the ideology of eighteenth-century writings on the picturesque. In comparison, the fan fiction texts I will discuss display a greater interest in the experience of the individual. This is also reflected on the level of content. I will argue that fans tend to replace Austen's emphasis on "views," on the importance of heritage, and on social responsibility with an emphasis on the embodied experience of space, personal history, and personal relationships. Both in terms of form and content, then, Austen's spaces are "personalised" in the process of rewriting. I will relate this shift in poetic preferences to the growing influence of a cultural value system that is based on individual, rather than communal, criteria.

4.3.1 Novelistic Space

Pemberley is an instance of what Lennard Davis calls "deep or thick space," because there is an "interiority to the mental constructions" that make up Mr. Darcy's estate (52-3). That is, when readers use Austen's textual "blueprint" to build Pemberley in their imaginations, they get the impression that there is more to Mr. Darcy's estate than what is, strictly speaking, described in the text. While the reader hears a lot of gossip about Pemberley in the first two volumes of Austen's novel, it is not until Elizabeth's visit in the third volume that the reader gets to see Pemberley (through the eyes of the narrator and Elizabeth). The narrator offers the reader several perspectives on the house and grounds by following in Elizabeth's footsteps. Because several landmarks return in the narrator's account of Elizabeth's impressions, the reader can piece together an image of Pemberley and its environs. At the beginning of the third volume, Elizabeth is travelling towards Pemberley in a carriage, together with her aunt and uncle Gardiner. The description of Elizabeth's journey towards the estate is remarkably extensive. The travellers first catch a glimpse of Pemberley Woods (235). They then enter the park by turning in "at the lodge" (235). They set out at a low point, and find themselves in "a beautiful wood" (235). It is only when they have ascended for "half a mile," and find themselves on top of a hill, that they catch their first glimpse of Pemberley House (235). The view is described as follows:

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. (235)

The woods, the valley, the stream, and the house itself are all part of what Meyer calls the "factual" space. These landmarks become reference points in the paragraphs that follow. Austen mentions that the carriage descends the hill, crosses the bridge (which, presumably, takes them across the stream), and drives up to the house (235). They are admitted to the hall, and the housekeeper shows them the dining-parlour and other rooms, as well as the picture gallery (236-7), after which the gardener and (to a lesser extent) Mr. Darcy give them a tour of the park (240-46).[13] This extensive description creates the illusion that Pemberley has "dimensions and depth" (Davis 53): there are rooms that we, as readers, visit with Elizabeth and her aunt and uncle, but we assume that other rooms are hidden from prying eyes; we see the beautiful spots that are part of the "circuit tour" that Elizabeth and her aunt and uncle take of the grounds, but we assume that there are also spots that are hidden away in the landscape, off the beaten track (Davis 53).[14] This is what makes Pemberley into a "thick" space.

Davis believes that this type of space is typical of the novel, and especially of "realistic" novels, because it is shaped by the social and historical context in which this particular type of narrative emerged (53-4). Here, it is unclear whether Davis is using "realistic" as a synonym for "realist." Since his discussion centres on the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century, however, it is more likely that his use of the word "realistic" is similar to mine (see General Introduction). In any case, Davis's theory can be used to shed light on Austen's work. This theory is partly inspired by psychoanalysis. However, I will not go into this context here because I believe that his use of psychoanalytical concepts, such as defence and resistance, is almost metaphorical. Therefore, they can be used as such. Davis approaches the novel as a type of "defence." By this, he means "a particular psychic construct that helps humans and by extension human society to cope"—that is, "nodal points by which humans make contact with reality and buffer that reality" (11). Davis posits that novels are such a "defense," because they buffer "lived experience": "their subject matter is heavily oriented towards the ideological, and their function is to help humans adapt

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[13] Marco Caracciolo would call this a "body tour," because the reader is encouraged to follow the characters' movement through space (both when they are in the carriage and in the house) ("Virtual" 120).

[14] In the immersion theory of Marie-Laure Ryan, this effect is called "hidden depth" (Ryan "Literary" 111). Ryan believes it is created not just by the words on the page, but also by the reader's projecting additional knowledge onto the text (Ryan, *Virtual* 91; see Section 1.3.3.1). Ryan associates this and other "immersive" effects with the techniques of "high realism" that can be found in nineteenth-century novels and popular literature (*Virtual* 4, 11, 96-7, 160).

to the fragmentation and isolation of the modern world" (12). Relating this to notions of "resistance," he concludes that "the novel resists society and is a kind of mass cultural defense, as are ideological structures in general"; the reader "alternately succumbs to and resists the structures of the novel as well as resisting society through the reading of novels" (16). This also informs Davis's approach to the representation of space in novels:

> When we 'see' a house in a novel, there is really nothing 'there,' and, worse, there is really no 'there' for a 'there' to be. The house we 'see' in our mind is largely a cultural artifact. It must be described as a cultural phenomenon with recognizable signs to tell us what kind of a house, what class, whose taste, and so on. All of this description will depend on ideology -- that is the vast signifying system that, in its interpenetration with the individual psyche, makes things 'mean' something to a culture and individuals in that culture. Ideology constitutes the sum of that which a culture needs to believe about itself and its aspirations as opposed to what really is. (24)

In what follows, I will demonstrate that Austen's representation of Pemberley contains "recognisable signs" that derive some of their meaning from eighteenth-century ideologies, just as representations in fan fiction contain "recognisable signs" that derive some of their meaning from the specific systems of preferences and priorities that circulate in the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*.

Like Davis, I believe that the emergence of "thick" spaces like Austen's Pemberley is closely related to the historical moment in which novels first came to prominence. Davis notes that

> [n]ovelistic space . . . is involved in a series of more or less hidden, ideological presuppositions about the nature of property and lands, foreign and domestic, the relationship of various races and classes to those lands, and the ways Europeans at various times found it necessary to represent, describe, and control terrains and property—their own as well as others. . . . In the simplest terms, locations are intertwined with ideological explanations for the possession of property. (53-4)

Pointing out parallel developments in eighteenth-century landscape painting and accounts by explorers, Davis argues that the representation of space in the novel is related to a "movement to try and control, enumerate, and represent property" (57). In the case of England, Davis ties this to an important shift in property law, a move away from a feudal system in which land was never truly owned by the landowner and towards a system in which land became property that could be bought, sold, and commodified in other ways (63). I will discuss this shift in depth in Section 4.3.2, when I discuss the "picturesque" movement and immaterial types of "improvement." Suffice to say that this "new" perspective, in which property became an index for wealth (63), underpins Austen's representation of Pemberley. As I have noted, Pemberley is first presented as an object of gossip. At the Meryton assembly, there are many rumours about Mr. Darcy's income. The narrator notes that a report is brought into "general circulation within five minutes after his

entrance, of his having ten thousand a year" (*Pride* 12). This gossip relates to Pemberley because as a member of the landed gentry, Mr. Darcy's estate would have been his primary source of revenue. This is made explicit later on, when the narrator notes that even "his large estate in Derbyshire" cannot compensate for his lack of manners (12). Similarly, Mr. Wickham describes Pemberley as a "noble" estate, of a "clear ten thousand per annum" (77). In these rumours, Mr. Darcy's wealth is almost synonymous with his estate. Davis also notes, however, that by the nineteenth century, this focus on property and wealth "had to be seen as something more than crass greediness" (88). It was no longer enough to represent property; narrators had to justify its ownership, by placing it in a particular historical setting and charging it with ideological meaning (88). In *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, "Elizabeth Bennet has to *not* care about money to get it" (Davis 88). In this respect, as in many others, Austen's novel seems to strike a balance between eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century concerns.

In some novels, this emphasis on the sociopolitical dimension of space came with a clear move away from sentimental associations. Bruno Hillebrand has argued, for instance, that authors who write from a sense of social engagement will write very differently from authors who are more interested in the individual experience of reality (429). To illustrate the impact of this poetical difference, Hillebrand compares the representation of narrative space in Henry Fielding's *Bildungsroman Tom Jones*, in which the narrator refuses to describe an idyllic space, to the representation of space in Samuel Richardson's sentimental novels (437-8). However, I want to illustrate the tension he discusses with Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, because this novel explicitly satirises representations of space in which subjective experience takes centre stage. Consider, for instance, Catherine Morland's famous reaction to a manuscript she finds in a cabinet at Northanger Abbey:

> Her heart fluttered, her knees trembled, and her cheeks grew pale. She seized, with an unsteady hand, the precious manuscript, for half a glance sufficed to ascertain written characters; and while she acknowledged with awful sensations this striking exemplification of what Henry had foretold, resolved instantly to peruse every line before she attempted to rest.
>
> The dimness of the light her candle emitted made her turn to it with alarm; but there was no danger of its sudden extinction; it had yet some hours to burn; and that she might not have any greater difficulty in distinguishing the writing than what its ancient date might occasion, she hastily snuffed it. Alas! it was snuffed and extinguished in one. A lamp could not have expired with more awful effect. Catherine, for a few moments, was motionless with horror. It was done completely; not a remnant of light in the wick could give hope to the rekindling breath. Darkness impenetrable and immovable filled the room. A violent gust of wind, rising with sudden fury, added fresh horror to the moment. Catherine trembled from head to foot. In the pause which succeeded, a sound like receding footsteps and the closing of a distant door struck on her affrighted ear. Human nature could support no more. A cold sweat stood on her forehead, the manuscript fell from her hand, and groping her way

> to the bed, she jumped hastily in, and sought some suspension of agony by creeping
> far underneath the clothes. (Austen, *Northanger* 161)

The following morning, Catherine discovers that the manuscript is nothing more than an "inventory of linen, in coarse and modern characters" (163). Here, the narrator pokes fun at Gothic descriptions of space by exaggerating Catherine's emotional experience and undercutting it at the same time—exposing her fanciful and unrealistic expectations. Hillebrand also sees this critical attitude in Fielding's novel, whose narrator similarly refuses to use a sentimental, emotional perspective in which character and space become blended together, which was often used in the representation of pastoral idylls (437). As my discussion of Mr. Collins's garden suggests, fans have no such qualms, and feel free to give centre stage to the characters' experiences of space. In the following sections, I will home in on two aspects of Austen's ideology, and I will contrast them with the ideological meanings that tend to underpin the representation of Pemberley in Jane Austen fan fiction. I will conclude that, in this community at least, the property-based ideological meaning that underpins Austen's spaces is eroded, and supplemented with ideas that are more individualistic.

4.3.2 Pemberley

Although Austen's representation of Pemberley seems to be fairly neutral, I will discuss two "recognisable signs" that refer to the novel's sociohistorical context and are charged with ideological meaning. First, Austen's narrator pays a lot of attention to "views" or "prospects" in her description of Pemberley—like she does in her description of Mr. Collins's garden. Several Austen scholars have linked this interest in "views" to the eighteenth-century aesthetic notion of the "picturesque," and its ideological assumptions. More specifically, theorists of the "picturesque" suggest that the individual's role is to "improve" the estate with the nature of the estate in mind, rather than follow the dictates of "awkward" individual taste. Second, Austen's description of Pemberley draws attention to symbols of continuity and organic growth. These elements, too, imply a respect for the "nature" of the estate, but on a sociocultural level. They emphasise the importance of cultural heritage and custom, as well as individual initiative. I will demonstrate that this dual emphasis on visual imagery and "thematic" associations, as Caracciolo would call them, is eroded in the process of re-presentation in Jane Austen fan fiction, and replaced by connotations that are more closely tied to the individual: namely, emotional and embodied associations. I will demonstrate this with an analysis of Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*, JessicaS's "So Gradually," and, to a lesser extent, Mari A.'s "Blackout." This increased interest in the individual is also mirrored on the level of content. In the fics I will discuss, Pemberley is expanded with rose gardens, in which personal relationships take centre stage and Mr. Darcy's responsibilities are "personalised."

4.3.2.1   From Parks to Rose Gardens

Austen: Views and the Picturesque

As Austen's lengthy discussion of Elizabeth's carriage ride toward Pemberley House suggests, Austen's narrator is very interested in views or prospects. This is confirmed during Elizabeth's tour of the house. While the narrator does not dwell on descriptions of furniture, or the proportions of the room, she does dwell on Elizabeth's views from the windows. Notably, the landmarks that were prominent in the narrator's description of Elizabeth's approach to the house return here:

> The hill, crowned with wood, from which they had descended, receiving increased abruptness from the distance, was a beautiful object. Every disposition of the ground was good; and she looked on the whole scene, the river, the trees scattered on its banks, and the winding of the valley, as far as she could trace it, with delight. As they passed into other rooms these objects were taking different positions; but from every window there were beauties to be seen. (Austen, *Pride* 236)

This passage draws the reader's attention to the shifts in perspective which are typical of an in-the-world experience of space, and encourages "spatio-temporal immersion" (see Section 4.2). The reader is invited, in other words, to imagine these views from Elizabeth's position in space, or a position close to it. Notably, this vantage point is encoded into the narrator's choice of words.[15] The narrator's description of Elizabeth's approach to Pemberley House in the carriage establishes an observational centre, or vantage point, on the scene of the story because it uses spatial references that are "projective" (that is, dependent on the viewer) rather than "topological" (that is, independent of the viewer) (Herman, *Story* 280, "Spatial" 528). In the first paragraph, these references are used to situate the various landmarks (the woods, the slopes of the valley, the stream, the house) and the viewer vis-à-vis each other. The side of the valley on which Pemberley House is located is the "opposite" of the side of the valley on which the viewer is located. The ground is "rising" from the perspective of the viewer; after all, if the viewer were standing next to the house, facing the woods, it would be more natural to say that the ground is sloping down. In a similar way, the house is only "backed" by woody hills when you look at it from a particular vantage point. In addition, the reader is invited to look at nature as an "object,"

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[15] To explain how the passage mentioned invites such a shift, I draw on David Herman's discussion of "spatialization" (*Story* 263-99). In a study of spatialisation, narratives are approached as "systems of verbal or visual cues prompting their readers to *spatialize* storyworlds into evolving configurations of participants, objects, and places" (263). Herman takes a "microstructural" approach and tries to tie basic inferences about the spatial dimension of storyworlds to specific textual cues. These inferences are not specific to individual readers; rather, they are "modeling tasks"—inferences every reader *has* to make in order to understand the text (Herman, *Story* 6-8; "Spatial" 531; cf. Emmott, *Narrative* 58-9). I will not discuss the process of spatialisation in depth, however, because I am more interested in the way spaces become tied up with "evaluative" emotional and semantic meanings.

almost as if they were looking at a landscape painting. This perspective is even more explicitly evoked in the second passage, when the narrator describes Elizabeth's view from the house. The "increased abruptness" and "taking different positions" in particular refer to the changes that come with taking a different perspective—to the projective, viewer-relative nature of the location described. In addition, the windows seem to act as picture frames. By presenting Pemberley in this way, the narrator draws attention to the various prospects afforded by the estate, rather than the estate itself.

Over the past few decades, several Austen scholars have tied Austen's description of Pemberley to the rise of the "picturesque," an aesthetic movement that revolves around "views" on the landscape. The notion of the "picturesque" was introduced in the late eighteenth century by William Gilpin, who defined "picturesque beauty" as "that peculiar kind of beauty, which is agreeable in a picture" (xii). In his *Essay on Prints* (1768), Gilpin taught his audience how to spot the principles of painting—such as "design, disposition, keeping, and the distribution of light"—in their study of cheap prints (Batey 52). He is most famous, however, for travel journals such as his *Observations* on the Lake District, in which he explains how to look at the landscapes of Britain through a similar lens (Batey 52). Gilpin's work created a stir, and picturesque observation of the landscape became very fashionable in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Notably, several scholars have related this popularity to the developments in English property law Lennard Davis mentions, and to the various ideological discourses this shift entailed. Both Jill Heydt-Stevenson and H. Elisabeth Ellington argue, for instance, that the picturesque rose to prominence because of the political movement of enclosure, which picked up speed from the seventeenth century onwards when Parliament began passing Enclosure Acts (Heydt-Stevenson, "Mourning" 54, 64; Ellington 93).[16] Before the passing of these acts, a significant portion of farmland was privately owned but communally used for a part of the year. Although these strips of land were cultivated by specific farmers during the growing and harvesting season, they were at the disposal of the community during the remainder of the year. These "commons" were often used to graze livestock. The Enclosure Acts put a stop to this communal use. This changed the landscape drastically, because vast fields were divided into farming plots by hedges and fences (Ellington 93). This soon resulted in nostalgic forms of landscape theory, such as the picturesque aesthetics, on the one hand, and landscape gardening or "improvement," on the other (94-5). This does not mean that the picturesque movement aimed to turn back time. This is especially visible in the work of "improvers." Heydt-Stevenson notes, for instance, that Humphrey Repton's "improvements" of the landscape, "though often beautiful, are dependent upon the eradication of commons, of signs of commerce, and of laborers' homes" ("Liberty" 263). Improvements such as these are shaped by ideas about who is allowed to control the

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[16] This does not mean that the enclosure movement did not exist before the seventeenth century. It is already mentioned, for instance, in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516).

landscape and who or what has the privilege to stay in the landscape ("Liberty" 264). The landscape is charged, in other words, with ideological meaning.

Between 1790 and 1811, this ideological dimension caused a rift between the advocates of "picturesque aesthetics," propounded by theorists like Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, and the advocates of "picturesque improvement," represented by landscape gardeners like Lancelot "Capability" Brown and Humphrey Repton (Heydt-Stevenson, "Liberty" 261-2).[17] Jill Heydt-Stevenson summarises this debate as follows:

> The debate centered on whether to preserve or alter, and thus whether to maintain or to use, though both camps believed they were preserving what was distinctly English. The picturesque theorists called for a wilder beauty; in contrast, the improvers claimed that those who wanted to tell them to keep their land undomesticated were directly compromising an owner's ability to make use of his property. ("Liberty" 262)

I agree with Heydt-Stevenson, who argues that Pemberley is shaped by the ideas of "picturesque aesthetics" rather than "picturesque improvement" ("Liberty" 262).[18] Heydt-Stevenson believes that for Austen, Price, and Knight alike, the "improvements" of Brown and Repton were fashionable but "divorced from the guidance of history and destructive of traditional community" ("Liberty" 263). This is why Knight, for one, advocated that improvers take their cue from the landscape itself, and not "from preconceived rules" that, supposedly, applied to every landscape ("Liberty" 263). Championing the "natural" and "unfettered" landscape, Knight and Price presented the "picturesque" as the middle ground between Edmund Burke's "sublime" and "beautiful" ("Liberty" 267-9). In effect, when Elizabeth first views Pemberley, she is delighted with the natural feel of the landscape, which still has the "abruptness" that is typical of the Peak District in Derbyshire (cf. Batey 69). She remarks that, even though the estate has been altered, it has been done "without any artificial appearance"; although the stream has been "improved," its "banks" are "neither formal nor falsely adorned" (Austen, *Pride* 235). She has "never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an

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[17] Humphrey Repton was one of Brown's disciples and a controversial figure (Duckworth 41). He is mentioned in *Mansfield Park*, where Mr. Rushworth is determined to "improve" his grounds. The notion of landscape "improvements" is a bone of contention among the characters and the narrator (see Duckworth 38-55 for an analysis).

[18] This is not the only opinion on the subject. Ellington argues, for instance, that Austen's description of Pemberley seems to be modelled on the work of "improver" Lancelot "Capability" Brown (101). This assumption also seems to underlie the 1995 A&E/BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, where Pemberley clearly has the streams, belts of woodland, and lawns that reach right up to the house which Brown was famous for (Ellington 100-1). Alistair Duckworth, in contrast, argues that it is "misleading" to look at Jane Austen's novels, and especially *Mansfield Park*, through the lens of the debate within the picturesque movement, because "it suggests that her distaste for Repton was merely aesthetic, implying a preference for the more naturalistic styles of Price and Knight" (41-2). He believes that Austen treats all forms of the picturesque with considerable irony, and is more concerned with the social implications of "improvements" like Repton's than with the relative "aesthetic merits" of particular styles (42). I will return to this argument in Section 4.3.2.2.

awkward taste" (Austen, *Pride* 235). Heydt-Stevenson, for her part, sees the picturesque aesthetics of Price and Knight embodied in the fact that Pemberley has "a formal garden by the house and wild nature in the Park" ("Liberty" 272). This has some important implications for the "thematic" connotations of Austen's Pemberley. Ultimately, her representation of Mr. Darcy's estate is underpinned by a similar ideology as the theories of Price and Knight. As Heydt-Stevenson puts it: "Elizabeth's connection to Darcy and his connection to Pemberley reinforces custom and moral heritage, as did the Price and Knight picturesque" ("Liberty" 272-3). The narrator's emphasis on "views," and particularly Elizabeth's emphasis on nature, associate Pemberley with a normative-evaluative system in which "improvement" with a respect for tradition and heritage is valued more highly than "improvement" based on individual fancies alone.

Jane Austen Fan Fiction: Idyllic Rose Gardens, Romance, and Privacy

In my comparison between the representation of Mr. Collins's garden in *Nothing Wanting* and *Pride and Prejudice*, I noted that Austen's emphasis on "views" is replaced by an emphasis on intimacy and romance. This suggests that Juliecoop's representation is underpinned by a different ideology than Austen's representation. I believe that this shift in ideology is also evinced by several rewritings of Pemberley.[19] While the narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* draws attention to "views" and the balance between nature and artifice, the narrators of JessicaS's "So Gradually," Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and GraceCS's *Given Good Principles* expand Mr. Darcy's estate with rose gardens. In most of these fan fiction texts, the rose gardens in question are "idyllic," in Mikhail Bakhtin's sense of the word.[20] Bakhtin defines the idyll as follows:

> Idyllic life and its events are inseparable from this concrete, spatial corner of the world where the fathers and grandfathers lived and where one's children and their children will live. This little spatial world is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world. (225)

I characterise the rose gardens as idyllic because they tend to be associated with previous generations, such as Mr. Darcy's mother (*Given Good Principles*), and especially with similar events, such as conversations about love and relationships (*Pride Prejudice and Prodigy, Nothing Wanting*) and proposals ("So Gradually"; *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*;

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[19] In this respect, fan fictional rewrites are not very different from adaptations. For an interesting discussion of the shifts in ideology that underpin the representation of Austen's landscape, and particularly Pemberley, in the 1940 and 1995 adaptations, see Ellington.

[20] In this respect, the rose gardens of Jane Austen fan fiction resemble other "idyllic chronotopes," such as the time-space that underpins the "love idyll (whose basic form is the pastoral)" (Bakhtin 224). One specific example that clearly resonates with the rose gardens of fan fiction is the "locus amoenus": a stereotypical depiction of a love scene that occurs in many classic and medieval texts, and typically contains "a patch of grass, a tree, a small stream of water, and a couple in love" (Keunen, *Time* 26, 43).

Given Good Principles). In addition, the space is represented as an intimate, private space that is isolated from the rest of the estate. This implies that fans disconnect Austen's space from its original ideological implications, changing it to suit the priorities of their own community. I will argue that, by expanding Austen's Pemberley with rose gardens, fans create more space for the individual and his or her personal relationships—in all their complexity.

I want to illustrate this with JessicaS's "So Gradually". In this "what if," Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth develop a profound friendship in Hertfordshire. When Mr. Darcy meets Elizabeth again in Kent, however, he realises that she has fallen in love with him. Determined to do the right thing, he tries to fall in love with her—only to realise that he has loved her all along. As my preliminary discussion of the "cul-de-sac" suggests (Section 4.2), the description of JessicaS's narrator is first and foremost charged with personal, individualistic associations, rather than the thematic meanings I discussed in the previous section. Both in terms of form and content, this space is different from Jane Austen's Pemberley. I have already noted that the rose gardens of this story, and particular a tiny "cul-de-sac," are charged with memories, emotional associations, and aesthetic judgments by the characters. While Austen's narrator calls attention to Pemberley's "views," moreover, the narrator of "So Gradually" calls attention to a part of Mr. Darcy's estate that is as enclosed, as deprived from wide and open vistas as a space can be: the cul-de-sac. This is confirmed by the fact that the characters start calling it the "rose nook" by the end of the story (Part 3). Austen's narrator emphasises the importance of "heritage"—by which I mean the traditional beliefs, values, and customs that have been passed down by a long line of ancestors. JessicaS's narrator associates the space with *personal* history—that is, with the memories, emotions, and relationships one has with family members of various generations. When Lady Matlock tells Georgiana and Elizabeth about the marriage proposals of her husband and Mr. Darcy's father, she does not really stress the fact that the "cul-de-sac" has been part of the estate for generations. Instead, she emphasises that it has played an important part in "love stories" for generations. This emphasis on personal history is confirmed by Georgiana's emotional reaction. As I have already noted, she concludes that the cul-de-sac is even more romantic than she originally thought. At the end of the narrative, moreover, she declares that she hopes that her future husband will propose to her there (Part 3). Indeed, even Mr. Darcy's claim that the rose garden is the most "picturesque"[21] spot of the entire estate strengthens this emphasis. Because he gazes at Elizabeth when he makes his aesthetic judgment, it becomes closely related to his romantic feelings for her. This is confirmed during his proposal, which takes place in the cul-de-sac in question. During this proposal, Mr. Darcy refers back to the associations of Lady Matlock and Georgiana, as well as his own aesthetic evaluation, but he makes his emotional reaction more explicit:

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[21] Since the "cul-de-sac" is the very opposite of the "wild," "unfettered" landscapes of Gilpin, Knight, and Price, it seems safe to say that the narrator uses the word "picturesque" in its modern sense, as a synonym for pretty and unspoilt.

"Did you notice where you took refuge from your brother's sister?" Darcy asked, somewhat breathlessly.

Elizabeth began to shake her head, and then abruptly realized she stood in the cul-de-sac Georgiana and Lady Matlock had once discussed. "I – not until this moment," she replied, blushing.

"I had not thought, at first, to ask this *here*. Two previous proposals, if there have not been more, might make *mine* a shade trite," he said with a smile. "But," he added, even as he slid down to one knee, "perhaps I may be a tad wrong in that regard." Elizabeth began to interrupt him, but he prevented her again – although not with a kiss, this time. "No, Elizabeth, before you can even say it – I am not wrong in this regard. We may be in the most picturesque part of my family's estate, but you are more beautiful than these roses, and certainly far dearer. I do not, I could not, wish to be parted from you again, as we have been these past months. I love you entirely too much to withstand such a separation again. Please, my friend, my darling – help me prevent such a horrible happening – marry me." (Part 3)

In this passage, Mr. Darcy expands the connotations of the cul-de-sac: while he thinks the "rose nook" is the prettiest spot his family's estate has to offer, he thinks it is less beautiful and less dear than Elizabeth. Arguably, this charges the space with a specific symbolic meaning. I have argued that Austen's description of Pemberley is underpinned by a normative-evaluative system in which heritage and society deserve as much, and in some cases more, respect than the needs of the individual. In this passage, however, Mr. Darcy puts his relationship with Elizabeth (that is, the personal) above the family estate (or the collective). This is confirmed by what *is* mentioned in the reader comments to this story, and also by what *is not*. There is only one explicit reference to the cul-de-sac in the reader comments to "So Gradually." One fan exclaims that she "loved the premise, the rose nook, the agreeable sisters, Caroline's frustration and just everything" (comments to Part 3). Two fans comment, however, that the proposal scene is "romantic" (comments to Part 3). Another fan says she is "swooning" in Elizabeth's stead (comments Part 3). This suggests that the rose nook's "tinge" is similar to the "sense of place" of Juliecoop's garden. Even fans who do not mention the rose nook or the proposal scene remark on "personal" elements. Several fans home in on the "happy couple," and rejoice that Mr. Darcy has finally realised how he really feels about Elizabeth, and how important she is to him (comments to Part 3). Most fans, however, like how the character of Lydia Bennet is developed in this story. In "So Gradually," Lydia becomes friends with Georgiana after Mr. Bennet refuses to let her go to Brighton (Part 3). Georgiana teaches her to play the pianoforte, like her and her brother. Lydia eventually realises that she needs to "improve" her talents, and Mr. Darcy offers to approach Georgiana's companion about lessons (Part 3). Ultimately, both Lydia and Kitty are tutored by Georgiana and her companion, while she and her brother are staying at Netherfield (Part 3). The youngest Bennets even ask to join Elizabeth and the Gardiners

on their visit to Pemberley—so Lydia can keep Miss Bingley from interfering with Mr. Darcy's suit (Part 3). In fact, it is Lydia and Kitty who direct Caroline away from the rose nook, giving Mr. Darcy the privacy he needs to propose to Elizabeth (Part 3). Several fans like that Lydia is a "good girl" in this story, that she develops a sisterly bond with Kitty and Georgiana, and that she and Kitty are determined to further the courtship of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy (comments to Part 3). Although there is talk of "accomplishments" in the narrative, which fit into Lydia's social role as a gentlewoman, these comments present Lydia's development first and foremost as a personal development. This ties in with the narrator's "personalised" representation of Pemberley.

This tendency to personalise Austen's space is also implied by the rose gardens of other stories, such as Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy* and GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*. These stories show that, while each fan negotiates fantextual conventions about the rose garden to suit different needs, they all give Mr. Darcy's estate a very personal dimension. In Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, the rose garden of Pemberley only plays a major role in the second part of the story, which is focused on the love story between Georgiana and Mr. James Darlington. Initially, the rose garden is merely mentioned as the scene for a private conversation between Georgiana, who has feelings for Mr. Darlington that run deeper than friendship, and Gwendolyn Beauchamp, a young lady who has set her cap at Mr. Darlington (Chapter 15). Mr. Darlington himself, meanwhile, is hiding from the Beauchamps in Pemberley's "wilderness" (Chapter 15). It is Lady Beauchamp, Gwendolyn's mother, who asks Georgiana to show Gwendolyn the "beautiful grounds" of Pemberley, and especially the rose garden, which she herself used to "love" (Chapter 15). While Lady Beauchamp stays inside with Mrs. Darcy to discuss the marital prospects of her son and Georgiana, on the one hand, and her daughter and Mr. Darlington, on the other, the young ladies have a private conversation about Mr. Darlington near the rose garden (Chapter 15). Although Gwendolyn is more interested in her own agenda than in the rose garden, the narrator gives the reader a brief description:

> She [Gwendolyn] was far more interested in soliciting what information she could from Miss Darcy, concerning Mr Darlington, than in appreciating the beauty of the gardens and grounds of Pemberley. She scarcely looked at the roses in what was acknowledged to be one of the finest rose gardens in the country. It was encircled by a high hedge, broken by the four entrances; from each of which, a path led to an ornamental sun-dial at the centre of the garden. Since Miss Beauchamp did not wish to wander between the circular beds to admire the beautiful roses, they found a bench against the hedge on the northern side bathed in warm sunshine. (Chapter 15)

This description does not just highlight the beauty of the roses, but also the enclosed nature of the garden. While Austen associates Pemberley with wide views, Jamie associates it with

a rose garden surrounded by a hedge that gives the occupants some degree of privacy.[22] This allows Gwendolyn and Georgiana to have a private conversation about Mr. Darlington, and especially about the nature of his relationship with another lady, the Countess de Namur (Chapter 15). It is after this conversation that Georgiana sorts through her thoughts and feelings for Mr. Darlington: she finally admits that she loves him, and wants to marry him—desperately enough to take matters into her own hands (Chapter 15).

The rose garden of *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy* is not completely private, however, and Mr. Darlington attempts to take advantage of that fact to discourage Gwendolyn Beauchamp. Unfortunately, his plan also creates a misunderstanding between him and Georgiana. In this episode, the rose garden becomes a stage for a "performance" (Chapter 17) that misleads Gwendolyn, Georgiana, and, indeed, the reader. Georgiana and Elizabeth are walking towards the rose garden (Chapter 16). Georgiana is being courted by Lord William, Gwendolyn's brother, but she tells her sister-in-law she wants to discourage him because her heart belongs to Mr. Darlington (Chapter 16). Elizabeth advises her to be honest with Lord William and his mother (Chapter 16). They walk to the rose garden, and come upon what appears to be a meeting of lovers:

> They walked on in silence for some time, following a path that brought them to one of the four entrances of the rose garden. They were no more than ten feet from the entrance when Elizabeth spied, through the gap in the hedge, two people standing at the very centre of the garden beside the sun dial. Elizabeth stopped, her face turning crimson. Georgiana, who had been looking at the delicate new leaves on a nearby tree, turned towards Elizabeth. Seeing the distressed expression on her sister's face, she followed Elizabeth's anguished gaze through the break in the hedge to the two figures at the centre of the garden. It was a man and a woman standing very closely together with their arms extended forward holding each other's hands. They were staring intently, lovingly, into each other's eyes. (Chapter 16)

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[22] To some extent, this relative privacy is afforded by gardens in general. However, it is still true that Jane Austen tends to charge this private space with sociological meaning, while fans (and, indeed, the adaptations) tend to use them for personal and erotic encounters. In *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, the "prettyish kind of a little wilderness on one side of the lawn" of Longbourn is the scene for a private conversation between Elizabeth and Lady Catherine (Austen, *Pride* 333). This confrontation is charged with "thematic" meaning, however. The confrontation between Elizabeth and Lady Catherine is not just a confrontation between two people, but between the lower gentry (that is, Elizabeth's social sphere) and the first circles of society (or Lady Catherine's sphere). It is as much a political confrontation, in other words, as a personal one. In the 1995 A&E/BBC adaptation, the garden of Longbourn becomes the setting for more domestic scenesWe see how the ladies of the house play and walk in the garden when Mr. Collins selects his bride (Sc. 7). Elizabeth and Mr. Wickham walk in the garden while they talk about Mr. and Miss Darcy (Sc. 9). We see Mrs. Bennet cutting flowers while she complains about Mr. Bingley's ill-usage of Jane (Sc. 21). As in the novel, we see Elizabeth and Jane running to the "little copse" after Mr. Bennet has received a letter from Mr. Gardiner (Sc. 30). We see Elizabeth and Jane drying flowers in the conservatory (Sc. 32) and we seen them walking in the garden while they are discussing Mr. Bingley's return (Sc. 33). As my discussion of the rose gardens of Pemberley suggests, fans also use gardens to set romantic or erotic encounters.

Notably, the author uses the romantic associations of this scene to increase the investment of his readers. Jamie ends the sixteenth chapter without revealing who the lovers are. He does, however, add the following Author's Note:

> *The reader is invited to leave their opinion, and to conjecture as to the identity of*
> *the couple by the fountain. Possible choices:*
>
> *Darcy and the Countess*
> *James Darlington and the Countess*
> *James Darlington and Gwendolyn*
> *Lord William and the Countess*
> *Lord William and Julia Darlington*
> *Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Mr Collins* (Chapter 16)

Several readers hazard a guess, and the author makes an effort to keep the speculation going. Several fans hopefully suggest Lord William and the Countess, for instance, but Jamie points out that, while this would solve many issues, it does not account for Elizabeth's reaction (comments to Chapter 16). Several fans shudder at the thought of its being Mr. Darcy and the Countess (comments to Chapter 16). Others agree that Mr. Darlington and the Countess are the most likely candidates (comments to Chapter 16). Here, the author clearly invites readers to engage with the story, and to consider every possible implication of the "romantic" connotations of the scene.

Notably, Jamie also undercuts the expectations that are raised by the "fantextual," romantic charge of the space and his invitation to guess the identity of the couple. Only one fan suggests that Mr. Darlington and the Countess de Namur may be rehearsing his proposal to Georgiana, or are acting (comments to Chapter 16). This fan is proved right in the next chapter. There, the narrator reveals that the lovers are James Darlington and the Countess de Namur (Chapter 17). Georgiana is distraught, and is just about to accept Lord William's proposal of marriage, when the Countess comes to Pemberley and explains that Mr. Darlington and she were never lovers (Chapter 17). They were acting the day before in order to mislead Miss Beauchamp and her mother (Chapter 17). Julia, Mr. Darlington's sister, is in on the ruse, because they needed someone to lead Gwendolyn to the rose garden (Chapter 17). In this episode, in short, both the characters and the author take full advantage of the semi-private nature of the rose garden, and its "romantic" connotations.

Ultimately, however, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy* confirms the "fantextual" connotations of the rose garden as a narrative space. After Mr. Darlington's elder brother dies, and he becomes heir to the estate and title of their father, he gives Georgiana a private tour of the "beautiful grounds" of Darlington Hall (Chapter 19). He refuses to propose until they have reached the garden, however:

> So they walked on silently, arm in arm, enjoying the lovely day, and feeling a
> wonderful sense of anticipation. Finally, James Darlington led Georgiana to a

beautiful rose garden. It was not on so grand a scale as the one at Pemberley, but it had a delicate beauty about it, that Georgiana greatly admired. They stopped at the centre of the garden, beside an ornamental fountain. Georgiana laughed.

James Darlington turned to face her, and took her hands in his so that they were standing in an identical pose to that he had assumed with the Countess de Namur at Pemberley. "Fear not, no one will come upon us," he said, smiling. (Chapter 19)

Here, James Darlington uses his body to associate the garden of Darlington Hall with memories, so that it echoes the rose garden of Pemberley. However, he also adds that this garden is a private space. It is in this garden that Georgiana proposes to Mr. Darlington, and where they share their first kisses (Chapter 19). This reinforces the "fantextual" resonance of the rose garden.

The rose garden of Maria-Grace's *Given Good Principles* has a different, more ominous "sense of place" than the rose gardens discussed so far. Arguably, this ties in with the "moral" of the chapter, which is captured in the title: "Folly is bound up in the heart of the child" (Chapter 8). This is a reference to Proverbs 22:15, which continues "but the rod of discipline will drive it far away" (*Kingjamesbibleonline.org*, "Proverbs"). Here, the rose garden is not associated with true love, but with Georgiana's naïve faith in Mr. Wickham and Mr. Wickham's foolish plotting. After all, in what follows, Mr. Wickham is punished physically, and Georgiana is forced to ask forgiveness of those whom she has wronged (Chapter 8, 9). The ideological meaning of the rose garden of *Given Good Principles* is attuned to this biblical "truth": there is a dark tinge to Georgiana's experience in the rose garden, and the associations discussed so far are used by Mr. Wickham to manipulate Georgiana. This rose garden, in short, is not a romantic, idyllic space. Yet Austen's Pemberley is still "personalised." Like the "Gothic" episode in *Northanger Abbey*, the narrative space is coloured by Georgiana's naiveté, grief, and fears, and it is first and foremost the space where Georgiana's innocence clashes with Mr. Wickham's villainy. Although this space is associated with a biblical "truth," in short, its representation is very much focused on the experience of the characters and, indeed, geared to the experience of the reader.

In *Given Good Principles*, Georgiana escapes to the rose garden of Pemberley after her brother has dismissed her for defending Mr. Wickham (Chapter 8). She is angry with Mr. Darcy because he treats her like a child, and does not allow her to be the mistress of her own home (Chapter 8). Like Mr. Collins's garden in *Nothing Wanting* and the rose gardens discussed so far, the rose garden in *Given Good Principles* is first and foremost associated with non-visual imagery, emotional reactions, and personal memories. Consider, for instance, the following excerpt:

"I'm not going to the nursery," she declared to the empty hallway. "I'm going…" she looked around again, noticing the moonlight streaming in through the tall windows, "…to the rose garden! I've always wanted to walk the rose garden in the moonlight.

Fitzwilliam has always said it is not proper for a lady to walk unescorted at night. I'll show him there is nothing at all improper about it. It is my mother's garden after all. What could be unseemly about taking a stroll there ?"

Squaring her shoulders triumphantly, she turned from the stairs. Quietly, she slipped out the door and furtively made her way into the garden. A soft spring breeze blew through the rose bushes causing them to sway animatedly.

"Oh!" She jumped, startled as a stray branch brushed her arm, catching a thorn on her wrist. Staring at the tiny trickle of blood, her heart raced. Stepping away from the edge of the path, she drew a deep breath, calming herself. *It smells like mama out here! The fragrance is different during the day, not so much like her, too heavy. But now it is cool and fresh, like mama. I never knew. Why would he keep me from this garden, from remembering her? Why? What else is he keeping from me. What else is he denying me?* Angrily, she stamped her foot in the dirt, wincing as a small rock bruised her heel. "Ouch!"

The sound of an owl in the distance silenced her. She paused, listening to the sounds of the night. *So peaceful.* With a life of their own, her feet took her down the path, winding through a wild looking tangle of thorny canes. *She always liked her roses left a little wild looking. She said it gave them personality.* Georgiana stopped before a bush heavy with blooms, their color indistinct in the silvery light. Carefully, she stooped to take in the heady fragrance. *Mama, I miss you so!* Silent tears slid down her cheeks. *You would have understood. You would not have been so mean to me tonight. You would not have allowed George to be so mistreated. You always understood. Why did you leave me?* Quietly, the young woman wept. (Chapter 8)

Here, Georgiana associates the rose garden with her mother, and grieves over her death. Once again, then, the rose garden does not stand for "heritage" in general, but for a very personal relationship between a daughter and her departed mother.

Yet there is also a sense of danger about the rose garden in *Given Good Principles*. Like Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy in *Nothing Wanting*, Georgiana defies the rules of propriety by walking in the garden at night. While Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy find the experience liberating and positive, however, there is a sense of danger about Georgiana's outing. While Elizabeth goes to the garden to find peace of mind, and Mr. Darcy goes to the garden because he follows his heart, Georgiana's trip to the garden is an act of rebellion against her brother. As I have suggested, this difference is indicated in two ways. On the one hand, the "sense of place" of the rose garden of *Given Good Principles* is more threatening than any of the rose gardens I have discussed so far. Georgiana has to calm herself down after she catches her arm on the thorns of the roses, and bleeds as a consequence. The garden fails to dissipate her anger, moreover, and she hurts her foot as she stamps the ground. The space is not just associated with sweet-smelling flowers, but also with "a wild looking tangle of thorny canes." The flowers become a symbol for Georgiana's act of rebellion. Just as Georgiana

believes that her mother accepts roses that are a little wild, she believes that her mother would have understood her own "wild," unlady-like defence of George Wickham. On the other hand, the "positive" connotations that are associated with the rose gardens discussed so far are used by Mr. Wickham to manipulate Georgiana. The sinister aspects of the garden tie in with the threat that looms over Georgiana. While Georgiana is walking in the rose garden, Mr. Wickham is going through the study and the private quarters of Mr. Darcy and Georgiana, stealing their personal belongings. He sees Georgiana through the window, and decides to "comfort" her. Mr. Wickham remarks on the "moonlight," and points out that one has to have "the heart of a romantic" to walk in the garden at night (Chapter 8). He adds visual and emotional cues, in other words, that are also prominent in the other rose gardens I have discussed. In addition, he compliments Georgiana not just on her appearance, but on the fact that she has a "fire" in her, "a spark, a strength" that makes her an ideal wife (Chapter 8). Mr. Wickham presents Georgiana's rebellious streak as a positive feature, just as the illicit meeting of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth is presented as liberating in *Nothing Wanting*. However, his intentions are not honourable. Mr. Wickham confesses that he loves Georgiana, and asks her to elope with him (Chapter 8). He tells her that they would have nothing to worry about, with her dowry (Chapter 8). He kisses her (Chapter 8). Georgiana soon realises that an elopement would bring shame on the family name, however, and that her father kept the amount of her dowry a secret for a purpose (Chapter 8). She tries to make him stop, but fails (Chapter 8). Luckily, her brother arrive just in time with a number of male guests and servants (Chapter 8). Mr. Wickham insists that he has compromised Georgiana (Chapter 8). The others claim that they have seen nothing (Chapter 8). In *Given Good Principles*, then, the "fantextual" connotations of the rose garden are used to create an emotional effect that is different from the effect of the other rose gardens I have discussed, but still highly personal. This suggests that, in essence, this representation is shaped by similar aesthetic preferences.

4.3.2.2 Pemberley as a Social Space: From Social Roles to Personal Relationships

Up to now, I have argued that, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Pemberley is "picturesque" because Austen's description gives centre stage to "views" and draws attention to the harmony between estate and nature. This has led me to conclude that Austen's space is underpinned by an ideology that is similar to the ideology of picturesque aesthetics, in which custom and heritage are valued very highly. In this section, I will demonstrate that this is also confirmed by Austen's representation of the social activities and roles that make Pemberley into a "social space." As I noted, I borrow this term from Henri Lefebvre, whose definition of "space" also includes social practices that have had an impact on locations. This notion of space calls attention to the social connection that is implied in Heydt-Stevenson's claim that "Elizabeth's connection to Darcy and his connection to Pemberley reinforces custom and moral heritage, as did the Price and Knight picturesque" ("Liberty" 272-3; see Section

4.3.2.1). In effect, Heydt-Stevenson is not the only scholar who has argued that Mr. Darcy's estate represents a synthesis of the collective wisdom of heritage and tradition, on the one hand, and individual initiative, on the other. In *The Improvement of the Estate*, for example, Alistair Duckworth notes that Pemberley is full of "symbols of organic growth and continuity" (53-4). Unlike Heydt-Stevenson, Duckworth does not align Austen's novel with the picturesque theories of Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight (Duckworth 41-2; see Section 4.3.2.1, note 18). Still, he makes a similar argument. He notes that Mr. Darcy's grounds are filled with woods and scattered with "beautiful oaks and Spanish chestnuts" (Duckworth 54; Austen, *Pride* 254). He also points out that Mr. Darcy's "picture gallery" and "family library" are works of "many generations" (Duckworth 58, 129; Austen, *Pride* 38). Like Heydt-Stevenson, Duckworth connects these features to the idea of "heritage," and concludes that Elizabeth's entry into Pemberley is "the responsible commitment of an individual to a heritage which, though basically sound, is in danger of becoming static and moribund without 'improvement'" (x). Here, Duckworth implicitly distinguishes "improvement" from "innovation." In philosopher Edmund Burke's view, to

> 'improve' was to treat the deficient or corrupt parts of an established order with the character of the whole in mind; to 'innovate' or 'alter,' on the other hand, was to destroy all that had been built up by the 'collected reason of the ages.' (Duckworth 46-7)

Even though Duckworth refuses to examine Pemberley through the lens of the "paper war" between picturesque aestheticists and picturesque improvers, in short, his conclusions are compatible with Heydt-Stevenson's.

While Heydt-Stevenson focuses first and foremost on the landscape itself, Duckworth focuses on the immaterial dimension of the estate. Austen's novels, he claims, suggest that the estate, "with the immaterial systems of religion, morality, and manners that it contains and upholds," should be improved from time to time to prevent "[c]ultural atrophy," but it should never be "radically changed" (46-7). On the one hand, the estate is presented as the home of, as Burke puts it, the "collected reason of the ages" or the "wisdom of our ancestors" and, therefore, as a fitting guide for "moral and social behaviour" (Duckworth 58).[23] For all its flaws, it is an "embodiment of a natural moral order ultimately based in God" (58-9). On the other hand, the estate can only exist through time if it is supported by the individual, who improves its imperfections with "the character of the whole in mind" (58-9). In Duckworth's view, Pemberley helps Elizabeth to look beyond her individual

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[23] In Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, Elizabeth criticises the argument Edmund Burke makes (in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*):

> I find the Burke book to be nothing more than a justification for conditions staying the same. He even uses the term *'relying on prejudices'* as the way we should live. As a woman, that is unacceptable to me. It is wrong that women are not accorded the same rights as men. (Chapter 20; cf. Chapter 37)

needs, and to see her duty to the order that is "incorporated into the historical structure of the estate," a duty to society and to God (80, 117-8). In much the same way, Mr. Darcy's confrontation with Elizabeth helps him see that Elizabeth's "individual energy" can improve his family's estate (80, 117-8).

Arguably, this reading is also supported by Elizabeth's experience of Pemberley House. Although Elizabeth first approaches her environment in a personalised way, she ultimately draws conclusions about Mr. Darcy's social roles. In the end, that is, the emotional, personal component of Elizabeth's experience is framed by thematic reflections about Mr. Darcy's social roles. Several scholars have noted that Pemberley, and particularly the fact that Mr. Darcy fulfils his social responsibilities, is an index for his true worth and character.[24] I believe that this implies that "established" social roles take precedence over individual identity. In many Jane Austen fan fiction texts, in contrast, individuals are no longer expected to put their individual energy in the service of an existing social role—or, to put it in more extreme terms, to "tailor" their identity to a social role they are born into. The individual has more freedom to define and redefine the role they play in society. I believe this difference is also reflected in the way Austen's Pemberley, as a "social space," tends to be represented in fan fiction. In the fan fiction texts under discussion, the representation of subjective experience is rarely left out in favour of sociological symbolism, as is common in novels like Austen's (see Section 4.3.1). Indeed, the narrators in question often colour Austen's "social spaces" with the characters' personal memories and emotions. This suggests that they are informed by the same discourse domain that underpins fannish representations of the landscape—a discourse domain that seems to be influenced more by the discourse domains of popular culture, such as recent adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* and other mainstream Hollywood narratives, than that of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. I will demonstrate that this ideological shift is evinced by the way in which Austen's narrative spaces, such as the picture gallery, are re-presented, but also in the way the relation between the characters and an entirely new space (such as England during World War II) is represented. Finally, I will argue that this ideology also underpins "fannish" representations of Elizabeth's role as mistress of Mr. Darcy's households.

Mr. Darcy's Social Roles

I will first discuss the way in which Austen's picture gallery is represented in Mary Ellen's "Lilacs." In this short Regency fic, Mr. Darcy returns to Pemberley after his disastrous proposal. Standing in front of his mother's portrait, he begins to realise that he has not behaved like a gentleman. This, of course, ties in with the epiphany of Austen's Mr. Darcy—who realises that, while he was given good principles, he was left to follow them in "pride and conceit" (see Section 3.3.2.1). In *Pride and Prejudice*, however, the description of Pemberley in general, and the picture gallery in particular, adds an important

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[24] See, for instance, Miles 22-3; Duckworth 38; Page 97, 104; Wenner 57.

counterpoint to Mr. Darcy's epiphany. While Mr. Darcy realises the importance of "gentlemanlike" behaviour, Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley demonstrates that Mr. Darcy has always been a gentleman, even if he has not always acted like one. In "Lilacs," the picture gallery is taken out of this context and tailored to a new one. As a consequence, it is suggested that gentlemanly manners are key.

"Lilacs" evokes the picture gallery that Austen's Elizabeth visits, but the narrator gives it a different "sense of place". When Elizabeth visits the picture gallery in Austen's novel (*Pride* 239-40), she takes a personal approach to a space that is, objectively speaking, a result of family tradition. As Alistair Duckworth has noted, the picture gallery of Pemberley suggests that Mr. Darcy has great respect for "the wisdom of his ancestors" (129). Duckworth believes that it has the same function as Mr. Darcy's "family library," yet another "work of many generations" (Austen, *Pride* 38):

> Darcy's pride in his library is the proper pride of the responsible owner of a large house who is conscious of his responsibilities as trustee and who is aware (in Burkean terms) that he is not the 'entire master' but only the 'life-renter' of Pemberley. (Duckworth 129)

This association with family honour and Mr. Darcy's duty to uphold that honour is also implied by Miss Bingley's snide comments about Elizabeth (Austen, *Pride* 51). During a walk at Netherfield, Miss Bingley sarcastically gives Mr. Darcy the following advice:

> "Do let the portraits of your uncle and aunt Phillips be placed in the gallery at Pemberley. Put them next to your great-uncle the judge. They are in the same profession, you know; only in different lines." (Austen, *Pride* 51)

At first sight, Austen's Elizabeth disregards these associations, and takes a highly personalised approach to the gallery. She ignores the family portraits, which "have little to fix the attention of a stranger," and walks on "in quest of the only face whose features would be known to her" (240). When she finds Mr. Darcy's portrait, she interprets it in terms of her personal relationship with him: "At last it arrested her—and she beheld a striking resemblance to Mr. Darcy, with such a smile over the face, as she remembered to have sometimes seen, when he looked at her" (Austen, *Pride* 240).

The approach of Austen's Elizabeth is never completely personalised, however. Almost immediately, her personal feelings are associated with Mr. Darcy's social roles. These associations give Mr. Darcy a richer identity, in a metonymical way:

> There was certainly at this moment, in Elizabeth's mind, a more gentle sensation towards the original, than she had ever felt at the height of their acquaintance. The commendation bestowed on him by Mrs. Reynolds was of no trifling nature. What praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant? As a brother, a landlord, a master, she considered how many people's happiness were in his guardianship!—How much of pleasure or pain it was in his power to bestow!—How

much of good or evil must be done by him! 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. (Austen, *Pride* 240)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, in short, the emotional component of Elizabeth's experience is framed by metonymic reflections about Mr. Darcy's role as a "brother" to Georgiana, a "landlord" to his tenants, and a "master" to his servants (cf. Miles 24). Her personal feelings are grounded in an understanding of his relationship to the community of people who are the living, breathing part of the estate. These reflections add a "thematic" dimension to Austen's representation of Pemberley as a social space, because they are related to the respect for heritage, tradition, and social responsibilities discussed in the previous sections. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the narrator's description of Pemberley and of Elizabeth's experience of Pemberley demonstrate that Mr. Darcy has always been a gentleman in terms of position (because, as a landowner, he belongs to the gentry); that, despite Elizabeth's suspicions, he has always been a gentleman in terms of the duties that come with his social position (because he respects his "heritage," and does his duty by those who are dependent on him); and that the "gentlemanly" manners he develops in the end, while important, are the icing on the cake.

In "Lilacs," the focus is much more closely on gentlemanly manners, to the extent that Mr. Darcy's social position as a gentleman and his duties as a gentleman—for instance, as a "life-renter" of Pemberley—are almost entirely erased from the space. While Austen's text emphasises that there is more to being a gentleman than gentlemanly manners, "Lilacs" implies that you are not a true gentleman until you act like a gentleman in your personal relations with others. This is suggested by the narrator's representation of the picture gallery (which, significantly, becomes a "portrait" gallery in this story). In this fan fiction text, the portrait gallery has some associations with Mr. Darcy's social role as a gentleman and master, but these associations are framed by non-visual and emotional memories. In "Lilacs," Mr. Darcy does not seek out his own portrait, or a portrait of his illustrious ancestors (such as his great uncle, the judge), but the portrait of his mother. Using visual images, the narrator tells us that Mr. Darcy's eyes are "fixed on the portrait of a woman dressed in the fashion of twenty years before" ("Lilacs"). Immediately, this visual image of Lady Anne's portrait is associated with Mr. Darcy's memories. Only one of these memories is related to his social role as a gentleman and a "master" of servants. He remembers how his mother taught him what it means to be a "gentleman":

> One day, flushed with pride after he jumped his first fence, he bounded into her room
> to seek her praise, and knocked aside the young maid, Reynolds.
> "Fitzwilliam, " his mother gently scolded, "a gentleman apologizes for such an act."
> "But she's only a maid, Mother," he had protested.

"Listen carefully, my son, a gentleman is a gentleman to all." ("Lilacs")

This memory is thematic, because it is related to the larger theme of Mr. Darcy's role in society. However, while Mr. Darcy's social position (as a "master" to the servants) is implied, the focus of this passage is more on gentlemanly behaviour. While Austen's Elizabeth realises that Mr. Darcy is a gentleman because of his social position, and that he is a true gentleman because he does his duty by those who are dependent on him, "Lilacs" implies that Mr. Darcy is not a true gentleman unless he behaves like one. While the focus in Austen is first on Mr. Darcy's social position and the responsibilities that this position entails, and only secondly on his gentlemanly manners, the focus in "Lilacs" is almost exclusively on Mr. Darcy's manners.

This impression is strengthened because the only memory that relates to Mr. Darcy's social position is framed by emotional and embodied images showing that, in Mr. Darcy's experience, Lady Anne was more than just a "tutor". Mr. Darcy first associates the portrait's eyes with kindness, and he has to cast his eyes down as he wonders what his mother would think of him now—if she would feel disappointment or pity ("Lilacs"). He then summarises several instances where his mother comforted him: "when his tutor reprimanded him, when a horse had thrown him, when his belly ached" ("Lilacs"). What binds these memories together is Mr. Darcy's depression and the feeling of comfort that his younger self received from his mother. They are emotional rather than thematic. Finally, Mr. Darcy also associates the portrait with non-visual imagery. He associates his mother with the scent of lilacs:

> Longing for some sort of peace, he had fled London and come home to his mother's scent, the heady smell of lilacs. It had followed him across Derbyshire. It filled the house. And there on a table beneath his mother's portrait sat a vase of the purple flowers left by the efficient, but sentimental, Mrs. Reynolds. ("Lilacs")

This association, too, draws the reader's attention away from the memory about gentlemanly behaviour. In this story, the portrait gallery does not stand for Mr. Darcy's role as a "life-renter" of Pemberley—as a reminder of what he owes to his ancestors—but it serves to draw the reader's attention to his personal relationship with his mother. While the personal admiration of Austen's Elizabeth is ultimately grounded in her respect for the way in which Mr. Darcy performs his social roles, the social role of Mary Ellen's Mr. Darcy is shaped by personal emotions and memories:

> Your little boy has come home, Mother, tail between his legs, for you to chasten and console, and he has failed to be a gentleman to all. He felt lighter for that admission. He had been trying to forget when he should have remembered the lessons his mother had taught him. Nor could he forget Elizabeth Bennet any more than he could forget his own mother. He could not undo the past, but from this day forward he would be the gentleman his mother wished him to be, a man who would not insult the woman he loved, nor slight a woman at a dance, a man who would treat all with respect. ("Lilacs")

Although the epiphany of Mary Ellen's Mr. Darcy reflects the epiphany of Austen's Mr. Darcy, the picture gallery no longer functions as a reminder of Mr. Darcy's responsibilities as a member of the landed gentry. This makes the individualised perspective more prominent in this story than in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The "role" of this Mr. Darcy is clearly shaped, first and foremost, by his personal relationship with his mother. While Austen's Elizabeth characterises Mr. Darcy as a "brother," a "landlord," and a "master," Mary Ellen's narrator characterises him as "Fitzwilliam Darcy, Master of Pemberley, father of three, husband of Elizabeth, son of Anne" ("Lilacs"). Similarly, the narrator tells us that Mr. Darcy dreams that "he saw Elizabeth Bennet's portrait hanging besides his mother's in the gallery," and he eventually visits the portrait gallery again when this is actually the case ("Lilacs"). This seems to echo, but personalise, Miss Bingley's snide comments. Formulations such as these give more weight to the various roles Mr. Darcy plays in his personal relationships, while Austen's phrasing gives more weight to the roles he plays in the community of the estate.

This personal dimension is also highlighted by the reader comments to "Lilacs." Most readers simply note that "Lilacs" is beautiful, "sweet," and that it made them feel good or emotional (comments to "Lilacs"). One fan is more specific, and remarks that he particularly "liked the mental picture of Darcy before his mother's portrait and the memory of him being admonished for bumping into Mrs. Reynolds" (comments to "Lilacs"). Another fan remarks that smells, and the smell of lilacs in particular, have the power to bring back "our" memories (comments to "Lilacs"). Another fan goes even further, and shares a personal memory that she recalled because of this story and its references to lilacs (comments to "Lilacs"). This suggests that the interest in the personal and emotional associations of space does not just underpin the writing practice of Mary Ellen, but also the reading practices of these fan readers.

In conclusion, I briefly want to demonstrate that these preferences also seem to shape fan fiction texts in which the characters of the source text are dropped into a different world. In Mari A.'s "Blackout," Austen's characters live in England during World World II. Although this storyworld seems to be radically different from the spaces I have discussed so far, it actually confirms the tendency to prioritise personal and emotional experience that is evinced in the representations of narrative space in *Nothing Wanting*, "So Gradually," "Lilacs," and other stories. In "Blackout," the effects of the Second World War throw the characters back on their most basic needs and desires. It helps the characters, in other words, realise what is really important. This is most obviously the case for the main character, Caro Bingley. It would take me too far to analyse Caro's development in depth. Still, it is worth noting that Caro "learns" to prioritise fulfilling personal relationships, and especially the relationship with her beloved and her child, over status and society. Several characters typify the Caro of before the war as a typical socialite, who, much like Austen's Caroline Bingley, is more prone to notice fashion and gossip than the kindness of people. Betty (the counterpart of Elizabeth Bennet) and Rick (the counterpart of Colonel Fitzwilliam) fully

expected Caro to escape London with her sister and mother after the war broke out (Chapter 1). Rick remarks that, when he met Caro, he didn't know if she knew how to put on an apron (Chapter 1). When she visits her brother in Cornwall, she is keenly aware that her "pretty frock" and "uncomfortable" shoes, "one of the few remainders of a previous life," may make her seem "posh" (Chapter 3). She also recalls that she said some hateful things about William Lucas, Betty's mentor, before the war (Chapter 3). Finally, she recalls that she could not be bothered to send her nephew birthday presents (Chapter 3). This indicates that, before the war, Caro cares more about herself than about her relationship with others. Once the war breaks out, however, Caro's priorities shift. She becomes aware of her duty to society—in this case, to the war effort. She stays in London and accepts a job in the city. As Betty puts it, she is "a part of it all," she is "wearing the uniform" (Chapter 1). Caro vehemently defends her choice to Rick, saying that "'[i]f everybody left London, we could just as well directly surrender her" (Chapter 1). However, once she realises that she loves Rick and is expecting his child, her priorities shift again. She chooses fulfilling, personal relationships over self-interest and the war effort. She goes to Cornwall to give birth, and cannot understand why she used to ridicule a likable man like William Lucas (Chapter 3). She becomes upset when she realises that David (the counterpart of Mr. Darcy) and Betty have been very kind to her while her old self would never have done the same for them (Chapter 5). She also no longer understands Rick, who decided to leave her behind to do his duty towards his country (Chapter 5). At the same time, she becomes fiercely protective of her child, which she sees as "the last bond she had to Rick, the last proof that he had been hers alone for too short a time" (Chapter 5, 6). This is reflected in Caro's relation to London. Once she has been in Cornwall to visit her brother and the Bennets, she decides to stay there till the birth of her child. She remarks: "I know I always said I'd never leave London and if it were just me, I wouldn't. But I don't think I want the child to be born with the sirens in the background --" (Chapter 4). When she pulls the door of her London home shut, she hopes that, one day, "she would be able to return to a home still standing, with her child on her arms and her husband in tow, carrying her bags from the car" (Chapter 6). The house, which was first a symbol of Caro's status and then of her commitment to the war effort, now becomes a symbol of domesticity. Her new identity is clearly shaped by Cornwall. She agrees to work on the farm, and soon replaces her "previous, lovingly selected wardrobe" with "old trousers and shirts from Charles" and dresses from Jenny (Chapter 6). Soon, "hearing Betty say that she herself could not have cut the hay better meant more to her than any earl's compliment on her dress" (Chapter 6). She begins to go to church, not to "be seen," but because "everybody went" in the country, and because she finds it comforting (Chapter 6). While she once "ridiculed fresh milk as a peasant's drink," she now drinks "as much as she could, for she had heard that milk was beneficial for children" (Chapter 6). She realises how much she has changed when she receives a letter and a visit from her sister, Louisa, who is a socialite like she herself used to be (Chapter 6, 7). Her new, strained relationship with her sister contrasts with her true friendship with Betty (Chapter 7). Her

most important relationships, however, are those with Rick and her child. When Rick eventually returns, he apologises for leaving her (Chapter 10). Ultimately, in short, his development seems to parallel that of Caro.

While the development of David, the counterpart of Mr. Darcy in this story, is much less drastic, he similarly gets his priorities straight. When Caro first sees Mr. Darcy again, she notes that he looks "terrible":

> He probably had not eaten properly in weeks and his clothes were rumpled and partly stained. She vaguely remembered how, in another life, he had been so fussy about them and refused to wear anything that was not ironed. Charles had told her just how much care Darcy took for a smooth shave. Now, he seemed to have forgotten to shave half of his face altogether. (Chapter 2)

In times of war, old priorities, such as one's appearance, become insignificant. As in other stories, personal relationships take precedence over other concerns (such as one's role in society). Caro notes: "For a split second, Caro could see the old Darcy again, not the tired man, but Betty's husband, Nina's brother, Charles' and her friend" (Chapter 2). This description of Mr. Darcy echoes the way in which Mrs. Reynolds and Elizabeth characterise Mr. Darcy, as a "landlord," a "master," and a "brother." However, as in "Lilacs," the focus is first and foremost on Mr. Darcy's relationships with immediate family members and close friends, rather than his relationship to the wider community. The atrocities of World War II make Mr. Darcy see what matters most in life. Unlike in Austen, his duty is first to his partner, his friends, and his family, and only then to society. He goes against his orders, for instance, to get a message to his cousin, in order to help Caro (Chapter 2). He, too, in short, comes to realise that personal relationships are more important than duty. In "Blackout," the narrative space helps characters to get their priorities straight, but it is barely charged with sociological meaning. This suggests that these stories, too, are underpinned by a preference for the representation of personal experiences.

Elizabeth's Social Roles

Up to now, I have focused on the representation of Mr. Darcy's social roles. Notably, however, the representation of Elizabeth's role as mistress of Pemberley is shaped by similar writing and reading practices, and by a similar discourse domain. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's understanding of what it means to be mistress of Pemberley is shaped during her visit to Mr. Darcy's estate. As Elizabeth approaches Pemberley House in the carriage with her aunt and uncle, the narrator notes that

> 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! (Austen 235)

Elizabeth's description of Pemberley may seem mercenary, but it is actually very different from, for instance, Mr. Collins's first description of Rosings—in which he enumerates "the windows in front of the house" and relates "what the glazing altogether had originally cost Sir Lewis De Bourgh" (Austen, *Pride* 158; cf. Page 102). As I have noted, Elizabeth focuses on what Duckworth calls the "scenic *mediocritas*" of the estate—the fact that it is "a mean between the extremes of the improver's art and uncultivated nature" (Duckworth 123). Duckworth remarks that Elizabeth's conclusion ("to be mistress of Pemberley might be something") is inspired, not just by the wealth and status that Pemberley exudes, but also by "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" (124; cf. Miles 24). This is the context of the final chapter, in which the narrator summarily describes how Elizabeth performs her new role. She receives her father at Pemberley and becomes a neighbour of Mr. Bingley and Jane. She takes Kitty under her wing, together with Jane, and "improves" her (Austen, *Pride* 364). She refuses to discuss Mr. Wickham's affairs with Mr. Darcy, but she does send them whatever money she can spare "by the practice of what might be called economy in her own private expences" (365-6). She receives her sister at Pemberley, and unknowingly inspires Mr. Darcy to advance Mr. Wickham's career (366). She receives Miss Bingley, even though Caroline has not been civil to her in the past (366). She becomes a loving sister to Georgiana, and teaches her that "a woman may take liberties with her husband, which a brother will not always allow in a sister more than ten years younger than himself" (366-7). Finally, she convinces her husband to overlook Lady Catherine's insults (367). Eventually, Lady Catherine agrees to visit Pemberley, either out of "affection for him" or "curiosity to see how his wife conducted herself," and "in spite of that pollution which its woods had received, not merely from the presence of such a mistress but the visits of her uncle and aunt from the city" (367). As this suggests, Elizabeth receives her aunt and uncle Gardiner very often, and she and her husband feel true affection and gratitude for them (367). Austen focuses, in other words, on Elizabeth's relations with her family, rather than her relationship with the servants or tenants of the estate.

Elizabeth's role as "mistress" of Mr. Darcy's estate is explored in several fics, and the representation of this role seems to be grounded in a similar preference for personal relationships defined by the individual over social roles defined by tradition. I will illustrate this with Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*. As I have noted, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth come to an understanding much sooner in this fan fiction text, after their meeting in Mr. Collins's garden (see Sections 2.3.2.1 and 4.2). However, after their wedding, Mr. Darcy is called away to Rosings because his cousin Anne is dying. He believes his aunt's slander of Elizabeth and rejects her (Chapters 14-21). When Mr. Darcy realises that Elizabeth is innocent (Chapter 21), he follows her to Pemberley. There, Elizabeth has been suffering under the "instructions" of Mr. Darcy's aunt, Lady Matlock, who tries to teach her how to be a good mistress of the estate (Chapter 22). I will home in on the (apparent) contradiction between Elizabeth's approach and Lady Matlock's approach.

In *Nothing Wanting*, the narrator does not just represent Elizabeth's relationships with her family, but also with the servants. Elizabeth's relationship with the servants is very personal. After Mr. Darcy has been called away right after his marriage, she decides to go to the Darcys' townhouse in London anyway, because now that she is married "her place" is with "her husband" rather than her parents and sisters at Longbourn (Chapter 13). Elizabeth immediately takes a very personal approach to the servants. In this respect, she is like her husband, who startles the maid who is attending to Anne de Bourgh by talking to her—"to Lady Catherine, she was furniture" (Chapter 13). While Elizabeth is learning how to run a large household like that of Mr. Darcy's townhouse, she shows great respect for the knowledge of Mr. Darcy's housekeeper—allowing her to instruct and advise her (Chapter 14). She asks her "a thousand questions" about the expenditures and other household matters (Chapter 14). She also discusses her plans for Anne's recovery rooms with Mrs. Taylor because the latter has "much knowledge of the infirm due to the protracted illness of her own mother" (Chapter 14). Elizabeth also asks the servants to tell anecdotes about Mr. Darcy's childhood (Chapter 14). The narrator notes that she "had a way of giving one her undivided attention, and listening so carefully, laughing – or gasping - in all the right places, that even the dullest felt himself to be a keen narrator and quick wit when in her presence" (Chapter 14). Elizabeth's relationship to the servants, in short, is based on respect for, and personal attention to, the individual.

Elizabeth's personal approach to the servants does not go unnoticed, and earns her the servants' loyalty:

> Mrs. Taylor also noted and appreciated the efforts Mrs. Darcy put into addressing each staff member by name, complimenting jobs well done, and in general taking nothing for granted. The warm water brought for her bath, the care taken over her meals, the fresh floral arrangements that appeared daily in her rooms – nothing escaped her new mistress' attention. While she was perhaps a bit on the enthusiastic side, and not completely polished, she was also clever, capable, and inherently kind. (Chapter 14)

Elizabeth's lady's maid, too, concludes that Elizabeth is a "gem of the first water," even though she is "unpolished", precisely because she tries to have a personal relationship with the servants (Chapter 17):

> Edith had never had any problem deflecting personal inquiries from her previous employers – not that there were many such inquiries to deflect. Her sole occupation was to insure the happiness and quality of life of her mistress, certainly not the other way around. Yet – this lady was not happy unless she knew that those around her were as well. If she could not reassure herself that everyone's needs were being met, Mrs. Darcy could not be content. (Chapter 17)

The narrator notes that Elizabeth is completely "unconscious of the norms of society, of her elevated station," and she inquires after the servants "with an absolute absence of gossipy

curiosity" (Chapter 17). What is more, she spends more money on the comforts of the servants, as well as her sisters and Miss de Bourgh, than on herself (Chapter 17). Soon, the servants are more loyal to Elizabeth than to Mr. Darcy. When Mr. Darcy finally returns to his townhouse, Mrs. Taylor and the other servants show that they are displeased by his treatment of Elizabeth without overstepping the boundaries of their role in the household: by not heating Mr. Darcy's bath water properly, by drawing his attention to Elizabeth's efforts to make Anne comfortable, by giving him a "flavourless" dinner (Chapter 20). Mr. Darcy interprets these actions in similar terms:

> As he picked at his completely flavourless dinner on a tray in his room, though, he began to feel defensive again. How dare the servants take sides! They had no idea what he knew, and while their preference for the mistress might be understandable, they had better remember to appreciate the master they had known so many years, or suffer the consequences. (Chapter 20)

This already indicates that, according to the "ethos" of *Nothing Wanting*, Elizabeth's personal approach is a positive trait.

It is precisely this personal approach that Mr. Darcy's aunt, Lady Matlock, apparently wants to curb. Lady Matlock emphasises that everyone at the estate has his or her role (which comes with his or her responsibilities), and that it does not do to take up responsibilities that are not your own. Elizabeth, in contrast, takes a casuistic approach to estate management—in which every situation is different, and some situations may call for a redistribution of roles. Elizabeth quickly learns that "the aristocracy were imbued with protocols from the cradle, and the informality of her upbringing had ill-prepared her for the sphere in which she found herself" (Chapter 22). One of these "informal" traits is her familiarity with the servants. Like in London, Elizabeth is quick to sense "unease or disquiet" among the servants, and she cannot "pretend a disinterest in their concerns" (Chapter 22). At one point, this leads Lady Matlock to comment:

> "Elizabeth, for the dozenth time, let Mrs. Reynolds decide the dispute between serving maids. You usurp her authority when you become overly involved in minor concerns, and if you continue in this manner the details only *you* can look after will be neglected."

> "Yes, ma'am. 'Tis only that the girls are both nieces of Mrs. Reynolds, but of different brothers, who have always been overly competitive with one another, and I thought to help her mediate -" but Lady Matlock was supremely disinterested in this pertinent genealogy. She waved off explanations, and redoubled her efforts to explain the importance of Burke's *Peerage*, and why Elizabeth must commit vast portions of it to memory." (Chapter 22)

While Elizabeth assumes that the individual can change their social role, if the situation calls for it, Lady Matlock believes that the individual should adapt their identity to their

social role. This contrast is felt by Elizabeth, who notes that "[s]he would never be the woman that Lady Matlock felt she must be – the 'rough edges' her Ladyship wished to polish off were pieces of Elizabeth's soul" (Chapter 22).

As the reference to Burke's *Peerage* suggests, the role which Lady Matlock has in mind is first and foremost based on Elizabeth's position in society. Her priority, therefore, is not Elizabeth's relationship with the servants, but her relationship with her own "sphere":

> Pemberley's household accounts alone were massive, and Lady Matlock urged her to become intimately familiar with every aspect of them, that she might not be taken advantage of and waste her husband's inheritance. She must learn hundreds of protocols, that she might not bring shame to her husband's reputation. And she must master style and design, that her countrified taste might never reflect poorly on her husband's estate. (Chapter 22)

These concerns are not entirely alien to Elizabeth. When Mr. Wickham threatens to expose Georgiana, Elizabeth refuses to sell off the jewellery of the Darcy family to pay him off as long as she is not sure whether Mr. Darcy intends it for her or Georgiana, and she does everything in her power to protect her husband and her family from scandal (Chapter 17). This suggests that she cares about the family's "heritage" and reputation. In these instances, however, Elizabeth is guided by her caring nature. Lady Matlock asks her to follow "protocols" and acquire "tastes" she is unfamiliar with, simply because they are a traditional part of her social role as mistress of Pemberley. Arguably, this perspective bears a resemblance to Austen's emphasis on Mr. Darcy's responsibilities as a "life-renter" of Pemberley.

Ultimately, however, the relationship between Juliecoop's Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth takes precedence over the relationship between the Darcy family and the wider community. In the end, it turns out that Lady Matlock's "tough teaching" was actually meant to heal the breach between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. The relationship between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth is strained after his rejection (Chapters 22-4), and it is only after Lady Matlock's polishing and other strategies break Elizabeth's spirit that she seeks comfort in the arms of her husband:

> "I did my best… not good enough, never good enough – your aunt has tried, she has, but… cannot care for things that I should… if the flowers are changed twice daily or once, it cannot matter to me! And I cannot make myself *not* care about what I should ignore… I did try, I did… today I could not…after what Miss Bingley said, and Mrs. Hurst… and Georgiana… Georgiana… that she would notice, that she would speak so… I cannot try anymore…" and much more, very little of it making sense to her confused husband." (Chapter 24)

Elizabeth later tells her husband that the only thing keeping her away from him was fear of rejection (Chapter 28). When she had failed to please everyone else, she turned to him as her last hope (Chapter 28). She suspects that Lady Matlock had foreseen this all along. After

all, she stopped pestering Elizabeth immediately after the reconciliation (Chapter 28). In addition, Elizabeth discovers that Lady Matlock made Georgiana aware of the fact that Mr. Darcy was unhappy (Chapter 28). This led Georgiana to approach Elizabeth while she is strolling in the rose garden, where she tells her sister-in-law that she is worried about her brother and feels that Elizabeth's coldness is hurting him (Chapter 24). In effect, Lady Matlock changes tactics immediately after the reconciliation takes place. When Miss Bingley, who has been Lady Matlock's ally in Elizabeth's instruction, tells her that she will take Elizabeth "under [her] wing and see that she does not disgrace the family," Lady Matlock replies:

> "Thank you, Miss Bingley, but I assure you that your services will not be required. Neither I, nor anyone whose company I would tolerate, sees anything lacking in Mrs. Darcy. She is courageous, enthusiastic, intelligent, and loving. She is the best thing by far to have happened to Mr. Darcy – and indeed, this whole family – in many years. . . . She is refreshingly innocent of the usual sarcasm and cynicism of our sphere. There will be those who care only for inconsequential details, who may detract or defame. The earl and I, of course, will not tolerate any intentional slight to her, and indeed will take it as a personal affront." (Chapter 25)

In *Nothing Wanting*, then, individual identity clearly takes precedence over established social roles.

This personalisation of Austen's social space is also highlighted by the reader comments to this story. The readers of *Nothing Wanting* clearly value Elizabeth's unique personality. Indeed, several fans believe that Mr. Darcy should stand up for his wife, and defend her right to be herself. One fan remarks, for instance, that Lady Matlock is "transforming Lizzy into a compliant and accept [acceptable] society wife for Darcy, becoming unrecognizable to herself," and she sees this as a very negative thing (comments to Chapter 21-2). She feels that Mr. Darcy should work hard to get back "the wife he originally married" (comments to Chapter 21-2). Similarly, another fan says that "Elizabeth's style of servant management is much better than all those protocols" (Chapter 21-2). Another fan thinks Mr. Darcy should tell his aunt that "all this criticism and attention to detail is worthless" (comments to Chapter 23-4). Yet another fan feels sorry for Elizabeth, because all she does is "try to conduct herself with kindness, honor, and propriety in her own household" (comments to Chapter 23-4). Still other fans simply wonder why Elizabeth is so "calm and collected," and why she is acting more like her sister Jane than herself (comments to Chapter 21-2). This suggests that these readers, at least, see no reason for Elizabeth to change, and that their reading practices are attuned to Juliecoop's writing practices. This is also reflected in their evaluation of Lady Matlock. Before Lady Matlock's motives are revealed, readers tend to present her as an obstacle that needs to be removed so that Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth can develop a personal, romantic relationship. Several fans are anxious to "get rid" of Lady Matlock, whom they feel is unwelcome, officious, or a bully and a dictator (comments to

Chapter 21-2, 23-4).[25] One fan also takes the specific situation of Elizabeth into account. She points out that it is "heartless" of Lady Matlock "to pursue such an intense course of instruction at such a time" (Chapter 23-4). Most commenters agree, however, that Mr. Darcy is the one who should tell Lady Matlock to back off, and they are hopeful that this will bring Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy closer together (comments to Chapter 21-2). One fan believes, for instance, that Mr. Darcy should tell his aunt the following:

> "I do not want you transforming my Elizabeth into one of the simpering and affected ladies of the ton living and breathing social protocol. I find her the most noble-spirited lady of my acquaintance and that is why I married her. And if that is not acceptable to you, the carriage is outside!" (comments to Chapters 23-4)

This comment clearly implies that, in this community, Mr. Darcy is supposed to love his wife for the traits that make her unique, rather than the traits that come with her social role as Mrs. Darcy. Indeed, the fact that Mr. Darcy does not step in makes some fans feel that he does not care enough about his wife to notice how unhappy she is (comments to Chapter 23-4). On the whole, this is confirmed by comments that were posted after the revelation of Lady Matlock's true motives. It is true that some fans were confused about Lady Matlock's sudden change of heart. One fan cannot tell if Lady Matlock was using "shock therapy" to drive Elizabeth into Mr. Darcy's arms or if she was genuinely "trying to break Elizabeth's spirit," and another fan calls her "Dr Jekyll/Lady Matlock" (comments to Chapter 23-4). Still, many fans "loved" Lady Matlock's set-down of Caroline (comments to Chapter 25-6). Another fan is glad that Lady Matlock schemed to reconcile Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, but she wishes that Lady Matlock would show her approval to Elizabeth rather than Caroline, to restore some of Elizabeth's self-esteem (comments Chapter 23-4). This confirms, once again, that fans value Elizabeth's unique personality over the "social identity" that comes with her position as Mrs. Darcy. On a more abstract level, it suggests that both Juliecoop and the fan readers mentiioned have similar preferences when it comes to the representation and interpretation of spaces in Jane Austen fan fiction.

4.4 Conclusion

As my analyses have shown, the spaces of Jane Austen fan fiction tend to be more personalised than the spaces of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This suggests that the stories of Jane Austen fans, on the one hand, and Jane Austen's novel, on the other, are

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[25] One fan does not agree, and thinks it is likely that Mr. Darcy asked Lady Matlock to show Elizabeth the ropes—and that he was condescending but right to suspect she would need help (Chapter 21-2). Most fans are annoyed by Lady Matlock's interference, however.

underpinned by different writing and reading practices, which are grounded in a different discourse domain. While Austen tends to charge narrative spaces with thematic, sociological meaning, Austen fans tend to charge their narrative spaces with subjective, personal meaning. This becomes apparent when you compare the "sense of place" evoked by Jane Austen's description of Pemberley in *Pride and Prejudice* and the "sense of place" of fannish descriptions of Pemberley's rose gardens and community. Following Marco Caracciolo, I have argued that this "sense of place" is the "experiential quality" that sets some narrative spaces apart from others. This quality is difficult to pin down, because it is shaped by the way in which the "experienced" space is described in the text, by the way it is experienced by the reader, and by the way in which readers enunciate and revise that experience when they interact with other readers. The influence of the third factor is considerable, especially in the case of fandom.

Taking the text as a point of departure, and examining reader comments whenever possible, I have pinpointed two meaningful differences between the "sense of place" of Austen's Pemberley, on the one hand, and the re-presentations of Pemberley in JessicaS's "So Gradually," Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, and Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*, on the other. First, Austen's description of Pemberley calls the reader's attention to "views," and to the fact that there is a harmony between nature and artificial improvement. Following Jill Heydt-Stevenson and other theorists, I have argued that these "visual" images are charged with ideological meaning. The emphasis on views aligns Austen's Pemberley with the picturesque theories of Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, and the normative-evaluative systems that underpin those theories. In these systems, the individual creativity of the "improver" must be curbed by a respect for the nature and history of the landscape. The narrators of "So Gradually," *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and *Given Good Principles*, in contrast, do not call attention to the "views" of Pemberley, but expand Mr. Darcy's estate with "idyllic" rose gardens. These rose gardens do not open out into views, but are isolated from the rest of the grounds; they are not associated with just any history, but with the personal history between different (generations of) characters. The characters' experience of these rose gardens is not just described with visual images, but also with embodied imagery, emotions, and personal memories. I have emphasised that fans can and do fit these fantextual details—such as the moonlight, the smells of flowers, the calming influence of the garden—into their own stories, and their own agenda. Nevertheless, I have argued that they are charged with a similar ideological meaning, which is different from Austen's. Both in terms of form (namely, the description in terms of individual experience) and content (namely, the emphasis on personal relationships), the rose gardens of Jane Austen fan fiction prioritise the personal experience of space. This does not mean that fans sideline the social dimension of space entirely. Rather, both in their writing and their reading practices, they use a different conceptualisation of the social than Austen. While the conceptualisation of fans is fundamentally sociopsychological, Austen's is also socioeconomic.

Second, I have examined the ways in which fans rework the social activities and roles that make Pemberley into a "social space." Following Alistair Duckworth, I have argued that Austen's description of Pemberley suggests that Elizabeth's individual energy is put in the service of the estate, and the customs that it embodies. This tradition is not just visible in physical spaces, such as the picture gallery, but also in the immaterial "space" of Mr. Darcy's social roles. In Mary Ellen's "Lilacs," Austen's picture gallery is rewritten in such a way that it is associated with personal history rather than "heritage." This is reflected in the depiction of Mr. Darcy's social roles, which are ultimately determined by individuals rather than custom. These priorities are also visible in "Blackout," a fan fiction text set during World War II. Finally, the representation of Elizabeth's social role as the mistress of Pemberley in *Nothing Wanting* is shaped by similar preferences. Ultimately, this fan fiction text advocates a flexible system of roles, in which the individual can step outside of their roles if the situation calls for it. This implies that individual identity and personal relations take precedence over the social roles that are part of the characters' "heritage." These two major differences in "sense of place" suggest that the fics I have discussed, and fics that are shaped by similar "fantextual" conventions, are underpinned by different aesthetic preferences than Austen's novel. This shift is due to the fact that fans write in a different cultural context, and have developed different preferences when it comes to writing and reading practices.

Chapter 5
Jane Austen Fan Fiction and Plot

5.1 Introduction

There is a curious irony to the recent wave of sequels, prequels, continuations, variations and other rewrites of Jane Austen's novels. As I noted in my General Introduction, several Austen scholars have argued that Austen rewrites bear a resemblance to the Gothic and sentimental novels Austen burlesques in her own work.[1] This is, among other things, due to their plots. Tamara Wagner notes, for instance, that

> [i]n contrast to Austen herself, the writers of sequels refuse to limit their fiction merely to a courtship plot without the introduction of sex, crime, or tortuous subplots involving foundlings and cross-dressing. . . . While they are absent from Austen's fiction, such clichés permeate the literature of her time. ("Sentimental" 224-5)

Observations such as these are not unfounded, but they need to be qualified. It is true that several plots in the archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* contain illegitimate children, sexual violence, cross-dressing, accidents, deaths, crimes, and bloodshed. In Jan H's *The Child*, Mr. Wickham abandons Lydia with a natural child, only to abduct the child later on in the story. In Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, Elizabeth is raped by Mr. Darcy's cousin, after which she falls pregnant and is persuaded to sell her child to the

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[1] Deirdre Lynch has argued that this argument was first made by interwar critics, such as Q.D. Leavis, and she summarises it as follows:

> The enduring centrality within Austen studies of juvenile burlesques like *Love and Freindship* and of *Northanger Abbey* may be ascribed to these efforts by interwar critics like Leavis who sought to wield the concept of 'realism' in a way that would rescue the novel form from its popularity. Such critics argued that from her earliest work on, Austen was cognizant of her historical mission, which was to target those novels (sentimental fiction in the juvenilia; Gothic romance in *Northanger Abbey*) which give *the* novel a bad name. ("At Home" 184)

Darcys. In GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, Mr. Collins dies a horrible death after he tries to assault the Bennet sisters. In hele's *Not Every Gentleman*, Elizabeth is raised as a boy to break the entail. In Jan H's *The Child*, Mr. Wickham falls off a cliff after he has shot Mr. Darcy in the shoulder. Mr. Wickham, and sometimes even Caroline Bingley, regularly use blackmail to safeguard their own interests (see, for example, Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting* and Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth"). In other stories, Mr. Wickham is beaten up, arrested, deported, or forced to join the navy (see, for example, Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*, Jan H's *The Child*, and Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*). In terms of plot, these fics bear some resemblance to Gothic novels like Matthew Lewis's *The Monk: A Romance* or sentimental novels like Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady*, in which innocent damsels are terrorised by sadistic or immoral villains.

It should also be noted, however, that elements like seduction, illegitimacy, the threat of forced marriages, accidents, and desperate financial straits are not completely absent from Jane Austen's novels. There are several examples,[2] but two instances of seduction are particularly relevant to my discussion, because they served as inspiration for the fics I will discuss in this chapter: Mr. Wickham's seduction of Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice*, and the seduction of Eliza Williams and her daughter in *Sense and Sensibility*. These minor plotlines are the jumping point for Jan H's *The Child*,[3] on the one hand, and Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*,[4] on the other. Jan H's *The Child* explores what might have happened if Mr. Darcy had not been there to save Lydia, because he went abroad before he and Elizabeth could meet at Pemberley. As a consequence, Mr. Wickham abandons Lydia when she becomes pregnant, and her child is raised by the Bennets. This is the situation when Mr. Darcy meets Elizabeth again. In Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, it is Elizabeth Bennet who suffers a similar fate. While she is staying with her aunt and uncle in London at fifteen, she is seduced and raped by Lord Wolfbridge, Mr. Darcy's cousin. She, too, becomes pregnant, and is persuaded to sell her baby to Mr. Darcy and his wife, Anne de Bourgh.

The differences between Austen's seductions and the instances of seduction, illegitimacy, and rape in Austen rewrites are rarely discussed in depth. Typically, the emotionally intense plot elements of Austen rewrites are taken as evidence that rewriters miss the point of Austen's novels, or fail to stay "true to her and her example" (Lynch,

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[2] Here are some other examples: in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mrs. Bennet also tries to force Elizabeth to marry Mr. Collins, so that the family would not be destitute after Mr. Bennet's death (Austen, *Pride* 108-10). In *Mansfield Park*, Henry Crawford seduces Mrs. Rushworth, Fanny Price's cousin (Austen, *Mansfield* 408-9). In *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne Dashwood becomes severely ill (Austen, *Sense* 287-94). In *Emma*, Harriet Smith is attacked by gypsies, while Jane Fairfax is almost thrown into the sea at Weymouth and is forced to look for a position as governess before she marries Frank Churchill (Austen, *Emma* 312-3, 150). In *Persuasion*, finally, Louisa Musgrove is severely injured after a fall from the Cobb in Lyme (Austen, *Persuasion* 102)

[3] Jan H, or Jan Hahn, pulled this story from the internet when Meryton Press began to publish her other work.

[4] This fan fiction text was published as Beth Massey's *Goodly Creatures: A* Pride and Prejudice *Deviation* (2012).

"Sequels" 160; cf. Simons 36-7; Wagner, "Sentimental" 211). In this chapter, I will use Hilary P. Dannenberg's cognitive theory of plot to pinpoint what makes the courtship plots of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, including its seduction sequence, different from the courtship plots of *The Child* and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*. More specifically, I approach the plots of these three narratives as coincidence plots, in which the narrative paths of the protagonists converge and come together in a moment of recognition and reunion. Following Dannenberg, I argue that coincidence plots have a "completed" dimension that only becomes apparent when the reader has finished the narrative and an "unresolved" dimension that is shaped by the immediate effect of textual strategies on the reader. In the case of fan fiction, these dimensions are closely related to the existence of fantextual conventions. I will approach *Pride and Prejudice* as a "classical" *Bildungsroman*, in Franco Moretti's sense of the word. This does not simply mean that Austen's novel is focused on the formation and socialisation of Elizabeth Bennet (her *Bildung*). It also means that, at the moment of narrative closure, it becomes apparent that the *Bildung* of Elizabeth has a personal *and* a social dimension. This has a profound effect on the way Austen's narrator presents Lydia's seduction, because Elizabeth's "maturity" is thrown into relief by Lydia's "immaturity." This is emphasised on the "unresolved" dimension of the plot. I will demonstrate that Jane Austen's representation of the seduction sequence draws the reader's attention away from the events themselves and towards Elizabeth's reaction to them, and the social integration that is implied by it. This is also true for *Sense and Sensibility*. *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* and *The Child* also feature a *Bildungsplot*, but one that is aimed at "intimate" rather than "social" integration. Their emphasis on "angst," both on the completed and the unresolved level of plot, makes their mode of storytelling more "melodramatic," in Peter Brooks's sense of the word. They are much more geared to immersive effects. As in the previous chapters, this suggests that several of the fan fiction texts in the archives of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* are shaped by writing and reading practices that are different from those that shape Jane Austen's novel. I believe that Jane Austen's text "demands" that the reader interpret the plot from a sociopolitical perspective, while the plots of the fan fiction texts encourage a sociopsychological reading. This difference is, once again, rooted in differences on the level of the discourse domain.

5.2   Theoretical Framework

5.2.1   The Cognitive Dimensions of Plot

In the second chapter, I argued that the reader's experience of characters is shaped by sociocultural knowledge, and especially by the cognitive templates of evaluation. In the

third chapter, I showed that readers also use "group frames" to make sense of evaluations, and especially the norms that underpin them. In the fourth chapter, finally, I demonstrated that the reader's experience of space is also shaped by visual images, embodied images, and emotional responses. In *Coincidence and Counterfactuality*, Hilary P. Dannenberg takes a similar, "experiential" approach to the analysis of plot. Cross-fertilising narratology and the cognitive sciences, she tries "to formulate new parameters for the analysis of plot, time, and space in narrative fiction" (11).[5] Examined through the lens of Dannenberg's model, the plots of *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Child*, and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* are all "coincidence plots." Coincidence plots are marked by the "convergence" of the characters' narrative paths and their interconnection within the narrative world (Dannenberg 1-2; cf. 67-8).[6] As I already noted, coincidence plots are typically structured around a moment of recognition and reunion, for instance between family members or lovers, and that is why they tend to have a closed and unified "artistic structure" (Dannenberg 1-2, 135-6).[7] The

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[5] In this respect, Dannenberg's approach is different from what Ruth Ronen calls "syntactic" and "semantic" approaches to plot. In "Paradigm Shift in Plot Models : An Outline of the History of Narratology," Ronen points out that, by the time of writing in 1990, the study of plot had undergone a "paradigmatic change" (817). This change consisted of

> a shift from structural descriptions of action-structures in classical structuralism to semantic descriptions of narrative modalities in recent developments in narratology. Yet this shift should not be described as a punctual transition but as a dialectical development, leading from the earlier ideology of classical structuralism to the gradual domination of semantics in narrative theory. (817)

Structuralist studies of narrative typically call attention to the "syntactic" dimension of plot, or the system of units and combination rules that governs the event sequence of narratives (see, for example, Barthes, "Introduction"). While structuralist narratologists typically focus on the "syntax" of the event sequences of narrative, semantic narratologists assume that these sequences can only be described with a combination of "semantic concepts and laws" and "syntactic categories" (Ronen 819). As a consequence, they assume that "the narrative segment is presented as an intersection or as a complex of syntactic and semantic rules" (819-20). This is the case, for instance, for the plot models proposed in Marie-Laure Ryan's *Possible Worlds* and Thomas Pavel's "Narrative Domains." Over the last few decades, the domination of semantic studies of plot has been challenged again, most notably by cognitive conceptualisations of plot (cf. Kukkonen 9; see, for example, Herman, *Story* 92-109, Ryan, *Virtual* 140-102, and others). While semantic approaches to plot such as Ryan's already take the mental world of the characters into account, cognitive conceptualisations of plot also pay attention to the role of the reader, and processes such as narrative comprehension and immersion. This is why I prefer to use cognitive discussions of plot.

[6] As this definition implies, the "coincidence" in "coincidence plot" refers first and foremost to the act of "coinciding" (because the characters' life paths eventually "coincide," or come together in space and time). However, it also refers to the idea of "chance" because, in many narratives with this type of plot, chance encounters are an important way to bring the characters together. On the level of the storyworld, "chance" may be represented as a force that is governed by "Providence," "fate," or other entities, or as a chaotic and random force (Dannenberg 27-9). On a meta-level, however, references to "chance" serve to distract the reader from "the ultimate causal-manipulative level of the author by implying that nothing at all influences events in the narrative world" (Dannenberg 29).

[7] Plots of "counterfactuality," in contrast, are marked by the divergence of narrative paths, which results in an "open pattern of diversification and multiplicity" (2; cf. 67-8). They involve speculations about how a character's life may have developed differently, either by the character itself (3-4) or on the level of the narrative (4-5).

plot of *Pride and Prejudice* is a "coincidence plot," in other words, because the life journeys of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy converge until they both recognise their true characters and desires and are joined in matrimony. The same is true for the fan fiction texts of Jan H and Beth AM, although this may be less obvious. Seen from the perspective of canon, these authors drive a wedge between Austen's characters, by imagining a missed meeting at Pemberley (*The Child*) or a childhood trauma (*Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*). Yet in the narratives themselves, this separation becomes the starting point for a convergence of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's narrative paths that culminates in marriages of love and affection.

Dannenberg does not try to reduce coincidence plots such as these to "a typological series of moves or stages,"[8] but approaches them with a "reader-oriented" or "cognitive" model for the analysis of plot (2, 13). She posits that the "narrative dynamics of plot" has two dimensions. First, plot can be defined as a sequence of events that is structured by teleological patterns (9). This structure only becomes apparent after you have read the entire narrative (9). The story sequence of a coincidence plot prototypically unfolds in three stages: a "prehistory" or "previous relationship" between the characters, a "coincidental encounter" that brings them back together, and the moment of recognition and reunion (94). In the case of Jan H's *The Child*, for instance, the narrative begins with a missed coincidental encounter that can be summarized as follows:

1. Mr. Darcy sees Elizabeth with a child near St. George's Church in London, two years after his proposal.
2. Just as they make eye contact, he has to go inside to attend the wedding [of his sister, Georgiana]
3. During the wedding breakfast, he gathers information, and [wrongfully] concludes that Elizabeth eloped with Mr. Wickham and was abandoned with child. (Chapter 1)

As my use of square brackets indicates, this is not the full picture. The narrative dynamics of plot are also defined by the network of choices and possibilities that characters live through as the story unfolds (Dannenberg 9). This state, which is unstable in ontological and interpretive terms, is what readers are confronted with before they have read the entire narrative (9). Dannenberg summarises this as follows:

> First, there is the intranarrative configuration of events and characters, which is an ontologically unstable matrix of possibilities created by plot in its still unresolved aspect. This in turn fuels the reader's *cognitive desire* to be in possession of the second aspect of plot—the final configuration achieved at narrative closure when (the reader hopes) a coherent and definitive constellation of events will have been achieved. (13)

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[8] This approach is associated with "syntactic" and even "semantic" approaches to plot (see note above).

In Jan H's *The Child*, for instance, the second event of the plot is "unstable" in ontological and interpretive terms because it is difficult for the reader to determine what is happening. Mr. Darcy, who is the narrator of this story, tells the reader he sees Elizabeth Bennet again near St. George's Church in London on September 22, two years after he left her at Rosings Park. Just as Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth make eye contact, however, his cousin tells him "[t]he bride is waiting" (Chapter 1). This exclamation invites the reader to infer that Mr. Darcy is getting married on the very day he sees Elizabeth again. This has implications for the reader's interpretation of *The Child*. It makes Mr. Darcy's desire to see Elizabeth again deeply tragic, for instance, and it creates certain expectations about the path to reunion— say, for instance, the expectation that Mr. Darcy's "wife" will die later on in the story so Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth can get married. After the reader has read the entire chapter, she or he is forced to revise the ontological status of this event—from an event that "actually" happened to something that "could have" happened. The reader realises the truth together with Elizabeth after the "real" coincidental encounter, when she meets Mr. Darcy in Hertfordshire. Elizabeth angrily asks him if he knew "Mrs. Darcy" while he was staying at Rosings, and why he left his wife so soon after the wedding. Mr. Darcy then reveals his sister was getting married, not he. Interestingly enough, the implied reader's reasoning is echoed in Elizabeth's remarks:

> "Misconception? I saw you, sir, outside the church the morning of your wedding."

> I did smile then, for I lacked the ability to contain it. "And I saw you across the street, but you are mistaken if you think it was my wedding that took place."

> "But Colonel Fitzwilliam called to you. He told you that the bride was waiting."

> "She was. My sister, Georgiana, was ready and waiting for me to escort her down the aisle. She is the bride to whom I have alluded." (Chapter 2)

The presentation of the wedding and its impact on the reader are regularly mentioned in the reader comments to the first instalment. Some readers write that it was "cruel" of Jan H "to lead us into believing that Darcy was married" (comments to Chapters 1-2). Another fan comments that "it's horrible that I thought Mr. Darcy was married just as he saw Elizabeth again" (comments to Chapters 1-2). Yet someone else thought it was merely "clever" of her, to keep her "readers in the dark about the wedding for so long" (comments to Chapters 1-2). Others guessed that Georgiana was the bride, and still others were "shocked" when it was revealed that Georgiana got married (comments to Chapters 1-2). Even though these comments are very different, they suggest that the tension between the "stable" and the "unstable" dimensions of plot is important to the reading experience of these fans. This is why I will not just analyse the stages of the coincidence plots of *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Child*, and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*—in their completed form—but also the

ways in which the presentation of these stages is managed by the narrator and received by the implied reader.[9]

Dannenberg's theory is based on the assumption that, although every reader brings a unique background to narrative fiction, there is a great deal of overlap in the way in which readers react to a narrative text, because narrative texts tend to "suggest . . . key sense-making operations" (Dannenberg 19, 26). More specifically, she believes that narrative texts are shaped by "plotting principles," which she defines as follows:

> A plotting principle is a specific textual strategy generally used to forge meaningful connections for the reader between events and characters within the narrative world, thereby creating immersion. Plotting principles can, however, also be short-circuited, leading to readerly expulsion from the narrative world. (26)

Dannenberg focuses primarily on plotting principles that result in very fundamental connections, such as textual strategies that encourage the reader to interpret events in terms of "cause" and "effect" (26-31), to fit characters into a network of family ties and other relationships (31-33, 35-6), and to spot similarities in the narrative world (33-36). These fundamental connections may become part of a more complex effect, however, when the narrator uses a complex textual strategy. This is suggested by the opening chapter of *The Child*, which is shaped by what Dannenberg calls "temporal orchestration": "a multifaceted narrative strategy that works to capture the reader's attention by suggesting multiple versions of events" (42, 50). More specifically, it contains an instance of "ontological plotting," because the narrative strategy in question comes down to the "coordination of the alternate possible worlds that give it [narrative fiction] depth and interest" (Dannenberg 45, 49-50). The narrator of *The Child* first evokes a "possible" world in which Mr. Darcy gets married and then, later in the chapter, an "actual" world in which Mr. Darcy attends his

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[9] This is why I take Dannenberg's two-pronged definition of plot as a point of departure. For an overview of other plot theories and definitions, see Dannenberg 6-16; Kukkonen; Ronen; and others. Karin Kukkonen distinguishes three major conceptualisations of plot, for instance, which are centred on the three main components of the process of narrative communication: text, reader, and author. Plot has been approached as "a fixed, global structure" (or a particular arrangement of events in a narrative), as "progressive structuration" (or an arrangement the reader pieces together on the basis of story events, their causes, and their consequences), and as a "part of the authorial design" (or an arrangement the author uses to achieve certain effects) (Kukkonen 1-5). Kukkonen's working definition of plot suggests that there is a tension between the text-centred [1], reader-centred [2], and author-centred [3] conceptualisations:

> The term "plot" designates the ways in which the events and characters' actions in a story are *arranged* [1, perhaps 2 and 3] and how this arrangement in turn *facilitates* [3] *identification* of their motivations and consequences [2]. These causal and temporal patterns can be *foregrounded* by the narrative discourse itself [3] or *inferred* by readers [2]. (Kukkonen, "Plot" 1)

Dannenberg combines approaches [1] and [2].

sister's wedding.[10] However, he also actively invites the reader to believe that the "possible" world is the "actual" one, because he describes the wedding ceremony and the wedding breakfast that follows in suggestive terms. He does not just mention Colonel Fitzwilliam's announcement that the "bride" is waiting without a clarification. Mr. Darcy also tells the reader that he performed his "role" during the wedding ceremony, and the actions he describes seem to be those of a bridegroom. He tells the reader that the bride means more to him "than any other person in the world" and after the bishop has "proclaimed the final declaration," he kisses the bride and accepts the congratulations of well-wishers (Chapter 1). Mr. Bingley calls this day the "happiest day" of Mr. Darcy's life, and remarks that Mr. Darcy put a lot of thought and effort into finding "the perfect match" (Chapter 1). Later, Caroline Bingley remarks that he is "thinking how beautiful the bride is and what a fortunate alliance [he has] secured" (Chapter 1). Using ambiguous references, the narrator invites the reader to connect a wide range of "effects" with a particular "cause," and to establish a particular relationship between Mr. Darcy and the "bride." The reader is encouraged to conclude that Mr. Darcy is behaving like a bridegroom and is approached as a bridegroom because he just got married to the "bride." The narrator presents the dots in such a way, in short, that the reader is tempted to make the wrong "meaningful connections."

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[10] I borrow the terms "actual" and "possible" from possible worlds theories of narrative, such as the theories of plot developed by Marie-Laure Ryan (*Possible; Virtual*) and Thomas Pavel ("Narrative") (cf. Dannenberg 48). Taking analytical philosophy as a point of departure, these theories approach the "reality" evoked by a narrative text as a system of distinct elements called worlds (Ryan, *Virtual* 99, 103). One of these, the "actual world," is the centre of the system; the others are either "possible worlds," connected to the epicentre (99), or "impossible worlds," bordering the system (99-100). The possible worlds are made up of the characters' knowledge or beliefs, obligations, wishes, pretence, fantasies, and intentions (104, 103; cf. Ryan, *Possible* 113-9, 124). The difference between possible and impossible depends on the way you define the connections or "accessibility relations" between the actual world and its possible counterparts (Ryan, "Literary" 115; *Virtual* 100). Usually, a world becomes impossible when it violates "logical laws," "physical laws," or when it runs counter to "temporal directionality" (*Virtual* 100). Dannenberg's use of possible worlds theory is similar to the approach of Ryan and Pavel. She argues that, in its completed form, the plot is shaped by an "ontological hierarchy" (Dannenberg 62). She defines this "ontological hierarchy" as "the system of relationships between alternate possible worlds that emerges in the process of the plot's development (subsequent to the ambiguities and complexities of temporal orchestration" (62). Her discussion of this hierarchy clearly builds on the work of Ryan and Pavel. Unlike Ryan and Pavel, however, she explicitly grounds her definition of possible worlds in the reader's imagination:

> A possible world in this sense refers to a text's basic ability to facilitate a sustained world-constructing capacity in the reader, something that metafictions undermine but that semirealist genres like science fiction inculcate through their use of plausible, world-cohesive causation patterns. (42)

She also calls more attention to the narrator, because she believes "it is through narratorial sleights of hand that narrative events can be represented as real when they are in fact only virtual" (48). She argues, for instance, that sophisticated narratives use "temporal orchestration of alternate possible worlds" to frustrate the reader's desire for "a causal-linear sequence of events," "by suggesting more than one possible version of events" (including possible versions of the past and the future) (45). This makes her use of possible worlds theory better suited to my analysis.

In my discussions of the unresolved dimension of plot, I will also home in on another type of "temporal orchestration." In *Coincidence and Counterfactuality*, Dannenberg discusses a number of "key cognitive aspects in the creation of narrative suspense, which stimulates the reader to imagine multiple versions of the story's future" (36). Most importantly, she argues that readers engage in "liminal plotting":

> I would like to designate the mental constructions that the reader makes during such suspenseful sequences as *liminal plotting*. This term refers to the reader's semiconscious mental images of possible future events that are logical extrapolations of the action, although they are not depicted in the text itself. . . . These images can be called *liminal* precisely because they are half-formed responses that are evoked in the recipient's mind at the same moment as he processes the scene taking place in the actional present of the narrative. (38)

In the coincidence plot, the centre of the reader's focus is the moment of recognition (39). Dannenberg believes that readers may "plot multiple future possibilities involving *whether* recognition will occur, *how* it will come about, and additionally, *how* the characters will respond to the revelation" (39). Having read the first two chapters of *The Child*, for instance, several readers expect Mr. Darcy will be proved wrong about the parentage of "Elizabeth's" child. One fan hopes he will have "a rude awakening"; another wonders "how long it will take for Darcy to learn that the child is not Elizabeth's and what he will do when he learns the truth" (comments to Chapters 1-2). Yet another fan asks the author if she is "going to torture us and ODC [Our Dear Couple] until the very end of the story or, for once, clear up their misconception early?" (comments to Chapters 1-2). In the end, it turns out that this is not the final moment of "recognition": Mr. Darcy discovers the truth in the next chapter, and it is his proud, arrogant reaction that sets the stage for the real moment of recognition (see Section 5.3.2.5). However, these comments seem to confirm that liminal plotting is part and parcel of the reading experience of these fans.

Dannenberg's definition of plotting principles suggests that certain textual strategies make it easier for the reader to become "immersed" than others (cf. Section 1.3.5). The reader comments to the opening chapter of *The Child* suggest, for instance, that the narrator's plotting principles create what Marie-Laure Ryan calls "temporal" immersion. In the case of temporal immersion, readers respond to the text's "narrative time" (*Virtual* 141; cf. Section 1.3.5). It can be argued that the idea of Mr. Darcy's marriage is "horrible" because the reader does not see how Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth can get together under these circumstances. Ryan would call this "what" suspense, because the reader does not know which of several possible outcomes will actually happen (*Virtual* 143).[11] The "torture"

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[11] Ryan discusses a wide variety of reactions to narrative time as "suspense." Notably, her definition of suspense is broader than the definitions of Dannenberg and other scholars. Similar to Dannenberg, Ryan argues that "narrative suspense" is "controlled on the discourse level by the author's strategies of divulging information"

comment, in contrast, refers to "meta-suspense," because the reader is not sure when or how the author is going to resolve the misunderstanding (Ryan, *Virtual* 145). The anxiety a text creates is, of course, stronger when the reader is emotionally invested in the characters and their fates—when they are also "emotionally" immersed (Ryan, *Virtual* 143). In the case of emotional immersion, characters begin to feel "present" enough to inspire emotional responses in the reader, such as sympathy, laughter, fear, anxiety, or sexual arousal (Ryan, *Virtual* 148-57, 121; cf. Section 4.2). When the first reader quoted says it would have been "horrible" if Mr. Darcy had got married just as he saw Elizabeth again, this suggests that she felt for the characters and their fate, even though they are not real people with real experiences. In some cases, then, temporal and emotional immersion are two sides of the same coin. In what follows, I will demonstrate that textual strategies, whether they have their greatest impact on the "completed" or the "unresolved" level of plot, also work together on a higher level, inviting readers to tie events together into "thematic" threads. More specifically, I will show that, while *Pride and Prejudice* encourages the reader to look for what I call sociopolitical themes, *The Child* and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* encourage the reader to understand the events in sociopsychological terms.

5.2.2 Fantextual Conventions and the Question of Angst

In my discussion of *The Child* and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, I will home in on plotting principles that are shaped by the existence of fantextual conventions, such as preferred outcomes and widely held beliefs about or emotional investments in characters. I have already mentioned the concept of "fantextual conventions" in Section 1.3.1. A

(*Virtual* 143). She distinguishes four types: "what" suspense (the author does not divulge whether the outcome of a particular event will be good or bad for the character), "how (why)" suspense (the author raises questions about the prehistory of the characters or events), "who" suspense (the author gives the reader a puzzle to solve, as in a whodunit), and "meta" suspense (the author raises questions about the narrative itself, as a verbal form) (*Virtual* 143-5). Dannenberg, in contrast, only uses the term "narrative suspense" when she discusses "key cognitive aspects . . . which stimulates the reader to imagine multiple versions of the story's future" (36). Ryan would call this "what" suspense. I will use Ryan's typology, because it is broad enough to cover types of suspense that have been discussed by other scholars. Thomas Pavel, for instance, distinguishes between "narrative suspense" and "epistemic suspense" (110). While "narrative suspense" occurs when the spectator does not know how a particular action will pan out, "epistemic suspense" occurs when the spectator is also "denied crucial information" about the action in question—for instance, when the spectator is not fully informed about a character's double agenda (110). Fan scholars Jason Mittell and Jonathan Gray make yet another distinction. Drawing on Seymour Chatman's interpretation of Alfred Hitchcock, they argue that "suspense derives less from mysterious secrets than the tension in how events will play out," and the viewer's desire to give the characters crucial information (38). However, they also distinguish suspense from "anticipation": the process in which viewers "form hypotheses as to what will happen, and anticipate resolutions to diegetic situations" (39; cf. Dannenberg 38). Notably, they apply this to spoiler fans, whose anticipation is shaped by the fact that they are "awaiting the plot developments that they know will occur but often lack significant details about" and are interested to find out "how the narrative will unfold toward this spoiled future" (Gray and Mittell 39).

"fantextual" convention refers to any element that recurs in the fantext, so any pattern in the fantext, whether that element is a distinctive interpretation of the source text or a tiny detail. Here, I will home in on the different levels of emotional investment in Lydia and Elizabeth, and the community's preference for an "intimate" reunion of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. In my theoretical chapter, I noted that the concept of "fantextual" convention is very broad: it does not help us understand how such conventions are integrated and negotiated in specific fan fiction texts by means of textual strategies, or how they influence the way in which the text is processed by the reader. I believe that Dannenberg's theory of plot can be used to remedy this, because she discusses plotting principles against the background of the processes of narrative comprehension and immersion.

As my examples will show, fans often describe the effect of plotting principles with the notion of "angst." This word is commonly used in the Austen fandom, so most fans use it without a definition. To explain how I developed the working definition of "angst" used in Section 1.3.2.2., I will briefly outline a forum discussion that was held in the "Tea Room" of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* in 2009. The discussion in question was sparked by one fan, Terry, who asked the community's opinion on angst (Terry, "Needing"). The responses were very diverse. Some fans admit that they never completely understood what is meant by angst (comments to Terry, "Needing"). For others, the term refers to a particular type of story content: to difficult fictional situations and to the characters' experience of those situations ("Needing"). Other fans argued that angst refers to the narrative tension that results from a clever use of "conflict" and "resolution" ("Needing"). Finally, some fans suggested that angst is a specific, intense variety of narrative tension ("Needing"). A few days later, Terry added her own voice to the debate with a metafic (that is, a fan fiction text about fandom) called "The Girl Who Did Not Know Angst." In "The Girl Who Did Not Know Angst," a fangirl keeps coming across the word angst on the message boards of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. She realises she does not know what the word means, because she has never felt the "pain and misery" people seem to associate with it. She decides to ask some fellow fans about it, but receives a wide range of answers. She then uses a story search to find some "angsty" fics, which turns up one story in which "Angst" is a character, some in which the characters torture themselves until their problems are suddenly and miraculously resolved, and a few that are light-hearted, sentimental, and plotless. She does not, however, find an answer to her question. She goes to bed, and dreams up a version of Austen's novels in which everything goes wrong. She wakes up in horror, and decides to comfort herself with one of her favourite fan fiction texts. She soon discovers, however,

> how nerve-wracking it was to read a story where you weren't sure if they ended up together, or how long it was going to take them to get together. She skimmed over some of the other stories, almost hyperventilating every time Darcy insulted Elizabeth, every time Wickham ran off with Lydia, and every time General Tilney threw Catherine out of Northanger she almost sobbed with anxiety, hoping that Henry would swoop in soon to save the day. ("Girl")

She eventually realises that she is reading fiction, however, and manages to enjoy stories with angst.

I do not mean to suggest that this story reveals the truth about "angst," and contains the concept's definitive definition. On the contrary, I have outlined this discussion because it shows that, in this community at least, "angst" is not a category with well-defined features fans use to classify stories and passages as "angsty." Instead, fans construct, confirm, or redefine the concept of angst when they give their fan fiction texts an angst warning, when they use the label in reader comments, when they discuss the concept on one of the boards, and when they write metafics about it. Still, this discussion suggests that these fans, at least, move between three major "poles" when they define angst. On the level of the storyworld, angst refers to difficult situations and the characters' experience of those situations; on the level of plot, it refers to such strategies as a particular use of conflict and resolution, and the narrative tension that results from it; and on the level of the reading experience it refers to negative feelings, such as anxiety.[12] Notably, these three "poles," and the tension that exists between them, are also present in Marie-Laure Ryan's discussion of "temporal" immersion. After all, the process of temporal immersion involves characters and the events they live through (storyworld), the strategies that are used to present these fictional lives to the reader (plot), and the reader's response to that representation (reading experience). That is why I will approach "angst" as a type of temporal immersion that is grounded in emotional immersion.

The forum discussion mentioned above also highlights other emotional responses, apart from anxiety. Several posts suggest, for instance, that too much angst, or the wrong type of angst, is alienating. While angst takes the form of anxiety when the reader is immersed, in other words, extreme or implausible situations can also cause the reader to be expelled from the storyworld, creating emotions that do not, strictly speaking, fall under the heading of "angst." There are several fans who note that a story becomes ridiculous or boring when there is too much angst (comments to Terry, "Needing"). Two fans even indicate that they stop reading when they are "being clubbed over the head with angst," or "if it is all angst just one thing after another, after another, etc." ("Needing"). Similarly, another fan notes that she likes it when the characters are "being tried" when it results in "a happy end they

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[12] This seems to be confirmed by the way "angst" ratings are used on the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index*. Because the term "angst" is so commonly used, the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* uses the label without a definition. This is why I will briefly summarise how the site generates "angst" ratings. Every story that is listed in the index with the author's permission has a story record. These records can be searched with the website's search engine, because they are filled out with the help of standardised checklists (*Jaffindex.com*, "FAQ"). These checklists allow authors, or the volunteers who run the site, to indicate the overall level of angst (which may range from "fluff" to "torture") and to give angst warnings (which alert the reader to "violence," "rape," "beloved character deaths," or "other angst not part of the blurb") (*Jaffindex.com*, "Author"). They can also include a number of thematic categories which are collected under the heading of "angst," such as "Elizabeth dying or deceased" ("Author"). While the overall angst rating of *Brave New World of Toil of Trouble* is not indicated, for instance, the author has included the warning: "This story is about rape. It is not explicit, but it is very intense" (*Jaffindex.com*, "Details").

have earned," but not when they are "dark, miserable, hurt, crying at every moment, falling into despair and not their usual selves" ("Needing"). Notably, this fan believes that Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* strikes an excellent balance, because it "deals with difficult situations, yet . . . doesn't make excessive use of angst" ("Needing"). Beth AM wrote the following in response:

> When I started writing BNWoTT, I had no idea that there was an aversion to angst. I had a story I wanted to tell . . . Actually coherent narrative and believable characters are the two things I am most looking for in a JAFF story. If there be natural angst as part of that narrative and believable for the character... then so be it. (comments to Terry, "Needing")

In this chapter, I will discuss a number of plotting principles that *invite* the implied reader of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* and *The Child* to feel the anxiety that is typically associated with angst.

5.3   The Courtship Plot and Seduction

5.3.1   *Bildung* and Melodrama

It would take me too far to analyse the entire coincidence plot of *Pride and Prejudice*. Instead, I will home in on one particular moment when the paths of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy "happen" to cross: the moment when Elizabeth receives a letter from Jane, saying that her fifteen-year-old sister Lydia has eloped with Mr. Wickham, just as Mr. Darcy calls on her at the inn of Lambton in Derbyshire. By analysing this encounter and its aftermath, and particularly the effect it has on Elizabeth's *Bildung* as opposed to Lydia's, I will pinpoint a distinctive feature of the "convergence" of Austen's plot: the fact that the reconciliation and marriage of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy have a personal *and* a social dimension. In doing so, I will refine my discussion of the characters and social roles of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy I developed in the previous chapters.

In *The Way of the World: The* Bildungsroman *in European Culture*, Franco Moretti argues that Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is a "classical" *Bildungsroman* because the *Bildung* of Elizabeth Bennet is shaped by a distinctive ideology. The *Bildungsroman* had its heyday in Europe between 1789 and 1848 (Moretti, *Way* vi-vii). Moretti points out that, on the continent, this period coincides with a time of transition for the "bourgeoisie" and the "aristocracy" (*Way* viii). This transitory period was inaugurated by the French Revolution, in which the conflict between the two classes came to a head, and it was sustained by the bourgeoisie's tendency to appropriate "aspects of the aristocratic way of

life for its own cultural formation" (*Way* viii). In essence, Moretti argues that the *Bildungsroman*, and particularly the classical *Bildungsroman*, represents encounters between these two classes as "a way to heal the rupture that had generated (or so it seemed) the French revolution, and to imagine a continuity between the old and the new regime" (*Way* viii). In novels such as these, the modernity that followed these major historical changes is "caged and exorcised" (*Way* 8).

Moretti believes that Austen was one of the only English novelists who dealt with this issue (*Way* 214).[13] He groups Elizabeth Bennet in with the heroes of continental *Bildungsromane*, who tend to be young, socially mobile, and restless (*Way* 4). He argues that these heroes are actually metonyms developed to make sense of, or impose a meaning on, the "dynamism and instability" of modernity (*Way* 5). In *The Way of the World*, Moretti homes in on the "meanings" attached to the relation between the individual and society, and he pinpoints several of those by examining the "differences in the ways in which plot generates meaning" in different types of *Bildungsroman* (6-7). He believes that "classical" *Bildungsromane* such as *Pride and Prejudice* offer a very distinctive solution to "the conflict between the ideal of *self-determination* and the equally imperious demands of *socialization*" (15). Here, "self-determination" refers to "the individual's right to choose one's own ethics and idea of 'happiness', to imagine freely and construct one's personal destiny" (16); "socialisation" is the process through which the individual becomes part of a system of "social and political relationships," which demand "agreement, homogeneity, consensus" by referring to values that are (said to be) recognised as "fundamental" by the system as a whole (16). Moretti believes that, in "modern bourgeois society," the individual is strongly encouraged to "*internalize*" these social norms, merging "external compulsion and internal impulses into a new unity until the former is no longer distinguishable from the latter" (*Way* 16). This ideal is represented in the "classical" *Bildungsroman*, where

> there is no conflict between individuality and socialization, autonomy and normality, interiority and objectification. One's formation as an individual in and for oneself coincides without rifts with one's social integration as a simple *part of a whole*. These are two trajectories that nourish one another and in which the painful perception of socialization as *Entsagung*, 'renunciation' (from which will emerge the immense psychological and narrative problematics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) is still inconceivable. (*Way* 16; cf. 18-9)

The "classical" *Bildungsroman*, in short, represents an ideal synthesis of self-determination and socialisation.

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[13] Moretti points out that England had had its own "bourgeois revolution" between 1640 and 1688, was never invaded by France, and was going through the Industrial Revolution (*Way* 181). As a consequence, the English *Bildungsroman* was typically shaped by a different "symbolic legitimation," which "in eighteenth-century England converged around the idea and practice of the law" (*Way* 208). See Moretti, *Way* 181-228 for more details.

I have noted that, according to Moretti, the "classical" *Bildungsroman* represents a *Bildung* that results in a "harmonious personality" perfectly attuned to the social context (*Way* 21). The classical *Bildungsroman* presents a new type of "social contract" in which individuals willingly subordinate themselves to society, because society's aim is to make the individual happy: in the end, they *desire* to do what they *should* do (*Way* 21, 23). This clearly resonates with my discussion of Austen's representation of Pemberley in the previous chapter. After all, Elizabeth comes to realise that she *wants* to invest her "individual energy" in Mr. Darcy, his estate, and the heritage they stand for, while Mr. Darcy comes to realise that he needs Elizabeth's individual initiative, and changes to "please" her. In much the same way, Moretti approaches Pemberley as a metonym for society as a whole (*Way* 26). He points out that Austen uses the word "handsome" to describe Pemberley and its master, a word that "envelops the ideal of a golden mean, of a clear and reciprocal translatability between the individual and his context" (37). Much like Alistair Duckworth (see Section 4.3.2.2), Moretti concludes that the harmony that Pemberley exudes is not just a matter of architecture "but also the visible manifestation of a pedagogical ideal" (Moretti, *Way* 38). However, unlike Duckworth, he also examines how this ideal is manifested in the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*. In classical *Bildungsromane*, such as *Pride and Prejudice*, youth is presented as a temporary state that is only meaningful because it leads to "maturity"—the point at which the protagonist reaches a "stable" and "final" identity (*Way* 8). This is the point when the "complementary and convergent trajectories" of "[s]elf-development and integration" come together and create an "epiphany of meaning" (*Way* 18-9). At this point, the protagonist has learnt how "to direct 'the plot of [his own] life' so that each moment strengthens one's *sense of belonging* to a wider community"—to a "homeland" (*Way* 19).

Moretti's reading of *Pride and Prejudice* resonates in interesting ways with several general studies of *Pride and Prejudice*, where it is noted that individuality and socialisation are both forces to be reckoned with. Moretti's analysis sheds new light, for instance, on the studies of Bernard J. Paris, Marilyn Butler, and Claudia L. Johnson mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.1). Even though these scholars clearly disagree whether *Pride and Prejudice* endorses individuality, socialisation, or both, there seems to be a consensus that the novel presents some kind of synthesis of the two. More importantly for my discussion, however, Moretti's analysis also resonates with discussions of Austen's courtship plot. Moretti argues that the "social contract" of the classical *Bildungsroman*, in which individuals subordinate themselves to a society that commits itself to making individuals happy, is exemplified by the marriages that typically conclude such novels (*Way* 23). After all, the couples of "classical" *Bildungsromane* are not motivated by "status" or other forces that exist outside of the individual, but by a sense of "individual obligation" (23). In effect, several Austen scholars note that the courtship plot of *Pride and Prejudice* has a "social" and a "personal" dimension, although few acknowledge their full extent. Evelyn J. Hinz, for instance, characterises the courtship plot of *Pride and Prejudice* as a comic "wedlock" plot, because

the novel "literally ends with the wedding of the young couple, and plot complications arise from the obstacles that stand in the way of the desired union" (902). Most importantly, however, these obstacles "represent that which is regarded as unsocial or unrealistic" (902). In the case of *Pride and Prejudice*, the main characters' pride and prejudice are overcome by "a conversion to a more practical and humanistic attitude toward the situation, a conversion from an idiosyncratic to a social perspective" (902). In wedlock narratives like *Pride and Prejudice*, the marriage "symbolizes the entrance into society of the individual, the acquisition or restoration of a realistic attitude toward life, the movement from romantic illusion to a novelistic sense of reality" (904).[14] Mary-Catherine Harrison makes a similar argument in "Reading the Marriage Plot," but she emphasises that Austen does not ignore the affective side of marriage altogether. She points out that, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen "simultaneously exposed the role that economics and inheritance play in the marriage market as she naturalized marriage as romantic ideal" (122). She ties this paradox to an important cultural shift that took place in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain: a shift from a utilitarian notion of marriage (in which the primary function of marriage is the establishment of "alliances between kin groups") to an "affective" notion of marriage (in which "love and emotional intimacy, expressed through the free choice of each spouse, are the appropriate basis of marriage") (115).[15] Arguments such as those resonate with Moretti's argument, because the individual's formation is attuned to the "needs" of society. However, while external forces such as "economics and inheritance" are still present, the protagonists enter into marriage out of individual commitment. I build on these arguments in Section 5.3.2.1, where I discuss in greater detail how the courtship plot of *Pride and Prejudice* is shaped by the ideology of the *Bildungsroman*.

Moretti's argument is clearly focused on the "completed" dimension of plot. I have noted, however, that the "unresolved" dimension of plot also plays an important part in the reading experience of fans. The importance of the "unresolved" dimension of plot, or the plot's immediate impact of the text on the reader, suggests that fan fiction texts are also shaped by a "melodramatic" mode. The term "melodramatic mode" was coined by Peter Brooks, who uses it to refer to "a certain imaginative complex and set of dramatic conventions which can be seen at work both in the theatre and the novel" (Brooks 202).[i] In *The Melodramatic Imagination*, Brooks defines the finer points of this mode by means of

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[14] Hinz's analysis of *Pride and Prejudice* is part of the wider novel versus romance debate. Hinz notes that the theme of marriage occurs both in novels, such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and romances, such as Charlotte Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (900). As a consequence, she refuses to distinguish these two types of fiction on the basis of a formal characteristic (namely the presence or absence of the marriage theme), as other scholars have done (901). Instead, she argues that the *treatment* of this theme is distinctive, and grounded in different philosophies (901). Hinz contrasts the "wedlock" plot with the "hierogamy" or sacred marriage plot of narratives like *Wuthering Heights* (905). In this plot, two lovers or elements unite on an ancient, divine, and eternal level, inspiring a rebirth or regeneration of the cosmos (904-5-11). This is why she tentatively calls this type of fiction "mythic" narrative (904).

[15] For a brief discussion of the sociopolitical factors that caused this shift, see Harrison 115.

nineteenth-century French stage melodramas. He then traces the mode's impact on the novels of Honoré de Balzac and Henry James, and he briefly contrasts it with the social realism of Jane Austen and others (75, 130-1). He argues that the imaginative complex that underpins melodramatic texts, the melodramatic imagination, is an epistemological way of thinking characterised by a tendency to put pressure on the "surface" of reality to make it yield meaning (9-10). The melodramatic mode is fundamentally different from the mode of the *Bildungsroman*, in terms of both form and underlying ideology. In a prototypical melodramatic text, the "pressure on everyday practices" can be seen in the use of hyperbolical gestures (such as excessive emotions), the explicit interrogation of gestures (such as the narrator's comments on the meaning of certain gestures), and in other conventions. According to Brooks, the most fundamental "meaning" this pressure reveals is tied to the "drama" that unfolds on the level of the "moral occult". This is the domain of operative spiritual values (good and evil) that is both hidden from our view and hinted at by the "surface" of reality (Brooks 5, 20-1). It exists because of post-sacred man's need to make the quotidian significant.[16]

Brooks's focus is very narrow, however. He places much emphasis on the ethical dimension of drama, and on the importance of the moral occult (Brooks viii). Several scholars, including Brooks himself (xii), have argued that there are more recent incarnations of the melodramatic mode. Several of these studies focus on popular texts, such as Hollywood melodramas (Elsaesser; Williams), American sentimental novels (Fisher; Tompkins), and other popular genres (H. Jenkins, *Wow*). What is more, these studies tend to emphasise the importance of the text's immediate impact on the reader. In *The Wow Climax*, for instance, Henry Jenkins argues that popular culture is typically "shaped by a logic of emotional intensification": ideally, it "makes us think by making us feel" (3). He believes the texts of popular culture tend to evoke feelings that are "broadly shared," because they "hit on conflicts, anxieties, fantasies, and fears that are central to the culture" (*Wow* 4). He also stresses that this "push toward emotional experience" takes a different form in comedy, action films, and other genres (*Wow* 9). He argues that, in melodrama, this push takes the form of "emotional elements that operate on the level of the narrative and characterization," such as "the clear opposition between characters, the sharp alignment of audience identification, abrupt shifts in fortune, and an emotionally satisfying resolution" (*Wow* 9, 81).[17] In what follows, I will focus on textual features that invite "angst." More

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[16] According to Brooks, this way of thinking emerged as a result of desacralisation (15-6).

[17] This resonates in interesting ways with other discussions of melodrama. In *Poetics of Melodrama*, Sergei Balukhatyi notes that nineteenth-century stage melodramas are teleological in two ways. First, they are shaped by a desire to evoke " 'pure,' and 'vivid' emotions" (Gerould 121). Second, they aim at portraying a "perfect system of rewards and punishments" (123). Balukhatyi calls these (respectively) the "emotional teleology" and the "moral teleology" (Gerould 121-2). He discusses a number of thematic elements (such as unexpected plot twists and reversals of fortune), technical principles (such as the principle of contrast, or the juxtaposition of materials), and construction principles (such as the central role of "chance") against this background (120-9). In her study of

specifically, I will demonstrate that *The Child* and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* retain the fundamental harmony of the *Bildungsroman*, but make it revolve around an integration in the "intimate" sphere rather than the "public" sphere. This "intimate" sphere is represented by the individual's integration into romantic relationships and nuclear family relationships, rather than the individual's integration in the public sphere of the wider community. Taking the representation of seduction as a point of departure, I will demonstrate that this focus on the "intimate" is apparent on the completed level of plot. However, I will also demonstrate that it is highlighted by the unresolved, "angsty" dimension of plot. I believe that this slight shift away from *Bildung* towards melodrama indicates that the reading and writing practices of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* are rooted in a different "discourse domain" than the writing of Austen.

5.3.2 From a "Social" Marriage Plot and Mediation to an "Intimate" Marriage Plot and Immediacy

5.3.2.1 Personal Happiness through Social Integration in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Taking Dannenberg's definition as a point of departure, I have argued that the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* is a "coincidence" plot. It may be a stretch to define Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth's time in Hertfordshire as a "prehistory," and their meeting at Rosings as a "coincidental encounter," but the plot as a whole is certainly shaped by a converging, teleological drive towards the marriage of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. In accordance with Franco Moretti, I believe that this marriage is charged with symbolic meaning, because it epitomises the "social contract" that is endorsed in the "classical" *Bildungsroman*. Still, I believe that a detailed analysis of the courtship plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, and particularly the function of Lydia Bennet's seduction, can help to refine Moretti's argument. In *The Way*

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melodrama in classic Hollywood films, Linda Williams argues that the defining aim of any melodrama is to achieve a "felt good" (55), which means that it aims to make its audience feel good about what is right according to the moral codes the melodrama defends. To attain that goal, a melodrama typically sets its opening scene in a locus of innocence—such as a garden, a rural home (65) or "middle-class American society" (Elsaesser 59)— where "good" characters can co-exist harmoniously according to the aforementioned codes (Williams 65; cf. Brooks 12, 29-32). As a result, the "patterns" of this space "take on a visceral sort of ethics," and "are *felt* as good" (Williams 74). When a "villain" disrupts that state of innocence (Williams 65), moreover, his behaviour is felt to be wrong. Such a disruption then makes the audience long for a restoration of the original space (Williams 65) and, as such, for a restoration of its moral laws. What ultimately makes melodrama comforting is not the fact that it provides a clear set of codes, but that it creates the illusion that the heart can function as a moral compass— indicating when you are in the right and in the wrong. Williams argues that melodrama should be seen as "the typical form of American popular narrative in literature, stage, film, and television," because "American culture" wants to represent itself as a "locus of innocence and virtue" (50). As a result, the spaces of innocence in modern Hollywood melodramas tend to promote American values (Williams 49, 82; Elsaesser 68).

of the World, Moretti remarks that Austen does not contrast marriage with "celibacy," but with "disgrace" (23). Seen from his perspective, Lydia Bennet's brush with scandal conveys her immaturity, because it shows that her "personality" is not fully formed: she is too focused on herself—on her own imagination or fancies—to consider her experiences and deduce the true "meaning" of her existence (Moretti, *Way* 46-7). I believe it is worthwhile to examine, however, exactly how Lydia's relationship with Mr. Wickham differs from Elizabeth's relationship with Mr. Darcy. Several discussions of Austen's plot suggest that Lydia's elopement should be considered in the context of the rest of the plot. In "Instrument of Growth: The Courtship and Marriage Plot in Jane Austen's Novels," William H. Magee's discusses the organisation of Jane Austen's plot, rather than the development of the protagonists (cf. Butler 122). He argues that Jane Austen uses a fairly traditional courtship plot in *Pride and Prejudice*, but that she adds a twist. He believes that she makes the courtship plot more flexible by contrasting the central plot (which is centred on Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth) with two specific minor plots: the marriage of convenience between Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins, on the one hand, and the fairy-tale love story between Jane and Mr. Bingley, on the other. Magee concludes:

> *Pride and Prejudice* at once satirizes the business-like marriages of the times and parodies the fantasy romance of the courtship convention. As a result Elizabeth and Darcy's love appears as a happy median. Jane Austen made the social mores look extreme and founded a plausible alternative on a plot that may seem simply conventional but has been made flexible. (sic) (201)

I believe that it is worthwhile to extend this analysis. After all, in the course of *Pride and Prejudice*, no fewer than four young women find a husband. The primary love story centres on Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. The main subplots centre on Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley, Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins, and Lydia and Mr. Wickham. The narrator also hints at other, less successful courtships, such as the courtship of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet (Austen, *Pride* 228). The narrator also describes a number of courtships that do not result in marriage, such as Mr. Collins's "courtship" of Elizabeth (102-7), or Mr. Wickham's courtship of Georgiana Darcy (196) and Mary King (147, 151, 212). There are also some flirtations that are too slight to call a courtship, such as Colonel Fitzwilliam's apparent interest in Elizabeth (180, 184). I will demonstrate that the courtship of Lydia and Mr. Wickham, as well as his flirtations, highlight the communal nature of marriage and, more importantly, the link between marriage and establishment (and particularly the difference between prudent and mercenary motives in courtship). This juxtaposition suggests that Lydia is "immature" precisely because she never considers the financial dimension of marriage and, as a consequence, is unable to take up her responsibilities in the community.

The narrator's juxtaposition of several courtship plots suggests that the courtship of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth is one of many in the community. It highlights the communal, or conventional nature, of their courtship. The plot structure of *Pride and Prejudice* calls

attention to the fact that the courtship of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy is both a personal and a social event. It also has another, more important effect, however. It stresses the idea that there is a fine and at times ambiguous line between "prudent" and "mercenary" motives in courtship. Already in one of the first reviews of *Pride and Prejudice*, Sir Walter Scott suggests that Elizabeth Bennet's interest in Mr. Darcy is first and foremost underpinned by economic motives:

> The lady, on the contrary, hurt at the contempt of her connections, which the lover does not even attempt to suppress, and prejudiced against him on other accounts, refuses the hand which he ungraciously offers, and does not perceive that she has done a foolish thing until she accidentally visits a very handsome seat and grounds belonging to her admirer. They chance to meet exactly as her prudence had begun to subdue her prejudice; and after some essential services rendered to her family, the lover becomes encouraged to renew his addresses, and the novel ends happily. (65)[18]

As I have noted in the previous chapter, scholars such as Alistair Duckworth have argued against this interpretation, pointing out that Elizabeth's change of heart is inspired, not just by the wealth and status that Pemberley exudes, but also by "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" (Duckworth 124; see Section 4.3.2.2). This reading is also supported by the organisation of the novel's plot, and particularly by the juxtaposition of courtships. More specifically, the events of the main courtship plot get a more nuanced meaning when they are placed in the context of the courtship plot of Mr. Wickham and Lydia. In this subplot, it is suggested that it is difficult to distinguish the "prudent" from the "mercenary" in the context of courtship (cf. Francus, "Discretion" 58-64). This idea is also suggested by Elizabeth's reactions to this minor event sequence.

Mr. Wickham is presented as a fortune hunter in every courtship plot he is involved in. Using the other characters as focalisers, Austen's narrator shows that Mr. Wickham is driven by mercenary motives in his unsuccessful courtship of Georgiana Darcy (since Mr. Darcy believes that "Mr. Wickham's chief object was unquestionably my sister's fortune, which is thirty thousand pounds . . . "—Austen, *Pride* 196) and Mary King (who only becomes an object of interest after she has inherited £10,000—Austen, *Pride* 147). These

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[18] Scott's assessment is based on Elizabeth's reactions when she first sees Pemberley (Austen, *Pride* 235-6), and perhaps also on the following conversation between Elizabeth and her sister Jane:

> "My dearest sister, now *be* serious. . . . Will you tell me how long you have loved him?"
> "It has been coming on so gradually, that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley."
> Another intreaty that she would be serious, however, produced the desired effect; and she soon satisfied Jane by her solemn assurances of attachment. (Austen, *Pride* 353)

two event sequences have a profound impact on Elizabeth's *Bildung*. When it seems that Mr. Wickham is interested in Elizabeth, her aunt Gardiner warns her:

> 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. (Austen, *Pride* 143)

By this account, a "good," "prudent" marriage is one where there is an establishment as well as affection. This conceptualisation of marriage is imposed by Elizabeth's father and the conventions of society (which determine what constitutes "good" conduct), but it is Elizabeth who must use her "sense"—who is expected to internalise the values of society, and regard them as "sensible." Elizabeth, however, cannot give her aunt the reassurance she needs:

> In short, my dear aunt, I should be very sorry to be the means of making any of you unhappy; but since we see every day that where there is affection, young people are seldom withheld by immediate want of fortune, from entering into engagements with each other, how can I promise to be wiser than so many of my fellow-creatures if I am tempted, or how am I even to know that it would be wisdom to resist? All that I can promise you, therefore, is not to be in a hurry. . . . But really, and upon my honour, I will try to do what I think to be the wisest; and now I hope you are satisfied. (Austen, *Pride* 143)

As I have noted in Sections 2.3.2.2 and 3.1, Elizabeth's *Bildung* is only complete when she learns to see past her vanity and to act accordingly. This is also reflected in her opinion of Mr. Wickham. When the latter transfers his attentions from Elizabeth to Mary King, the narrator tells us that "[h]er heart had been but slightly touched, and her vanity was satisfied with believing that *she* would have been his only choice, had fortune permitted it" (*Pride* 147).[19] This clearly prevents her from seeing Wickham's true nature. Before Elizabeth reads Mr. Darcy's letter, she asks her aunt:

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[19] Here, it is worth mentioning Elizabeth's reaction to the minor courtship sequence of Mr. Collins and Charlotte Lucas. As Magee's analysis suggests, Charlotte Lucas is, from the first, presented as driven by prudent motives rather than romantic ones. She feels that Jane Bennet should "secure" Mr. Bingley as soon as possible, even if she is not yet certain of his character (Austen, *Pride* 22-4). She feels that "[h]appiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance" (24). After Elizabeth has rejected Mr. Collins's offer of marriage, Charlotte is "kind" enough to "secure her [Elizabeth] from any return of Mr. Collins's addresses, by engaging them towards herself" (118). The narrator makes it very clear that Charlotte is motivated by "the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment":

. . . what is the difference in matrimonial affairs, between the mercenary and the prudent motive? Where does discretion end, and avarice begin? Last Christmas you were afraid of his [Mr. Wickham's] marrying me, because it would be imprudent; and now, because he is trying to get a girl with only ten thousand pounds, you want to find out that he is mercenary. (Austen, *Pride* 151)[20]

After "Hunsford," the narrator, focalising through Elizabeth, exclaims:

How differently did every thing now appear in which he was concerned! His attentions to Miss King were now the consequence of views solely and hatefully mercenary; and the mediocrity of her fortune proved no longer the moderation of his wishes, but his eagerness to grasp at any thing. (Austen, *Pride* 201)

Elizabeth's ability to recognize that Mr. Wickham's motives are mercenary rather than prudent, in short, are an important part of her *Bildung*.

This is also reflected in her reactions to her sister's elopement, which occurs after "Hunsford." Although an elopement is, of course, worse than an engagement, it is striking that Elizabeth has absolutely no sympathy left for "fellow-creatures" who enter into a relationship without financial security. At Lambton, Elizabeth receives a letter from Jane saying that their fifteen-year-old sister has eloped with Mr. Wickham, and then a second one saying that it seems Mr. Wickham has no intention of marrying Lydia (Austen, *Pride* 260-2). Elizabeth is overcome with emotion, and confesses all to Mr. Darcy, who happens to arrive right after she has read the letters (263). Initially, she blames herself: "that *I* might

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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. (120)

Elizabeth is shocked when she hears that Charlotte has "sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage" (122). After she has visited Charlotte at Hunsford, however, she has to admit that "it was all done very well" (155). There is a very clear contrast between Elizabeth's reaction to Charlotte's engagement and her reaction to Mr. Wickham's attentions to Miss King. Indeed, the narrator points out this contrast:

The sudden acquisition of ten thousand pounds was the most remarkable charm of the young lady to whom he was now rendering himself agreeable; but Elizabeth, less clear sighted perhaps in his case than in Charlotte's, did not quarrel with him for his wish of independence. Nothing, on the contrary, could be more natural; and while able to suppose that it cost him a few struggles to relinquish her, she was ready to allow it a wise and desirable measure for both, and could very sincerely wish them happy. (147)

[20] This tolerance is also reflected in Elizabeth's reaction to Colonel Fitzwilliam's circumstances. During a tour of the grounds of Rosings, Colonel Fitzwilliam remarks that he is a younger son and, therefore, cannot marry whoever he likes (Austen, *Pride* 179). He tells Elizabeth that "there are not many in my rank of life who can afford to marry without some attention to money" (179). As a consequence, Elizabeth concludes that he has no intentions towards her (184), but she does not seem to think less of him because of this. On the night of Mr. Darcy's proposal, for instance, "her spirits" are " little fluttered" when she thinks it is Colonel Fitzwilliam who has come to inquire after her health, even though this idea is "soon banished" (184).

have prevented it!—*I*, who knew what he was. Had I but explained some part of it only—some part of what I learnt, to my own family!" (264). However, when she observes Mr. Darcy's reaction, she thinks of Lydia's actions in no uncertain terms: as "a proof of family weakness" and "the deepest disgrace" (264); she thinks of "the humiliation, the misery" that Lydia is "bringing on" their family (264); although she cannot believe that her sister would do this if she did not believe that Mr. Wickham would marry her, she has "no difficulty in believing that neither her [Lydia's] virtue nor her understanding would preserve her from falling an easy prey" (266).[21] Notably, Elizabeth blames everything on "neglect and mistaken indulgence towards such a girl" (266). She later adds:

> Perhaps I am not doing her justice. But she is very young; she has never been taught to think on serious subjects; and for the last half year, nay, for a twelvemonth, she has been given up to nothing but amusement and vanity. She has been allowed to dispose of her time in the most idle and frivolous manner, and to adopt any opinions that came in her way. Since the —shire were first quartered in Meryton, nothing but love, flirtation, and officers, have been in her head. She has been doing every thing in her power by thinking and talking on the subject, to give greater—what shall I call it? susceptibility to her feelings; which are naturally lively enough. (Austen, *Pride* 169-70)[22]

This suggests that Lydia's behaviour is the direct result of the fact that her personality is not fully, or incorrectly, "formed." In effect, the novel clearly suggests Lydia never fully "matures," because her brush with scandal does not change her personality in the slightest. When Lydia arrives at Longbourn after her wedding, she is completely devoid of the feelings that would have plagued the eldest Bennet sisters, had they been "the culprit" (Austen, *Pride* 298). Mr. Bennet, Elizabeth, and Jane are shocked to find that "Lydia was Lydia still; untamed, unabashed, wild, noisy, and fearless" (298). To her, the entire situation is "very good fun" (299). The disapproval and distress of her father and her elder sisters are

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[21] Elizabeth also calls the elopement a "*scheme* of infamy" (277) and later refers to Lydia's "ruin" (280) and "infamy" (283).

[22] Other characters offer more extreme perspectives, but these are discounted as hyperbolic by Elizabeth's reactions. When Mary Bennet draws the "useful lesson" quoted in Section 3.3.2.3, concluding that virtuous females must be on their guard, Elizabeth lifts "up her eyes in amazement" (Austen, *Pride* 275). Similarly, Mr. Collins writes to Mr. Bennet that it would have been better if Lydia had died (281). He also remarks that, although Charlotte tells him "there is reason to suppose . . . that this licentiousness of behaviour in your daughter, has proceeded from a faulty degree of indulgence," he is "inclined to think that her own disposition must be naturally bad, or she could not be guilty of such an enormity, at so early an age" (281-2). Considering that this event "will be injurious to the fortunes" of all the Bennet sisters, he advises Mr. Bennet "to throw off your unworthy child from your affection for ever, and leave her to reap the fruits of her own heinous offence" (282). Although Elizabeth's reaction to this letter is not described, she usually approaches Mr. Collins's letters as "curiosities" (281). This suggests that she takes Mr. Collins's words with a pinch of salt. Most importantly, perhaps, Elizabeth's sentiment is also echoed by Mr. Bennet, who says that Lydia's behaviour "has been [his] own doing," and he semi-seriously vows to be more "cautious" with Kitty (284).

lost on Lydia because she "never heard nor saw anything of which she chose to be insensible" (299). She is completely free of "embarrassment" (300).

Without this personal growth—a development that involves the internalisation of social values—both personal happiness and a full entrance into society are impossible. As soon as Elizabeth hears of Lydia's marriage, she fears that "permanent happiness" is impossible for "a couple who were only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue" (Austen, *Pride* 296).[23] In effect, the narrator does not paint a rosy picture of their future life together. By the end of the novel, Mr. Wickham and Lydia are still "extravagant in their wants" and "heedless of the future" and, therefore, they lead an "unsettled" life full of debt (366). They still hope that Mr. Darcy will make Mr. Wickham's fortune. Mr. Darcy assists him in his career for Elizabeth's sake (365). Elizabeth and Jane help them with their personal allowance (365-6). The feelings of Mr. Wickham and Lydia soon cool down, although Lydia manages to retain "all the claims to reputation which her marriage had given her" (366). Mr. Wickham enjoys himself in Bath and London while Lydia stays at Pemberley, and they both descend on the Bingleys' home where they overstay their welcome (366). While Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy, Jane, and Mr. Bingley lead a life of stability, security, and social responsibility, Lydia and Mr. Wickham lead a life of instability, uncertainty, and social dependency.

Incidentally, it is possible that this negative interpretation of "love at first sight" already lay at the heart of the earliest version of *Pride and Prejudice*. According to her sister Cassandra, Austen wrote an early draft of *Pride and Prejudice*, called *First Impressions*, between October 1796 and August 1797 (Butler 86). In November of the same year, it was offered to a publisher. In his application, Austen's father described it as "a Manuscript Novel, comprised in three Vols. about the length of Miss Burney's Evelina" (Mandal 57). Unfortunately, this original manuscript was refused and eventually lost, leaving scholars to speculate about its form and content. Brian Southam, for one, takes the title as an indication of the manuscript's having been a literary satire:

> The object of the burlesque is hinted at in the title, for the phrase 'first impressions' comes directly from the terminology of sentimental literature . . . . Here, as commonly in popular fiction, 'first impressions' exhibit the strength and truth of the heart's immediate and intuitive response, usually love at first sight. (59)

Pride and Prejudice revolves around "first impressions" in the literal sense of the word. Unlike the heroes and heroines of many Gothic and sentimental novels, Elizabeth and, to a

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[23] These fears are confirmed when she sees Mr. and Mrs. Wickham together. She deduces that Lydia's love for him is greater than his love for her, and that Mr. Wickham only agreed to elope because he wanted a companion when he fled his distressed circumstances (Austen, *Pride* 301).

lesser extent, Mr. Darcy are misled by appearances. The narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* explicitly presents their courtship as an alternative to the *cri de l'âme* of popular literature:[24]

> If gratitude and esteem are good foundations of affection, Elizabeth's change of sentiment will be neither improbable nor faulty. But if otherwise—if the regard springing from such sources is unreasonable or unnatural, in comparison of what is so often described as arising on a first interview with its object, and even before two words have been exchanged, nothing can be said in her defence, except that she had given somewhat of a trial to the latter method in her partiality for Wickham, and that its ill success might perhaps authorise her to seek the other less interesting mode of attachment. (Austen, *Pride* 265-6)

This passage resonates in interesting ways with Franco Moretti's claim that the protagonists of the classical *Bildungsroman* choose one another willingly, and my own claim that Elizabeth learns to see the value of the "less interesting" factor of establishment.

In juxtaposing the courtship of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy with that of Lydia and Mr. Wickham, in other words, the narrator highlights one particular aspect of Elizabeth's *Bildung*, and of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's relationship. To use Moretti's words: Elizabeth's "formation as an individual" in and for herself coincides "without rifts" with her "social integration as a simple *part of a whole*" (Section 5.3.1). In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth pursues personal happiness. However, along the way, she has to choose which values and desires she makes her own. Because of her experiences with Mr. Wickham and Lydia, she realises the importance of prudence in marriage—which, in this case, means the importance of establishment. Ultimately, she internalises precisely those values that are considered to be "fundamental" by the social network in which she is embedded—a society that idealises stability, security, and social responsibility. As I have noted in Section 3.3.2.1, these values are not questioned in the "community" that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy create at Pemberley. Because Lydia serves as a counterpoint to Elizabeth's *Bildung*, the novel does not emphasise Lydia's youth (claiming, for instance, that "children and fools tell the truth"[25]), or romanticise her elopement (for instance, as a measure of the love between two individuals), or idealise passion, sexual attraction, or love at first sight (as a sure sign of true love). By juxtaposing the courtship of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy with that of Lydia and Mr. Wickham, the narrator calls attention to the sociopolitical dimension of courtship.[26]

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[24] Betty Rizzo uses this term to describe the instances of "first impressions" in Frances Burney's work, where "the worthy suitors are known by their recognition of the *cri de l'âme*, the call of the soul – the instinctive recognition without proof, even against contradictory evidence, of one superior soul by another" (146).

[25] In this respect, Austen's novel is very different from many Victorian *Bildungsromane*, such as *Great Expectations* (Moretti, *Way* 182).

[26] Marilyn Francus has developed a similar argument about the mercenary-prudent question, more generally:

> Austen's depictions of the prudent and the mercenary raise questions of social discernment and moral choice: How can an heiress recognize whether a suitor is interested in her, or her money? How does a man with a

5.3.2.2 Mediation in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*

As the previous section suggests, discussions of Austen's plots tend to focus on the "completed" dimension of plot. Indeed, when the "unresolved" dimension of Austen's plot is mentioned, Austen scholars have traditionally emphasised that Austen does *not* prioritise, or even actively lessens, the immediate impact of her plots on the reader. In "At Home with Jane Austen," Deidre Lynch traces the history of a common argument: the idea that Jane Austen campaigns against sentimental and Gothic fiction, two genres that play to the reader's emotions in a very overt way. She traces the roots of this idea back to interwar critics like Q. D. Leavis, who tended to emphasise Austen's realism and her lack of "mass appeal" to distinguish literature from the best-seller, which was beginning to emerge during the interwar years (180-4; see Section 5.1, note 1).[27] In *Fiction and the Reading Public*, for example, Q. D. Leavis praises Austen's lack of "romantic idealism," the fact that she preserves a distance from "the emotional situations" she is handling, and does not tamper with "the reader's own mode of feeling" (Leavis 128-30). I could easily illustrate this with Austen's proposal scenes, since Austen's narrators tend to represent these with summaries (*Pride* 346) and humour (*Emma* 404; *Mansfield* 436). I want to focus, however, on Austen's representation of the two seduction sequences that serve as a point of departure for *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* and *The Child*.

   Austen's narrator does not represent Lydia's seduction "in real time," which she could have done by focalising the events through Lydia or Mr. Wickham as they live through the seduction. Instead, the seduction is mediated by the letters and confessions of other characters. The story of Lydia and Wickham gradually emerges from Jane's letter to Elizabeth (Austen, *Pride* 260-2), her account of Colonel Forster's visit (271-8), a note from Lydia (276-7), a letter from Mr. Gardiner to Mr. Bennet (286-7), Lydia's light-hearted account of her wedding (301-2), and, most importantly, a letter in which Mrs. Gardiner

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large estate determine a woman's true intentions? How do people with limited resources acquire more, without seeming or becoming immoral or unethical? How can one maintain moral probity, or fulfill romantic ideals, in light of the realities of personal finance? As Austen forces the reader to assess and judge situations and characters, the broader issues that frame the 'prudent or mercenary' question emerge: the fear of downward mobility; the desire to satisfy social, sexual, and financial appetites; and the fear of being duped, with the consequence of a lifetime of regret. Austen documents a society in a state of financial flux, in which anxious people grapple with the social consequences of fiscal change that are often beyond their control. ("Discretion" 57)

[27] In light of this, it seems significant that this argument reappears in recent discussions of Jane Austen rewrites. It can be argued, in other words, that Austen scholars have felt the need to stress the difference between Jane Austen's novels and Austen rewrites, and the irony of this difference, because Austen's popularity boomed in the 1990s. Screen adaptations, published sequels, popularising historical texts, and other products of "Austenmania" have given Austen's stories a solid place in the canon of popular culture, as well as the Western literary canon (Johnson, "Cults" 224; cf. Lynch, "Cult" 113). However, they have also blurred the boundaries between high and popular culture. Arguably, this has triggered a bout of protectiveness in Austen scholarship, in which the idea that Jane Austen campaigns against Gothic and sentimental fiction is recycled.

explains Mr. Darcy's role in the affair to Elizabeth (304-8) and Mr. Darcy's confession of his motives (346).[28] The actual events of the seduction, that is, are "hidden" behind layer upon layer of mediation. As I have noted, Elizabeth first receives a letter from Jane at Lambton, saying that their fifteen-year-old sister has eloped with Mr. Wickham (260-2). Jane explains the family received an express from Colonel Forster, saying that, during the regiment's stay in Brighton, Mr. Wickham convinced Lydia to elope with him to Scotland (260). Colonel Forster knows this because Lydia explained herself in a note to his wife (261). In Jane's second letter, she tells Elizabeth that it is likely that Mr. Wickham does not intend to marry their sister (261). One of Wickham's fellow officers told Colonel Forster that Mr. Wickham had no such intention (261). Jane also writes that Colonel Forster managed to trace Lydia and Wickham as far as the London road, but lost all trace of them there (261). She begs Elizabeth to come home with her uncle, so he can help their father search for Lydia in London (262). Elizabeth later learns that Mr. Darcy travelled to London too. When all is said and done, and Mrs. Lydia Wickham is bragging about her wedding at Longbourn, she accidentally reveals that Mr. Darcy attended her wedding (302). Elizabeth immediately writes to her aunt (302). Bringing together three levels of mediation, Mrs. Gardiner then writes that Mr. Darcy told Mr. Gardiner (who presumably told her in turn) how he found Lydia and Mr. Wickham (304). Mrs. Gardiner explains that Mr. Darcy came to London and convinced his sister's former companion to reveal where Mr. Wickham and Lydia were staying (305). He failed to convince Lydia "to quit her present disgraceful situation, and return to her friends as soon as they could be prevailed on to receive her" (305). She was convinced they would be married eventually (305). Mr. Wickham argued that Lydia's predicament resulted from her own "folly," because *he* only wanted to escape his debts of honour (305). He did not want to marry Lydia because he cherished "the hope of more effectually making his fortune by marriage, in some other country" (306). Eventually, however, Mr. Darcy managed to persuade Mr. Wickham to marry Lydia, for the right price (306). Mr. Darcy then went to the Gardiners, and convinced Mr. Gardiner to take the credit for his actions (306). In her letter, Mrs. Gardiner also tells Elizabeth that Mr. Darcy told them that he went in search of Lydia and Wickham because it "was owing to him, to his reserve, and want of proper consideration, that Wickham's character had been so misunderstood" (307). Still, when Elizabeth thanks Mr. Darcy for what he has done, he confesses that he "the wish of giving happiness" to her added "force to the other inducements" which led him on (346). As this summary shows, the narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* creates a distance between the reader and the seduction that takes place in the storyworld, hiding the events in question behind layers mediation. Arguably, this lessens

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[28] Notably, the same is true for *Mansfield Park*. Fanny Price, and the reader with her, learns about the elopement of Mrs. Rushworth and Henry Crawford via other characters—first in a letter by Mary Crawford (406-7), then in a newspaper article (408-9). Once again, the narrator does not focalise the events through the seducer or the seduced.

the impact of this "emotional situation" on the feelings of the implied reader, and draws her or his attention, instead, to Elizabeth's reactions and *Bildung*.

The seduction sequence of *Sense and Sensibility* is also mediated, this time through the character of Colonel Brandon. When Marianne Dashwood falls ill after Mr. Willoughby has abandoned her, Colonel Brandon tells her sister Elinor the story of Eliza, his father's ward (Austen, *Sense* 192-9). Colonel Brandon and Eliza fell in love, and were making plans to elope to Scotland (194). They were caught, however, and Colonel Brandon's father forced Eliza to marry his oldest son instead, so her fortune could be invested in the family estate (194). Eliza was grounded by her guardian, treated unkindly by her husband, and seemingly abandoned by Colonel Brandon, who had taken up a post in the East Indies to make things easier for both of them (194-5). Left without "a friend to advise or restrain her," Eliza had an affair and her husband divorced her (195). When Colonel Brandon finally returned to England he "could not trace her beyond her first seducer," and he feared that she had been living in poverty and "sin" (195). He finally found her in a "spunging-house," imprisoned for debt, terminally ill, and left with a three-year-old child to feed (195-6). Colonel Brandon placed the girl, who is also called Eliza, "under the care of a very respectable woman" (197). When young Eliza visited Bath at sixteen, however, she was seduced and abandoned by Mr. Willoughby (197-8). When Colonel Brandon finally received a letter from her, she was in the final stages of her confinement (198-9). She gave birth, and mother and child were removed to the countryside (199). Meanwhile, Colonel Brandon challenged Willoughby to a duel, but they both walked away unharmed (199). At the end of Colonel Brandon's narrative, young Eliza is still in love with Mr. Willoughby, but her "mind" is "tormented by self-reproach, which must attend her through life" (198). This instance of seduction is less refracted, and therefore less overtly mediated, than the account of Lydia's seduction. Yet it is still thoroughly coloured by the fact that it is told by Colonel Brandon rather than the victims themselves and by his view on "fallen women." When he is finished, Colonel Brandon tells Elinor he hopes this tale will help Marianne Dashwood see that "her own sufferings" are nothing compared to Eliza's, because they "proceed from no misconduct, and can bring no disgrace," only admiration (198). Although the story of Eliza and her daughter is not refracted through a series of letters and confessions, Colonel Brandon's account is clearly coloured by his own evaluation of their "misconduct." Once again, in short, Austen's narrator does not use textual strategies that heighten the immediate impact of the events on the implied reader—such as the anxiety that is commonly associated with angst. Instead, she gives centre stage to reactions that resonate with the ideology of the classical *Bildungsroman*.

5.3.2.3 Personal Happiness through "Intimate" Integration in Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*

More explicitly than Austen's narrator, the narrators of *The Child* and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* detail the stages that, according to Dannenberg, are typical of the

coincidence plot. They establish a "prehistory" or "previous relationship," frame and describe a "coincidental encounter," and create anticipation for a moment of "recognition" and reunion (Dannenberg 94; see Section 5.2.1). For clarity's sake, I will first focus on the plot of Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, because this narrative was written as a direct response to Austen's representation of the seductions of Lydia, Eliza Williams, and her daughter. In the Author's Note to the first instalment, Beth AM emphasises that her fan fiction text

> is a sort of mashup of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*. The characters are from *P & P*, but the tales of the two Elizas as told by Colonel Brandon to Elinor are integral to the plot I conceived. (Author's Note to Chapter 1)

Beth AM responds to the mediation that is implied in Austen's representations of "fallen women," and she draws attention to this "mission" in several Author's Notes and comments. In the very first Author's Note, she writes: "my main motive when I imagined what I wanted to write—those two women (Eliza I and Eliza II) that Jane Austen created—their lives so angered and saddened me that I was left wanting to vindicate them" (Author's Note to Chapter 1). In another Author's Note, she specifies this as follows:

> Though my mission is to right some wrongs that have haunted me since first reading *Sense and Sensibility* as a young woman, I am also attempting to be as true to the prevailing attitudes and morality of Austen's times as possible. Rape as we evaluate it was not acknowledged and there was little legal recourse when women were violated. All of society accepted that women were the responsible party with regard their reputations. The loss of their virtue was seen by prevailing attitudes as an attack on the men in the woman's life rather than an act that denied the violated individual the right of self-determination. In fact women had few rights and the topic of extending liberties to women was only beginning to be discussed at the time of Austen. A duel had traditionally been the way to avenge a violation. (Author's Note to Chapters 9-11)[29]

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[29] This is also confirmed by *Pride and Prejudice*, where Elizabeth remarks that Lydia has no brothers "to step forward" (269), and Mrs. Bennet fears that Mr. Bennet will challenge Mr. Wickham to a duel only to be killed (273). Beth AM's understanding of "the morals and scandals of Regency high society" is based on *An Elegant Madness* by Venetia Murray and records of court cases (Author's Note to Chapter 49). She notes, for instance, that she "there were almost no prosecutions for man-on-woman rape—man-on-man had more, but rarely among the titled folk. Even though it had been outlawed, a duel seemed to be the most favored way to get justice" (Author's Note to Chapter 49). At the same time, she admits that there are some elements in her plot that are not "true to the period" (Author's Note to Chapter 49). She doubts, for instance, that "any 15-year-old young woman would have been bold enough to confront Lord Wolfbridge and Mr. and Mrs. Darcy to demand money" (Author's Note to Chapter 49). She hopes, however, that she is "allowed to suspend belief. We all know Elizabeth Bennet is a remarkable character" (Author's Note to Chapter 49).

In another note, she adds that this situation is problematic, since it "sort of left a woman completely out of the equation. She was just property being defended not a human being with feelings and emotions that needed vengeance" (Author's Note to Chapter 49). Beth AM is very much aware that, while she is trying to tell her story in an "Austenlike way," she is "veering off the path of Austen with some of [her] characters" (Author's Note to Chapters 9-11). On the level of plot, she takes care to reward her "Elizas" with happy endings, and she punishes her villains while Austen does not (Author's Note to Chapters 9-11).[30] I will discuss how her "rewards," in particular, change the sociopolitical overtones of Austen's *Bildungs*plot.

Elizabeth's Intimate Integration

Beth AM writes the following about this "mission":

> BNWoTT is a story to learn from and to gain a realistic understanding of a harsh reality. Austen dealt with these issues though the culture did not allow her to treat them as I do. She was forced to look at the issues with 19th century prejudices, and I have the luxury of invoking 21st century sensibilities. Most importantly I get to reward a "fallen woman" with the prize of Mr. Darcy. . . . I believe the reward for you as a reader is in being part of the triumph. (comments to Chapters 1-5)

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[30] I do not have the space to go into detail about Beth AM's "punishments" here. Suffice to say that she takes care to punish her villains, even though Austen "was not particularly about punishing her characters" (Author's Note to Chapters 9-11). She is not alone in this. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Wickham is not really punished for his seduction of Lydia. In several Jane Austen fics, however, Mr. Wickham receives some sort of punishment. In several stories, he is punished by Mr. Darcy, the military, and the law. This usually results in physical harm, death, or deportation. In Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting,* for instance, Mr. Wickham tries to convince Elizabeth that he has some of Georgiana's love poems, in an attempt to blackmail the Darcys (Chapter 16). In the end, Mr. Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam search him out in an inn (Chapter 19). Mr. Darcy throws ale in his face and breaks his nose. Mr. Wickham tries to get away, but he is stopped by the Colonel's men. They throw him back into the ring, leaving Mr. Darcy free to break his jaw, hand, and a couple of ribs. Mr. Wickham is on his way to gaol, before the military authorities can try him for his desertion and debts (Chapter 19). In GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, Mr. Wickham forces himself on Georgiana but he is stopped by Mr. Darcy and his neighbours. When he is searched, they discover stolen goods on his person (Chapter 8). Mr. Wickham is tied to a chair in a nearby cottage, and fed drink until he confesses to his debts in the presence of a magistrate (Chapter 9). Mr. Wickham fears for his life, but Mr. Darcy and his neighbours ultimately decide to make him join the Navy (Chapter 12). Something similar happens in Jan H's *The Child* and Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*. In these stories, however, Mr. Wickham is "punished" by the other characters. In Jan H's *The Child*, Mr. Wickham is in bad shape after his kidnapping attempt. Nevertheless, he refuses to take Mr. Darcy's offer of a ticket to Virginia, three thousand pounds, and a doctor's appointment. Standing on the edge of a ravine, he tries to shoot Mr. Darcy dead. He falls to his death instead (Chapter 16). In Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, both Lord Wolfbridge and Mr. Wickham are punished—the first is murdered by Lydia, and the second is forced to go to the new world (Chapter 49, 50). Arguably, these punishments also make fan fiction texts more melodramatic. After all, they add an emotionally satisfying resolution to the narrative, in which justice is served. However, I want to emphasise that fan fiction texts such as *The Child* also complicate this drive for justice (for instance, by making Mr. Darcy equally guilty).

The coincidence plot of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* moves towards this "triumph." The paths of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy become entwined during the "prehistory" in London and Derbyshire, cross again in a "coincidental encounter" in Hertfordshire, and finally become one when they get settled into their life together at Pemberley. Beth AM's fic is different from *The Child*, because the prehistory is set before the events narrated in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This is clearly indicated by the author. In the first Author's Note, Beth AM explains that "Part I takes place five years prior to canon P & P and Part II is mostly set within Austen's timeline" (Author's Note to Chapter 1). Even though this narrative is partly based on *Sense and Sensibility*, the plot's prehistory has some ties with the canon of *Pride and Prejudice*. Austen's narrator suggests that Jane and Elizabeth often stayed with their aunt and uncle Gardiner "in town" when they were younger (Austen, *Pride* 137). Indeed, Mrs. Bennet exclaims that, when Jane was only fifteen, "a gentleman at my brother Gardiner's in town" wrote love poems about her (Austen, *Pride* 44). It is around this time that *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* begins.

Elizabeth Bennet is fifteen when she visits her aunt and uncle in London (Chapter 1). At the theatre, she becomes an object of interest to Mr. Darcy, who is trapped in a marriage of convenience to Anne de Bourgh (Chapter 2, 3), and to his cousin, Lord Wolfbridge (Chapter 2). While Mr. Darcy is fascinated by Elizabeth's joyful and intelligent nature (Chapter 3, 5), Lord Wolfbridge is sexually aroused by her childlike appearance and vulnerability (Chapter 2). Elizabeth visits Mrs. Anne Darcy several times, and she regularly meets Lord Wolfbridge at the Darcys' townhouse (Chapter 6). Misled by her cousin, Mrs. Darcy leaves her alone in Lord Wolfbridge's sitting room, and he rapes the young girl (Chapter 7, 10). Elizabeth first tries to escape, but when she sees that the situation is hopeless, she does everything in her power to keep her violation a secret to save her sisters' reputations—she does not scream for help, and she takes off her clothes before Lord Wolfbridge can rip them off (Chapter 7). Elizabeth manages to leave the house without the servants noticing, but her traumatised appearance rouses the suspicions of Mr. Darcy (Chapter 8). After he has walked Elizabeth home, he confronts his wife (Chapter 8, 9). She tells him that Elizabeth was infatuated with Lord Wolfbridge and became very distraught when her hopes were dashed (Chapter 9). Elizabeth cannot hide her secret from Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, however, because she becomes pregnant (Chapter 11). Racked by guilt and out for revenge, Mr. Gardiner and Elizabeth go to the Darcys' townhouse to reveal what happened and to demand compensation (Chapter 12). This leads Mr. Darcy, who is fighting his attraction to her, to believe that Elizabeth is "avaricious and unscrupulous" (Chapter 13). Mrs. Darcy, who has been unable to produce an heir, persuades her husband to offer Elizabeth a fortune in exchange for the child (Chapter 14). Elizabeth is furious at first, but eventually agrees because she is convinced that Mr. Darcy is a good man, and because she needs the money to safeguard the futures of her sisters and mother (Chapter 14, 15). After the birth of her daughter, Elizabeth makes Mrs. Darcy promise that she will tell Mr. Darcy that she carelessly left Elizabeth alone with Lord Wolfbridge (Chapter 21). She hopes that this

confession will make Mr. Darcy understand that she is not "greedy" or "wanton," so he can watch her child grow up without apprehension (Chapter 21, 22, 25). Elizabeth goes back to Hertfordshire, where she improves the prospects of her family but refuses to marry herself (Chapter 25). The Darcys lead a happy life (Chapter 22). However, Anne Darcy dies in childbirth before she can fulfil her promise to Elizabeth (Chapter 22). A few years later, Mr. Darcy goes to Netherfield with Mr. Bingley, in the aftermath of Ramsgate and at the urging of his children (Chapter 27). This is where the paths of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth "happen" to cross again, in much the same way as in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Needless to say, Elizabeth's *Bildung* is very different in this narrative. I have noted that Austen's Elizabeth learns the importance of "prudence" in courtship, and that this "mature" (or conformist) approach to courtship is thrown into relief by Lydia's "immature" (or nonconformist) behaviour (see Section 5.3.2.1). It is suggested, in other words, that Lydia's "disgraceful" elopement and her "unsettled" married life is the direct result of her vanity, a lack of guidance, and, perhaps most importantly, an unwillingness to learn. In *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, there is no such correlation between Elizabeth's character and her fate. It is true that Beth AM's Elizabeth is proud and vain, much like Austen's Elizabeth is. When she first meets Mr. Darcy and his cousin, Lord Wolfbridge, she is very "proud of her ability to converse easily with such important personages," and has "improper" thoughts about their looks (Chapter 5). When she is talking to Lord Wolfbridge and his father, Lord Elderton, the first thing she thinks of is "how envious the inhabitants of Meryton would be when she treated them to her re-enactment of this encounter" (Chapter 6). She momentarily feels out of her depth when the earl makes a lascivious joke, but it only takes a few other conversations with Lord Wolfbridge before "her pride at seeming to please him had been restored" (Chapter 6). Even when she is alone in a room with Lord Wolfbridge, and aware of the impropriety of it, her first concern is "not to offend this great man" (Chapter 7). To some extent, in short, the development of Beth AM's Elizabeth is grafted onto the main flaw of Austen's Elizabeth. Unlike Austen's Lydia, however, Beth AM's Elizabeth is willing to learn, she is prepared to "conform" to social conventions, and she *has* been taught to think on serious subjects—even though her education has been "haphazard" at best (Chapter 1). When the narrative starts, Beth AM's Elizabeth is determined to do her duty by her father, who has asked his daughters to remain "chaste" and not to be "too silly" (Chapter 1). Even at fifteen, she dreams of a life that exudes stability, financial security, and social responsibility: although she secretly dreams of a husband with a title, she could easily tolerate a "loving and content" married life with a "husband in trade with a prosperous business," "a house in town and access to London's cultural wealth," and "lively, well-behaved, attractive, intelligent children" (Chapter 1). Elizabeth is clearly aware how precarious the Bennet family's financial situation is, and even in her wildest fantasies she makes "certain her mother and sisters [are] secure" (Chapter 1). She is also aware that gentlemen, whether they own a small or a large estate, usually marry to obtain "an infusion of cash . . . to ensure prosperity" (Chapter 1). In this respect, Beth AM's Elizabeth is as

"mature" at fifteen as Austen's is a twenty. Yet she is "immature," or rather, "innocent," in other respects. Her sexual education is incomplete because her parents consider her to be too young for it. When Elizabeth asks her father to explain what "remaining chaste" means, for instance, he laughs and tells her that "she would learn from her mother soon enough" (Chapter 1). Indeed, while Mr. Bennet encourages her to read fairy tales like Perrault's "Little Red Riding Hood," he offers her "little help in applying the knowledge or how it helped in her quest to remain chaste and escape silliness" (Chapter 1).[31] In addition, she still looks like a child at fifteen, and is staying with her aunt and uncle to be away from her mother, who is pressuring her to "come out" on the marriage market (Chapter 1, 7). This makes Beth AM's portrayal of the "fallen woman" very different from Austen's portrayal of Lydia.

As a consequence, the development of Beth AM's Elizabeth draws attention to a different aspect of marriage than the development of Austen's Elizabeth. The events of the plot are no longer organised in function of a social integration, but revolve around the efforts of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy to become integrated in an "intimate" relationship. Elizabeth, in particular, learns to look beyond a life of social responsibility, entirely devoted to her family, and to have an emotionally and physically intimate marriage with Mr. Darcy. After her traumatic experience, Beth AM's Elizabeth can no longer bear the thought of this aspect of marriage. When she has just been raped, she feels "young and silly," and is acutely aware that she has failed to live up to her father's expectations of chastity and seriousness (Chapter 8, 13). She is instantly humbled by her experience:

> Lord Wolfbridge's despicable actions had forced the realization she was not mature enough to understand the motives of men… and maybe never would be. What arrogance to think that her extensive reading made her knowledgeable about the human condition. (Chapter 9; cf. Chapter 12, 13)

When she remembers that the Bible condemns pride and haughtiness, moreover, she begins to feel guilty about her "sin" (Chapter 9). Elizabeth also feels guilty because she did not fight Lord Wolfbridge, as an "honourable" woman would have (Chapter 11). When she finds out she is with child, she exclaims that God is punishing her and her family for her pride, and for not fighting (Chapter 11). Most importantly, however, she has also lost her "sense of security," and cannot bear to be touched by men (Chapter 8, 10). As a consequence, the prospect of marriage is dreadful to her:

> The idea of a man wholly unconnected to her touching her other than getting in and out of carriages was repugnant. How did women bear the marital bed? Submitting to those attentions seemed a very high price to pay for prestige and security. She was

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[31] References to "Little Red Riding Hood," such as wolves, big teeth, and red cloaks, are a motif in *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*. Naturally, this is because "Little Red Riding Hood" is believed to be a warning for rape.

certain she could never again go through what she endured yesterday. (Chapter 10; cf. Chapter 8)

When she arrives back in Hertfordshire, she is determined to keep her trauma a secret from her family, and refuses to explain the sadness in her eyes (Chapter 25). Still, she asks her father to convince Mrs. Bennet to keep her away from the marriage market (Chapter 25). This breaks the link between marriage and establishment that is so prominent in Austen's novel. Since Elizabeth has received a compensation from the Darcys, and returns to Hertfordshire as an "heiress," she no longer needs to marry to have financial security and stability. While the changed attitude to marriage of Austen's Elizabeth draws attention to the link between marriage and establishment, the development of Beth AM's Elizabeth draws attention to the "intimate" side of marriage.

Almost immediately, Elizabeth begins to focus all of her energies on social responsibilities, such as the need to give her sisters and her mother a life of stability and financial security. When she has just learnt that she is pregnant, she first thinks of the futures of her sisters and her child, and her responsibility to protect "the good name" of her family from scandal (Chapter 11, 12). She refuses to marry Lord Wolfbridge for the child's sake as well as her own (Chapter 12). It is true that she initially wants to "seek justice" through "vengeance," by making Lord Wolfbridge and Mrs. Darcy feel "some anguish" and by convincing them to buy her silence (Chapter 12). However, she also wants to be able to "provide the baby with an education if it is a boy," "a small dowry if it is a girl," and make investments so Mrs. Bennet is provided for when Mr. Bennet dies (Chapter 12). Indeed, she vows to emulate her uncle, and be "protective, loving, and devoted to [her] family" (Chapter 12). When she is persuaded to sell her baby for a fortune, she takes no pleasure in the money. After the birth, she explains that she cannot forgive Mrs. Darcy for feeling "entitled," and making her an offer she, in her circumstances, could not refuse (Chapter 21). She did not get the revenge she wanted and is now condemned "to live my life believing I have sold my soul to the devil," like Faust (Chapter 21). She also realises, however, that things could have been worse, and resolves not to waste what she has "been given for the bargain" (Chapter 21). She invests the money in her family (cf. Chapter 37). She never doubts that her need for revenge, in itself, was justified or "righteous," but she eventually comes to regret her decision to make demands altogether (Chapter 12, 14, 21,42). As she later explains to Mr. Darcy:

> I did not go to your townhouse that day to sell my baby; I was childishly angry and wanted reparations. My uncle and I have discussed that day, and both of us now agree it was unwise to have demanded the money. He had enough to take care of another child and to provide for his sister—my mother—when my father dies. The only thing I really wanted was revenge, but Mrs. Darcy thwarted my quest. She was both Portia to my Shylock and Mephistopheles to my Faust. She found a way to deny me my pound of flesh, and she made me an offer I could not refuse… twenty-three thousand pounds. (Chapter 34; cf. Chapter 37, 40)

This clearly shows that, initially, Elizabeth cares more about getting revenge and protecting the "honour" of her family than about the money in and of itself.

Gradually, however, Elizabeth begins to long for something more than a life of social responsibility. She begins to feel pangs of longing, "regret," and "anger at her interrupted life," when her sisters fall in love and prepare to be wives and mothers (Chapter 26, 27). Yet she is still determined to be an advisor to her sisters, especially when it comes to "propriety," "the need to protect one's reputation," and the way to assess the intentions of new acquaintances (Chapter 28). It is only when she meets Mr. Darcy again in Hertfordshire that she truly begins to long for more. Elizabeth has always been attracted to Mr. Darcy on a very deep level. Looking back on their first meeting at the theatre, she says:

> With Mr. Darcy, however, I thought he was reacting to me as a kindred spirit. He seemed pleased by something that was much beyond the surface. Sometimes I think it was my wit, and sometimes I think he envied the joy I felt that evening. (Chapter 18)

When she is in Derbyshire in preparation for the birth, a good friend of hers remarks that she and Mr. Darcy seem to have a "simultaneous attraction and antipathy for each other" (Chapter 18). In effect, throughout their relationship, they play a game of push and pull, becoming more intimate and pushing each other away again. Even before she gives birth, Elizabeth loves to make Mr. Darcy smile and laugh, but she is also aware that he fighting his "dishonourable" thoughts about her, and that he thinks she is "vulgarly mercenary" (Chapter 18; see below). As Elizabeth puts it at one point:

> She knew this was their great divide, and what kept him from having a good opinion of her. He could not see that she had a right to revenge. The norms of their society made her the villain. She had stepped out of her place, and he could not forgive her for her transgression. (Chapter 21)

This pattern continues in Hertfordshire. When their "coincidental encounter" finally takes place, Elizabeth quickly begins to suspect that Mrs. Darcy did not keep her promise (Chapter 31, 33). Although she tries to avoid Mr. Darcy as much as possible, he also stirs a longing in her she does not understand (Chapter 32). During her stay at Netherfield, she enjoys his repartee, dreams of him, and wants to make him laugh (Chapter 33). In addition, she allows him to touch her. When Mr. Darcy teaches her how to waltz, she is overcome by an "intense feeling of longing," and agrees to attend the Netherfield ball for the final dance (Chapter 34).[32] However, she is still not ready for the intimate side of marriage:

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[32] Notably, this increased intimacy also manifests in her relationships with the other characters. Eventually, Mr. Bennet reminds Elizabeth that it is "one of God's commandments to honour your father," and he forces her to tell what happened in London (Chapter 36). When he hugs her, see feels "almost no revulsion, and she even felt a certain sense of security, reminiscent of the feelings she remembered from childhood" (Chapter 36). Elizabeth tells

I cannot marry, Papa. I could not honour all of my vows, and I would fear what would befall me if my husband were to find out why. Dancing has always been out of the question. Oh, but just once, I want to go to a ball... and dance with a man. (Chapter 36)

When Mr. Darcy lashes out at her during their dance, however, her confidence suffers a blow: "That night at the theatre, he had seemed to be drawn to her mind and her joy… now she could only discern for certain an appreciation for her bosom and hair" (Chapter 37). For Elizabeth, this puts an end to their growing intimacy:

Mr. Darcy, you and I both know there has always been some odd form of fascination between the two of us which neither has any control over. It is, as you say, misplaced. Despite our best intentions of dismissing the other as not worthy of our concern, we always seem to gravitate toward 'reckless' interaction… . . . Or perhaps . . . we are instead the one documented case of Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism . . . The attraction is definitely useless in my case. . . . I am the female equivalent of a gelding. . . . Any semblance of desire ended almost six years ago, but you should feel gratified you made it to my list of half a dozen men whose touch I can abide . . . (Chapter 37)

The intimacy between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy is re-established at Rosings, when Mr. Darcy has finally put two and two together, and tells her he understands that she had a right to seek revenge (see below). He tells her he respects her, and mentally adds that he also wants to hold her and comfort her (Chapter 42). During Mary's birthday party, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy become more intimate, and she ends the evening falling asleep against Mr. Darcy (Chapter 42). When Lady Catherine condemns her behaviour, however, she realises how dangerous her situation is: "Marriage had never been her desire. She had been indulging in foolish behaviour to which she had no right these past weeks." (Chapter 43). In addition, Colonel Fitzwilliam tells her Mr. Darcy had a hand in the separation of Mr. Bingley and Jane, and seems to be doing the same with Georgiana (Chapter 43). She interrupts Mr. Darcy's proposal, making it very clear that he is arrogant and cruel to think that she would want to be connected to his "disreputable family," most of whom are "totally without honour" but "look down on everybody outside their circle" (Chapter 43). This makes Mr. Darcy think about Elizabeth, rather than himself (see below). He tells his cousin:

"We have not spoken of this, but Elizabeth also believes my admiration is purely for her body and that frightens her. She still has nightmares, and fears intimacy because of your brother's cruelty." (Chapter 44)

The following morning Elizabeth finally explains to Mr. Darcy why she cannot marry:

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him she "did not remain chaste, and I was very silly to be so filled with pride" (Chapter 36, 39). He reminds her that she was very young and still "did not even agree to be alone with him," after which he hugs her again (Chapter 36). This time, "she relished the security" (Chapter 36).

"As you know, my violation at the hands of Lord Wolfbridge, left me unable to bear being touched by any man in any meaningful way. A wife has certain obligations that I am convinced I would never be able to fulfil, and I made a promise to God that if he protected my family from scandal, I would devote myself to my parents and my sisters." (Chapter 45)

She tells him the details of what happened that day, using the word "rape" for the first time, and Mr. Darcy is shocked (Chapter 45). When Mr. Darcy hugs her, apologising all the while, she begins to feel the beginnings of intimacy:

She had felt apprehensive at first, but with every 'I am so sorry,' she began to feel warm and safe. When she thought he had kissed her hair, she felt a shiver and a little tug way down at the bottom of her belly—so many new sensations. He had called her 'dearest Elizabeth,' and it did not cause her to feel anger toward him, as it would have yesterday. . . . Elizabeth looked up at him and wished she could be back in his arms. The warmth and safety she had felt had been reassuring. (Chapter 45)

On her way to London, "her six-year denial of any possibility of romance" briefly asserts itself (Chapter 46). When Mr. Darcy saves her sister Jane from the attentions of Lord Wolfbridge's father, however, and prevents history from repeating itself, Elizabeth looks at him "as if he were a knight in shining armour" (Chapter 46). When they talk in private, she has "a look on her face he had never seen before," and she kisses his bruised hand, and holds it (Chapter 47). She eventually confesses to her aunt that she loves Mr. Darcy, his children, and his sister, and wants to be with them, but that she cannot accept Mr. Darcy's offer of marriage (Chapter 48). She explains her reasons for refusing him, and her aunt refutes every one of them, including her fear of intimacy (Chapter 48). When Mr. Darcy proposes again, she discusses her fears with him, as her aunt and a friend recommended (Chapter 48). He tries to convince her that they can have a marriage of "*strong affection, admiration, respect, and common purpose*" (Chapter 48; cf. Chapter 42, 44). He explains that, during his first marriage, physical intimacy only came with time: "That part of our marriage required time, trust, patience and communication before we 'worshipped' each other" (Chapter 48). He assures her that, even if that aspect of their marriage turns out to be impossible, he still wants her "companionship" (Chapter 48). Elizabeth does not give him an answer yet, but cannot stop thinking about his embrace and his scent (Chapter 49). Mr. Darcy continues to woo her by letter, and Elizabeth is eventually tempted to accept (Chapter 50, 51, 52). At Pemberley, he promises to never let her go and her eyes fill with light (Chapter 52). After the wedding, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth slowly move towards a "complete marriage" (Chapter 52). In the final chapter, they make love for the first time (Chapter 53). In the morning, they spend some family time with their children (Chapter 53). This suggests that Elizabeth's ability to have an "intimate" married life is the true crowning achievement of her development. While the development of Austen's Elizabeth is aimed at social

integration, in short, the development of Beth AM's Elizabeth is aimed at an "intimate" integration.

Mr. Darcy's Intimate Integration

At the same time, Mr. Darcy learns to reject what Beth AM's calls "nineteenth-century prejudices" about "fallen women." As was the case for Elizabeth, this development is grafted onto the main flaw of Austen's Mr. Darcy. In *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, Mr. Darcy's tendency to "think meanly" of the "sense and worth" of everyone beyond his own "family circle" manifests itself as a refusal to believe that Elizabeth, with her connections in trade, may be blameless (cf. Section 3.3.2.1). In the course of the narrative, he gradually pieces together the truth about Elizabeth's violation, and comes to realise that Elizabeth is innocent, rather than mercenary, and that Lord Wolfbridge is guilty of depravity, rather than "mere" dishonour. This development brings him closer to Elizabeth, and makes an intimate relationship possible. From the first, Mr. Darcy's assumptions echo the assumptions that underpin the representation of Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice*. As he is escorting Elizabeth home after her trauma, Mr. Darcy notices that the "joyful inner light" he saw in her eyes at the theatre is gone, and has been replaced by "sadness" and "perhaps a touch of madness" (Chapter 8). Mr. Darcy becomes convinced that Elizabeth is "unstable," probably as a result of "inheriting bad characteristics combined with improper supervision" (Chapter 8). Remembering that Elizabeth admitted at the theatre that she had read a "forbidden" book—namely, Laclos' *Dangerous Liaisons*—Mr. Darcy concludes: "If Miss Elizabeth behaved like this in the future, something dire was certain to befall her" (Chapter 8). This reasoning, namely that "dire" experiences are the direct result of a woman's "bad" characteristics, "improper supervision," and unwillingness to curb her behaviour, clearly echoes the representation of Lydia in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

However, when Elizabeth makes her demands, he begins to think that she, like the tradesmen she is connected to, is greedy and avaricious. This development is closely related to the development of Mr. Darcy's feelings for Elizabeth. Towards the end of the narrative, he explains this link as follows:

> "I realize now that I have loved her since the beginning of our acquaintance, but everything was so complicated. She was a child, and my attraction was abhorrent. Once she demanded money, I had an excuse for blaming her rather than trying to make sense of what I felt. It was proper that I never acted on my feelings as long as Anne was alive, but the way I treated Elizabeth was not right." (Chapter 44; cf. Chapter 18)

When Elizabeth and Mr. Gardiner come to Darcy House to make their demands, Mr. Darcy is quick to call her a "courtesan in the making" (Chapter 13). He cannot decide whether Elizabeth "merely helped with her buttons or consciously hoped to wrench filthy lucre from a viscount with poor control" (Chapter 14). He still assumes, in other words, that Elizabeth

is in some way to blame for what happened, even though he is already certain that Lord Wolfbridge acted "dishonourably" (Chapter 14; cf. Chapter 24, 45). As I have indicated, Mr. Darcy is eager to find fault with Elizabeth because he is repressing his feelings for her. However, the fact that he concludes that Elizabeth is "avaricious," "unscrupulous," and "greedy" is also due to his tendency to think meanly of those who do not belong to his "family circle." When Mrs. Darcy is trying to persuade him to raise Elizabeth's child as his own, he is reluctant to do so because of the child's connections to trade (Chapter 14). Eventually, however, he decides that Elizabeth's "poor behaviour" is the result of "improper and haphazard training not birthright" (Chapter 14). One of the reasons he agrees to his wife's plan is to "save" the baby from an upbringing by tradesmen, who would teach it to "value money above all else" (Chapter 14).[33] Mr. Darcy's "nineteenth-century prejudices," that is, are closely related to his pride.

Eventually, however, Mr. Darcy becomes aware of his pride and learns to break free from his assumptions about Elizabeth. As he watches Bethany grow up, he realises how great a sacrifice Elizabeth has made, but the thought of her "negotiating her pound of flesh" keeps flashing through his mind (Chapter 23). When his children are older, he begins to look for a woman "who could inspire passion of both mind and body in him and still be a good mother to his children" (Chapter 23). He is reminded of Elizabeth in Hertfordshire, but the memory of her is still tainted by guilt and prejudice:

> The remembrance of the other woman who smelled of lavender caused him to shudder with a wave of guilt. She had become the secret fantasy image he used when his body insisted he indulge. He knew she had most of the characteristics Bethany and Lewis had requested in a mother, and some he would also enjoy; but unfortunately, she was also morally deficient and decidedly mercenary. It was important that his children be raised with good principles the way he had been. (Chapter 28; cf. Chapter 29)

His experiences with Georgiana have changed his opinion of Elizabeth only slightly:

> Deep in his soul, he feared Edmund had taken advantage of her [Elizabeth], and somehow Anne had helped. Despite his anxiety about his family's actions, he clung to the belief that a well-bred young woman would not have allowed herself to be violated by a cad, even if he was a viscount. How could he say that when Georgiana's situation was not that different? . . . His mind as always returned to the most damning fact. Regardless of the circumstances, Miss Elizabeth had been intelligent enough to realize she could gain from her situation. . . . Her demands, given with unflinching purpose and cool disdain, definitely showed a lack of breeding. Georgiana would never try to turn such a situation into monetary betterment. . . . [A] proper young lady would have put up a struggle if someone were trying to compromise her. . . . Finally after three brandies, he succeeded in convincing himself that she had known what she

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[33] Ironically, Elizabeth fears exactly the same thing when she reflects on the fact that Mr. Darce married for convenience rather than love (Chapter 16)

was doing all along. She was from a different class… they did not have the same sense of propriety. . . . That class only cared about money… never about honour. (Chapter 29)

Still, he cannot reconcile everything he has learnt about the Bennets with this image, such as the fact that Elizabeth recoils from his touch and does not want to marry (Chapter 29). He is both drawn to Elizabeth and repelled by the idea that she comes from a "family of fortune hunters" (Chapter 32, 33). He cannot understand why she is afraid of him, and does not believe her when she tells him she is afraid to be touched by any man (Chapter 33). She tells him that her experiences with Lord Wolfbridge were painful, and that she is afraid that it will happen again every time a man touches her (Chapter 33). Elizabeth's words to not seem to sink in, however, and like "a little boy who had been denied a sweet," he persuades her to dance the final dance with him at the Netherfield ball (Chapter 33). Still assuming that Elizabeth was a willing participant, Mr. Darcy is only angry with his cousin because Elizabeth was "too young to understand what he was going to do and what she was allowing to happen" (Chapter 34; cf. Chapter 38). After Mr. Darcy sees her smiling at Wickham, apparently enjoying his touch, he jealously lays all of his charges at her door (Chapter 36). He later reads her letter of defence and realises that, in fact, "there was much about her to respect," and he is determined "to never doubt her or disrespect her again" (Chapter 39). When his cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, reveals that Lord Wolfbridge has a predilection for young, "childlike" girls and sadism, Mr. Darcy finally realises what Elizabeth probably suffered (Chapter 41).[34] This discussion makes Mr. Darcy see how blind his family pride has made him for the depravities that exist within his "family circle":

> "Are you saying you believe he raped her? But I had no idea a man from the highest circle—someone soon to become a peer—would stoop so low. I thought only brutes from the lower classes took women by force."
>
> Richard gave his cousin a look of intense scorn. "Darce, you sound so arrogant… uh and naïve and possibly a bit witless. Do your tenants make a habit of raping women? Are wellborn rakes more acceptable to you?" (Chapter 41)

When Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are alone, he apologises, and admits that she had a right to seek revenge and ask for money (Chapter 42):

> "My family treated you abominably. You had every right to be angry, seek revenge and ask for money. I have been intolerably rude to call you mercenary." (Chapter 42)

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[34] Notably, Colonel Fitzwilliam also helps his cousin understand by telling him the story of another rape victim. Colonel Fitzwilliam has tried to find love in Spain, but his beloved was caught carrying messages for the Spanish insurgents, raped by French soldiers, beaten up, and abandoned (Chapter 41). The "humiliation of the violation" ended her "will to live," and she died the following morning (Chapter 41).

It is only after Elizabeth refuses his proposal, however, that he fully realises that his family is "the cause of her dead eyes," and that it was arrogant and naïve to think he could persuade her to marry him (Chapter 43, 44). For the first time, he truly begins to think about Elizabeth, who is shaped by her experiences:

> What changes had Edmund's cruelty wrought in Elizabeth? The light in her eyes was rarely seen, and inevitably when he did occasionally observe it, he would rush to assume she was restored to that former joyous being… because that was what *he* wanted. (Chapter 44)

He concludes that the Darcys, Fitzwilliams, and De Bourghs are "a family of monsters, and I am one of the worst" because his "abominable pride" kept him from seeing the true nature of Lord Wolfbridge, and led him to assume that Elizabeth and Jane Bennet were fortune hunters (Chapter 44). In the course of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, in short, Mr. Darcy breaks free from the assumptions of his time, and to take the perspective of the victim.

Elizabeth and Eleanor

This move towards the "triumph" of Elizabeth is emphasised by what Alan Palmer would call the "cognitive narrative" of Miss Eleanor Harding—the counterpart of Colonel Brandon's first Eliza (see Section 3.2.2). Eleanor is first mentioned by Lord Wolfbridge, who wants to marry her for her dowry (Chapter 10). Elizabeth, who used this fact as leverage during her negotiations, feels guilty when she hears that Eleanor actually married Lord Wolfbridge (Chapter 22). She feels guilty because "her pursuit of revenge had been at the expense of this woman's happiness" (Chapter 25; cf. Chapter 38). Mr. Darcy later assures her that she is not guilty: "Edmund ruined all your lives" (Chapter 42). Similarly, Colonel Fitzwilliam later tells Elizabeth that Eleanor knows of her existence, and that she feels great compassion for Elizabeth (Chapter 43). Several characters refer to the history between Eleanor and Lord Wolfbridge's brother, Colonel Fitzwilliam (Chapter 22, 23, 24). As in *Sense and Sensibility*, however, it is Colonel Fitzwilliam who tells her story (Chapter 41). The stories of Eliza and Eleanor are very similar, but, significantly, the ending is different. Much as in *Sense and Sensibility*, Colonel Fitzwilliam and Eleanor fell in love, but while he was in Portugal, his brother charmed her into accepting *him* (Chapter 41). Colonel Fitzwilliam felt the "treachery" of his brother and the "betrayal" of Eleanor keenly, but eventually he came to understand her actions better, and decided to forgive his new sister (Chapter 41). When he returned to England, he saw that Eleanor regretted her decision, and was suppressing "the warmth of her heart," "eagerness of spirits," and "irreverence" that he loved (Chapter 41). He felt pity, which turned into compassion after she had several miscarriages (Chapter 41). When she begged his forgiveness, and explained how high the pressure of Lord Wolfbridge and her father had been, his love returned (Chapter 41). Eleanor is not treated kindly by her husband, and has come to hate him (Chapter 41). Here, however, the story of Eleanor diverges from the story of Eliza. Colonel

Fitzwilliam knows it would be scandalous for him to marry his "sister" if his brother died, and Eleanor does not want to have an affair with him—as Lord Wolfbridge once suggested—because she respects her marriage vows and does not want her husband to claim her money in a divorce (Chapter 41). Elizabeth only meets Eleanor after Lord Wolfbridge's has been stabbed to death by Lydia (see above, note 31). Eleanor and her son Eric visit Pemberley for the wedding (Chapter 50, 52). There, she points out that Elizabeth and she have a bond, but not because their children have the same father (Chapter 52). They have a bond because Lord Wolfbridge treated them both cruelly (Chapter 52). She then reveals that Richard is Eric's father (Chapter 52). She and Colonel Fitzwilliam made love but managed to disguise the consequences (Chapter 52). Eleanor tells Elizabeth Lydia did them a great service, and they would have named the child after her if it had been a girl (Chapter 52). She hopes she will be able to marry Richard eventually, and they do (Chapter 52; Epilogue). Notably, the narrator explicitly draws attention to the contrasts between the stories of Eleanor and Elizabeth, on the one hand, and the two Elizas, on the other. Eleanor tells Elizabeth her story resembles one she read in a novel, *Sense and Sensibility* (Chapter 52). She notes that it also contains a story that is similar to Elizabeth's:

> We are not told any of the particulars of her liaison. Maybe she was not really seduced, but violated as you were. How many young women are raped, but society blames them for the children they bore out of wedlock. . . . In the novel I mentioned, men callously ruined the lives of both those women I told you about. I rejoice, because unlike them, we will be triumphant. We are loved by good and honourable men. (Chapter 52)

This is the crucial difference between the seduction plots of Austen and the plot of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*. Jane Austen's narrator contrasts the "cognitive narratives" of Elizabeth and Lydia, highlighting the "maturity" and "triumph" of the one by depicting the "immaturity" and "unsettled" life of the other. The narrator of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, in contrast, draws attention to the parallels between the "cognitive narratives" of Elizabeth and Eleanor in order to emphasise that, in this narrative, it is the fallen women who are "triumphant." This plot, in short, produces a different ideology than the classical *Bildungs*plot of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

5.3.2.4 Immediacy in *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*: Elizabeth and Lydia

I have noted that several Austen scholars, including Q. D. Leavis, have argued that Jane Austen's narrators actively lessen the impact of emotional situations (see Section 5.3.2.2). This contrasts with the view of several members of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, who interpret Austen's works and her identity in accordance with their own goals, norms and purposes. In the forum discussion about "angst" I discussed in Section 5.2.2, two fans justify their preference for angst by referring to Jane Austen's work (comments to Terry,

"Needing"). They argue that angst is part and parcel of Austen's novels, but emphasise that she only portrays realistic difficult situations (comments to Terry, "Needing"). Unlike Leavis, these fans do not focus on instances where Austen's narrator establishes a distance between the emotional situation and the implied reader, but rather on the emotional situations themselves. This may explain why members of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* typically tolerate "angst" in Jane Austen fan fiction. This is also suggested by *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*. Beth AM's narrator uses ontological plotting to draw parallels between the "angst" in her narrative and the "angst" of *Pride and Prejudice*. The narrator introduces this counterfactual after two conversations that are hard to bear for the characters. Notably, the "angst" of the scenes is expressed in terms of the "gestures" and extreme emotions typically associated with such genres as the Gothic novel and sentimental novels. In the first scene, Mr. Darcy proposes and Elizabeth tells him he is ignorant, arrogant, and cruel (Chapter 43). She explains she does not want to be connected to his family, because they are proud and have abused her, and she cannot love a man who broke up Jane and Mr. Bingley and Georgiana and her suitor, Jamie (Chapter 43). She then tells him she has just received a letter from Jane, who has made the acquaintance of Lord Wolfbridge and his father (Chapter 43). Elizabeth breaks down completely when she thinks about what could happen to her sister:

> Her face exhibited momentary defiance, but then seemed to melt into madness. "If he hurts her, you need not fear. I will not ask for more money—I will kill him; and I do not care if they hang me." Her voice became ragged and hysterical. "I have a knife, and I am serious about my threat. What does it matter what happens to me? In so many ways, I am already dead. You, who have taken six years to get over your misgivings, will get the job of explaining to Bethany, Lewis and Georgiana why their friend was hanged."

> Lizzy shook her head in disgust. "Now, if this was a Moliere play, the audience would laugh at me for being outrageously melodramatic and nonsensical. Why did you not leave me alone when I asked? I am completely out of control." (Chapter 43)

When she finally looks at him with a haunted look in her eyes, Mr. Darcy is "overwhelmed with guilt because she had spoken the truth. His family was the cause of her dead eyes" (Chapter 43). They agree to meet the next day, so Elizabeth can explain why she cannot marry (Chapter 43). She also tells him that his wife, Anne, knew that she had come to Darcy House on her own, and left her alone in Lord Wolfbridge's sitting room (Chapter 45). This makes Mr. Darcy "close his eyes and moan," and his breathing becomes "laboured" as she continues (Chapter 45). When he hears how his cousin raped her, he is "disgusted," "distressed," and "ashamed" because he assumed that "she had fallen for Edmund's seductive charm," and was "to blame" for her predicament (Chapter 45). He admits that he "kept" his early attraction to her, and the guilt he felt over it, "at bay" by believing her "mercenary" (Chapter 45). While these two difficult situations, and the characters' reactions

to those situations, seem to be more intense than the situations in Austen, the narrator takes care to point out the core of similarity between the two. After Elizabeth has assured Mr. Darcy he is a good man, and nothing like Lord Wolfbridge, she thinks of the following counterfactual:

> If we had met for the first time when you came to Hertfordshire—what then? That same spark would have ignited, and there would have been no obstacles. You and I would have danced at the assembly, and our affection would have grown. We are well suited to each other and enjoy the same things. Our life could have been what you told Lady Catherine about Kitty and John's—affection, admiration, respect and common purpose." Elizabeth gave him a shy smile. "In addition, I could have made you laugh." . . . As he had listened to her scenario of love blossoming in Hertfordshire, he was not as confident as she that he would have acted appropriately. The same pride that had prevented him from seeing the truth about her rape might have kept him from acknowledging her worth despite his assessment of her inferior connections. Still, he answered her smile with a display of his dimples. (Chapter 45)

Here, the narrator juxtaposes the events of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* with a possible world that closely resembles *Pride and Prejudice*. The reader's attention is drawn to the similarities rather than the differences, however, and particularly to the impact of Mr. Darcy's pride on both worlds. This creates a parallel between the "angst" of Austen's storyworld and the "angst" that is portrayed in *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*.

This does not mean that all fans enjoy high levels of angst. Indeed, many fan readers are very apprehensive when it comes to extreme angst. This is suggested by the very existence of "angst warnings."[35] In an Author's Note to the first chapter of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, for instance, Beth AM warns her readers, in bold and capital letters, that her story is "about rape. It is not explicit, but it is very intense" (Author's Note to Chapters 1-5). She repeats this warning in the Author's Note that precedes the rape chapter, noting that she assumes "many who have read my story before will probably skip this post—not to mention those who are new to the material [and] are now probably completely freaked out by my warning" (Author's Note to Chapters 6-8). The author warns her readers, in other words, that her fic contains story content or, rather, that it makes readers imagine story content that may be distressing to them. This seems to be confirmed by comments to the first chapters of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, where several readers call themselves "angst weenies" or express concern about the level of angst in the story (comments to Chapters 1-5). This suggests angst, or at least extreme angst, is something several readers want to avoid.

It should be noted that I am discussing a reposted version of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*. When Beth AM started posting this version, she was clearly aware of the community's aversion to excessive angst. When one of her readers expresses concern about

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[35] I borrow this term, and the example, from the *Jane Austen Fanfiction Index* (see Section 5.2.2, note 12).

the angst level of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, Beth AM replies that even readers who are familiar with the original found certain chapters difficult to "relive" because "the material is not written in a sensational way" (comments to Chapters 1-5). Some even told her that "it is all **too real**—both for the Regency period—and with a few slight changes of circumstances the present as well" (comments to Chapters 1-5). In these comments, Beth AM associates the "angst" of her narrative with particular textual strategies. Some of these strategies are closely related to fantextual conventions, such as the emotional investment of the fan community in particular characters. Beth AM remarks the following, for instance:

> I have had others who are unable to tolerate the plot because it happens to Elizabeth Bennet. This prejudice is the most painful for me to hear. Rape is wrong regardless of the victim or the type of violation. Whether it happens to one who has come down for the ages as a most beloved character, like Elizabeth; or one that Austen wrote with numerous flaws like Lydia is not relevant. (comments to Chapters 1-5)

This suggests that, in this community at least, the idea that Lydia is persuaded to have sex when she is too young and naïve to give consent, and has a child out of wedlock, is easier to accept, or fits better into the community's idea of Jane Austen's storyworld, than the thought that Elizabeth has a child out of wedlock. Whether Beth AM approves of this convention or not, her narrative has a larger impact because of it. Her choice of protagonist cranks up the narrative's angst level and adds emphasis to the idea that rape is wrong. As one commenter puts it:

> The shock and horror of such an abomination being wrought on any woman is brought home by her being the Elizabeth Bennet we all love and admire, when she was even younger, sweeter and more vulnerable than when we knew her. (comments to Chapters 6-8)

This suggests that any discussion of the implied reader of fan fiction, and the plotting principles that are used, should take the existence of fantextual conventions into account. In this case, the way in which the community's emotional investment in the character of Elizabeth is used encourages fan readers to make sense of the events in emotional, sociopsychological terms. After all, the fantextual convention in question is used in such a way that it encourages the reader to feel first, and think later. This makes this textual strategy fundamentally different from the textual strategies used in *Pride and Prejudice*.

I want to home in on the plotting principles that are used to represent the rape and its impact on the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice*. On several occasions, Beth AM uses Author's Notes to draw attention to the textual strategies she uses, and some of these strategies are borrowed directly from Austen. At one point, for instance, she points out that she uses intradiegetic narration:

> This conceit of a character telling a tale has its precedent in *Sense and Sensibility*. Twice Colonel Brandon tells Elinor the details of what happened to the two Elizas

(mother and daughter). Several times in BNWoTT, I have had the dialogue become one sided to give some back story. . . . I thought I would try the plot device. (Author's Note to Chapter 44; cf. Author's Note to Chapter 53)

However, she does not use this "mediated" representation during the rape. Indeed, she emphasises that she tells the "rape completely from the POV of the victim—a perspective that rarely seems to get a voice" (comments to Chapters 6-8). In the part that precedes the rape scene, the narrator uses variable and multiple focalisation, showing the events from the perspectives of Elizabeth, Lord Wolfbridge, Anne Darcy, and Mr. Darcy (Chapters 1-6). As a consequence, the reader has a good idea of Lord Wolfbridge's desires and proclivities before the rape begins (Chapter 2). The rape itself is shown "in real time," focalised through Elizabeth (Chapter 7). As a consequence, the reader knows that Anne Darcy left Elizabeth alone with Lord Wolfbridge, that Elizabeth was not a willing participant, and that she only helped him undress her so she could keep her disgrace a secret (Chapter 7). The only part that is summarised and partly elided is the sexual act itself, because a traumatised Elizabeth forces her mind to wander to memories of Hertfordshire:

> When he was finished with her, she was unaware of exactly what he had done. Her eyes had remained closed throughout her ordeal and she had desperately tried to stay focused on pleasant images. She had felt pain occasionally and let out involuntary cries and moans. Somehow she had been conscious the sounds she made were pleasing to him. (Chapter 7)

The event of the rape is never unstable in ontological and interpretive terms. It is represented in such a way that there can be no doubt about what happened, or who the victim and the villain are. This is reflected in the instances of "liminal plotting" that are mentioned in the fan comments to this chapter (and two other chapters that were included in the same post). Many readers speculate how Mr. Darcy will react when he finds out what happened, and how his wife helped Lord Wolfbridge. One fan expects him to "question Anne," and to realise that "something is not right"; another wonders if he will "discover the truth behind her behavior? If he does, will he be outraged by his wife Anne's and the Viscount's behavior and will he be empathetic of Elizabeth?"; two fans agree that Mr. Darcy will be "livid" or worse "when he finds out what happened," "what role his wife played," and "what snuffed out Elizabeth's 'light' " (comments to Chapters 6-8). These expectations clearly contrast with the actual plot. As I have noted, Mr. Darcy is blinded by pride, and it takes him a long time to understand that Elizabeth is innocent, to acknowledge that his family members are to blame, and to respect Elizabeth's trauma (see Section 5.3.2.3). This clearly frustrates several readers, who feel Mr. Darcy "needs a smack upside his head to open his eyes to what is really going on," possibly "with something hard" (comments to Chapters 12-15). At least one fan thinks this is a testament to Beth AM's skills as a writer:

> I love this story and it is beautifully written. But just as with the original version Darcy continues to frustrate me with his inability to accept that Elizabeth was not a willing

participant in the creation of her child. But I think that speaks to the quality of the writing that it makes me so upset, if it wasn't good in wouldn't bother me as much. (comments to Chapters 19-21)

Similarly, another fan writes:

Yes, I must say I was a bit disappointed that Anne did not make her confession of her role in the matter of Elizabeth's violation to Darcy. I would have liked him to have a better regard for her, but I am sure that there are reasons that you wrote it this way so I eagerly wait to read further. I am hoping that he remembers parts of what Anne had said and perhaps he can piece it together later in the story as I do so hope he gets to understand that Elizabeth was an innocent in all that had occurred.. (comments to Chapters 22-24; cf. comments to Chapter 28)

This suggests that the narrator's textual strategy invites readers to look forward to an "intimate" moment, when Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth understand, love, and respect each other. This seems to be confirmed by other comments. One fan writes:

Then, when Darcy spent time with Elizabeth, I longed to have him move from his coldness and distance and to reach out to her, somehow. I don't know what I wanted him to do, but I long to see him 'get' her. (comments to Chapters 19-21)

The idea that the plot is moving towards a point where Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth "get" each other also underpins more specific instances of liminal plotting. One fan remarks:

So when and where will Darcy first come upon Lizzy? Will he espy her doing totally wonderful things - only to add more confusion of what he thought he knew about her, as he attempts to sketch her character? He is beginning to get information on her that seems to be causing a disorder of what he had assumed to be true about her. Will he be able to deal with it all and not be blinded by his own prejudices? (comments to Chapter 28)

Another fan remarks:

I like to see how Darcy and Lizzy are falling in love in spite of all their misunderstandings and problems. I like to see how Darcy's thoughts about Lizzy are evolving with time. How he is understanding her better and better. He is getting closer to the truth. (comments to Chapter 34)

When this moment of intimacy is deferred, one fan begins to wonder "how and when Darcy and Elizabeth will ever come together - appreciating, respecting and loving each other" (comments to Chapters 38-39). Another fan asks: "when will D&E ever come to an understanding???" (comments to Chapter 38-39). I believe that this effect is due to the way the narrator handles the rape and its aftermath. The representation of the rape scene invites the reader to imagine particular future events, which contrast with the events that actually follow. This heightens the "angst" level of this sequence. On the level of the storyworld,

the rape is "angsty" because it is a difficult situation for Elizabeth. On the level of plot, however, there is also a gap between conflict (Mr. Darcy's ignorance) and resolution (Mr. Darcy's understanding). This serves to heighten the implied reader's feelings of frustration and anxiety.

It should be noted that the fan readers of this story also worry and speculate about other aspects of the story, such as the punishment of Anne, Lord Wolfbridge, and Mr. Wickham (e.g., comments to Chapters 12-5, 26-7, 28, 38-9, 42), the fate of Lydia and Jane (e.g., comments to Chapters 26-7, 43, 47, 49), and the consequences of a wide range of events and deviations from canon. It is interesting to see that, in some cases, Beth AM uses Author's Notes and comments to answer particular questions, or to direct the reader's attention to new ones. One fan asks, for instance:

> I was just wondering...will Darcy ever find out about Ann's role with having placed Elizabeth at the mercy of his cousin, Lord Wolfbridge? And if he does, will he find this to be as despicable as he found Mrs.Younge's role with Georgianna and Wickham? Or will the differences in their classes be the shield that protects one's behavior from the other? (comments to Chapter 28)

Beth AM replies that "Darcy will definitely find out about Anne's treachery. In fact, the horror that his family has perpetrated will come crashing down on him" (comments to Chapter 28). This reply makes another fan wonder "how he'll find out" (comments to Chapter 28). Something similar happens for the speculations about the moment of "intimacy" between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. In an Author's Note, Beth AM remarks the following:

> I enjoyed the debate about whether Darcy deserves Elizabeth. Sadly, I think the more germane question is whether Elizabeth will ever be able to stomach the idea of marriage to anyone. Is there some man out there who will sweep her off her feet, love and respect her and have absolutely no qualms about what has happened to her? Will he offer her affection and companionship without marital relations? (Author's Note to Chapters 44-5)

Here, Beth AM picks up on the speculations of her readers, and steers their debate in a different direction—raising new questions for them to speculate about. This shows that the liminal plotting that occurs on the message boards of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* has a strong social dimension.

5.3.2.5   Personal Happiness through "Intimate" Integration in Jan H's *The Child*

Following Franco Moretti, I have noted that Jane Austen does not contrast marriage with celibacy, but with disgrace (see Section 5.3.2.1). While marriage facilitates social integration, disgrace makes social integration difficult or impossible. In *Sense and*

Sensibility, for instance, the young Eliza and her illegitimate child—the living proof of her disgrace—are literally removed from the community, and hidden away in the countryside. This contrasts with the plot of Jan H's *The Child*, where Lydia's illegitimate child helps Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth move towards a complete, intimate marriage. This narrative is focused first and foremost on the intimate integration of Mr. Darcy. Contrary to *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, the "prehistory" of this narrative is not set before *Pride and Prejudice*, but comprises every event before the meeting of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy at Pemberley. As I will discuss in Section 5.3.2.6, these events are not recounted "in real time" in the narrative itself, but the reader is clearly expected to be familiar with them. The point of divergence from canon is clearly delineated in this narrative. Mr. Darcy (the autodiegetic narrator) recounts that he fell into a deep depression after his proposal at Hunsford (Chapter 3). This inspired him to invite Mr. Bingley, Caroline, and the Hursts to Pemberley (Chapter 3). This ties in with canon, where Mr. Darcy organises a similar house party (Austen, *Pride* 236, 245). Both Jan H's and Austen's Mr. Darcy travel ahead of their guests, although Austen's Mr. Darcy sets out "a few hours" earlier (Austen, *Pride* 245) and Jan H's Mr. Darcy sets out "several days" before the Bingleys (Chapter 3). In *The Child*, however, Mr. Darcy suddenly realises that it is unfair to encourage Caroline Bingley's hopes when he cannot possibly make her an offer of marriage (Chapter 3). This thought makes him "turn around mid-way during [his] journey from Town to the country and return to London" (Chapter 3). He cancels the invitation and makes plans to go abroad with Mr. Bingley (Chapter 3). The narrative clearly suggests that this is where the prehistory of *The Child* diverges from the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*. Mr. Darcy is not there to hear about the elopement of Lydia and Mr. Wickham, or to find them in London (Chapter 1, 3). Mr. Wickham abandons a pregnant Lydia, who dies shortly after childbirth (Chapter 3). Two years later, Mr. Darcy sees Elizabeth Bennet again in London with "a" child (Chapter 1). Miss Bingley tells him that "a" Bennet sister eloped with Mr. Wickham, only to fall pregnant and be abandoned (Chapter 1). Mr. Darcy draws the wrong conclusions (Chapter 1). When Netherfield is robbed, Mr. Bingley insists that they return to Hertfordshire to investigate the matter (Chapter 1). On the road from London to Hertfordshire, they suddenly see Jane and Elizabeth Bennet standing by the side of the road (Chapter 1). It turns out that their horse has thrown a shoe, and that they are stranded with Fan, the child Mr. Darcy saw earlier (Chapter 2). This is how Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth "happen" to meet again.

As I have noted, the coincidence plot of *The Child* moves toward an "intimate" relationship between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. Before this integration can take place, Mr. Darcy has to overcome his pride and accept Fan, in particular. There is thus a close relation between the growing emotional and physical intimacy between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, on the one hand, and Mr. Darcy's personal growth, on the other. This in turn enables him to become a father to Fan. Mr. Wickham's kidnapping of Fan helps to effect these changes.

From Pride to Humility

Initially, it seems that Elizabeth's reproofs have given Mr. Darcy insight into his character, as they do in *Pride and Prejudice*. When Mr. Darcy recalls how he reacted at the time, for instance, his thoughts indicate that he regrets the manner of his proposal:

> Although her accusations had been ill-founded, formed on mistaken premises, my behaviour toward her at the time merited the severest reproof. It was unpardonable, and I soon grew to think of it with abhorrence. I confess that it took some time before I became reasonable enough to allow her words' credence. After two years, however, I realized without doubt that the day I had asked Elizabeth to be my wife, I could not have addressed her in a more atrocious way that would insure that she refused me. (Chapter 1)

After he concludes that Elizabeth eloped, he also regrets his decision to keep quiet about Mr. Wickham to the people of Meryton:

> At least, I should have warned Mr. Bennet and the other fathers in Hertfordshire society. But no, I had felt too far above simple country folk, too lacking in feeling for my fellow man, and too concerned with my own injured pride upon seeing Elizabeth's preference for the blackguard to do the right thing. (Chapter 2)

He later thinks that "Elizabeth had been correct to call [him] arrogant and proud" (Chapter 2). This seems to be confirmed by Mr. Darcy's reaction to Elizabeth's circumstances. When Elizabeth tells him that he mistakenly assumed she eloped with Mr. Wickham, for example, he realises that he has insulted her in "an even more horrid manner than [he] had done at Hunsford" (Chapter 3). In much the same way, he berates himself for leaving, and for putting his "selfish needs" first (Chapter 3). Jan H's Mr. Darcy seems to be "humbled," in short, much as Austen's Mr. Darcy is humbled by Elizabeth's reproofs.

"Seems to be," because from the very beginning, it is suggested that Mr. Darcy has not changed as much as he thinks he has. Before he realises that Elizabeth is not Fan's mother, for instance, he judges her and what he believes her circumstances to be by the criteria he uses during his first proposal in *Pride and Prejudice*:

> Her disgrace forbade any future with her that I might ever have contemplated. Of what had I been thinking? Once again, I could see that my decisions had been ruled by my heart and not my head. My desire to see her had robbed me of the good sense with which I had been born. Even if she cared for me, we could never marry. If my relatives, especially my Aunt Catherine de Bourgh, had disapproved of Elizabeth Bennet years ago (and I suspected that she had), I could only imagine their horror upon hearing that I was considering such a union now that her reputation had been tarnished beyond repair. (Chapter 3, cf. Chapter 4)

What is more, Jan H's Mr. Darcy still has a tendency to "think meanly" of those who do not belong to his family circle. When he visits Hertfordshire before his marriage, he still finds it difficult to talk to the inhabitants of Meryton:

> *Still arrogant,* I thought suddenly. Now, where had that come from? Did I truly believe I was above country society? I told myself that I did not, that I simply had nothing in common with them, but the memory of Elizabeth's condemnation refused to vacate my mind. I downed another brandy. (Chapter 4)

Using the phrase "told myself," the narrator indicates that Mr. Darcy suspects that he is, in fact, still proud. This suggests that, while Jan H's Mr. Darcy has been confronted with the same reproofs as Austen's Mr. Darcy, he is not yet completely "humbled."

In *The Child*, this flaw leads him to disregard "intimate" considerations, in particular. When Mr. Darcy learns that Fan is Lydia's child and not Elizabeth's, his first reflex is to try and expunge the "stain" on Elizabeth's reputation. To some extent, he is motivated by the same feelings as Austen's Mr. Darcy when the latter sets out to find Lydia and Mr. Wickham. Jan H's Mr. Darcy feels that it is wrong that Elizabeth and her sisters "should suffer the degradation that Wickham had inflicted upon them" (Chapter 3). Like Austen's Mr. Darcy, he wants to right the wrong that his failure to warn Mr. Bennet has caused, and take away Elizabeth's pain (Chapter 3). In doing so, however, he disregards such "intimate" considerations as the Bennets' love for Fan, and the child's emotional tie to Elizabeth in particular. In *The Child*, Mr. Darcy knows that the Bennets decided to raise Fan themselves even though they "knew it would be far better if she were reared separate" from them, because she is "the image" of her late mother, Lydia (Chapter 3). Mr. Darcy does not take this into account, and concludes: "The child had to be removed from Longbourn, and that involved Wickham!" (Chapter 4). Mr. Darcy tracks Mr. Wickham down in London (Chapter 4). He threatens Wickham, coerces him, and promises to pay him to acknowledge Fan and remove her from Longbourn so Mr. Darcy can "place her in a suitable position" (Chapters 4). As he is planning his scheme, he refuses to believe that the Bennets may not be willing to give up Fan:

> Would the Bennets release Fan to her father? Well, why should they not? Her presence was a burden and humiliation. The circumstances of her birth had destroyed their daughters' future chances, but in time and with luck, all memory of the child might fade among society. Would not the Misses Bennet find suitors then? (Chapter 4)

The motivations of Austen's Mr. Darcy are perfectly adequate under the circumstances of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*; in *The Child*, however, there is a discrepancy between Mr. Darcy's motivations and the circumstances. This draws attention to the fact that Jan H's Mr. Darcy does not take "intimate" considerations into account.

The main events of the narrative serve to make Mr. Darcy aware of these flaws. When Mr. Wickham puts his proposition to Mr. Bennet, the latter refuses because Elizabeth and,

to a lesser extent, her mother and sisters do not want to let Fan go (Chapter 5). Mr. Darcy arranges to meet Mr. Wickham again, and demands that Mr. Wickham use everything in his power to convince the Bennets that he cares for Fan, even though Wickham clearly could not care less about her (Chapter 5). The next time he goes out, he sees Mr. Wickham proposing to Elizabeth (Chapter 5). Mr. Darcy talks to her afterwards. Attempting to convince her to give up Fan to Mr. Wickham, he tells her that Mr. Bingley is hesitating to make Jane an offer of marriage because of Fan (Chapter 5). As a consequence, she seriously contemplates marrying Mr. Wickham and raising Fan far from Longbourn (Chapter 5). Mr. Darcy seeks out Mr. Wickham to tell him the deal is off, and begins to consider asking Elizabeth to marry him instead (Chapter 6). Terrified that she will refuse him again, Mr. Darcy hides his true feelings and offers Elizabeth a marriage of convenience instead (Chapter 6). As Elizabeth's opinion of him improves, however, and she begins to think of him as a "good man," he begins to doubt if she is right to think so:

> Sometimes I wondered if I had been less than truthful with Elizabeth when I said her rebuke had changed me, for I still found it painful to perform with strangers or even acquaintances. In truth, I seldom made the effort. Had I effected only the slightest of alterations in order to win her hand? Had I truly remained that arrogant, prideful man she had accused years ago?
>
> And speaking of truth—when had I become a deceitful man who plotted behind the scenes? I had lied to Elizabeth, her family, even Bingley to accomplish what I wished.
>
> "Would you still deem me a good man if you knew all that I have done, Elizabeth?" I said aloud.
>
> No, if Elizabeth ever learned that I had thrust Wickham upon her family, had approved, even conceived the idea that he should take the child from her, she would never forgive me. That fact I knew as surely as I knew my own name. (Chapter 12)

When Fan goes missing, Mr. Darcy receives a ransom note from Mr. Wickham, demanding the fortune Mr. Darcy promised in exchange for Fan and his silence about their deal (Chapter 14). Since Wickham was last seen boarding a coach to London, he decides to go to London too (Chapter 14). He wants to tell Elizabeth about the deal he cut with Mr. Wickham, even though he dreads the prospect, but she is fast asleep because the maid has given her a sleeping draught (Chapter 14, 15). In London, Mr. Darcy is racked with guilt (Chapter 15; cf. Chapter 12). He fears that Elizabeth will never love him when she finds out what he has done (Chapter 15). He tries to pray for forgiveness, and visits the church regularly (Chapter 15). He is clearly aware of his pride:

> If only I had never sought out Wickham in the first place...if I had never inflicted him on Elizabeth's family...if I had never considered myself smarter and wiser than others,

> then little Fan might still be sleeping safely in her bed at Netherfield. How could I live with myself when I had brought harm to that innocent babe? (Chapter 15)

He blames himself for his arrogant presumption, for bringing harm to Fan (Chapter 15). One night, he unburdens himself to the curate (Chapter 15). He knows that God will offer him "forgiveness, redemption, and the ability to make things right," but he does not know how he "will ever receive pardon" from the people he has "wronged" (Chapter 15). He tells the curate about his love for Elizabeth, and how he thought she was unsuitable; how he brought Wickham back into the lives of her family so he could make her situation tolerable; how he married her under false pretences, because he was afraid she would reject him; how he resented "a blameless child"; how that child was abducted as a result of his arrogant interference (Chapter 15). The curate assures him that Elizabeth may still be able to love him, and advises Mr. Darcy to confess all to her and beg her forgiveness (Chapter 15). With this, Mr. Darcy is truly humbled.

To reflect this, the implied author repeats the conclusions of Austen's Mr. Darcy. Not long after his discussion with the curate, Mr. Darcy finds Fan and they return to Hertfordshire (Chapter 16). As soon as he enters Longbourn with Fan, and notices how quiet Elizabeth is, he knows that she knows about his bargain with Wickham (Chapter 16). She confronts him as soon as they are alone (Chapter 16). He confesses everything, explaining that he devised his scheme because he wanted to marry her (Chapter 16). Elizabeth deduces that he did not propose to her because of Fan—that the "great Mr. Darcy could not bear the thought of making an alliance with such a discredited family" (Chapter 16). Using words that echo those of Austen's Mr. Darcy, Jan H's Mr. Darcy tells her:

> "I have done great wrong. I have thought only of myself and my desires. I have been selfish since I was a child, raised in arrogance and pride. And until now, I never knew myself."

> She raised her eyes to mine, a further expression of disbelief covering her face. "It seems that I do not know you, either, sir. You told me you were a man who abhorred deceit. How could you have lied with such abandon?"

> I closed my eyes in shame and shook my head. "I know not, Elizabeth. I was given good principles to live by, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Yet, until recently, I strove for honour. Why did I fail? I cannot give you a creditable reason, for reason had nothing to do with it. I have been like a man possessed, driven to obtain the one prize I desired, and willing to do anything to get it. I did not set out to lie, but one falsehood led to another. Before long, I had gone too far and could not see my way out." (Chapter 16)

Mr. Darcy eventually confronts Mr. Wickham, who shoots Mr. Darcy in the shoulder before he falls to his death (Chapter 16). After Elizabeth has nursed him back to health, he asks her what she thinks of him (Chapter 17). She refuses to berate him, saying:

"I have borne witness to your suffering, William. During those two days that you lay in an insensible state, you cried out against yourself repeatedly—vile, despicable accusations. I saw how your conscience afflicted you. Nothing I say could equal the torment you have already imposed upon yourself." (Chapter 17)

While it takes some time before Elizabeth can forgive him, this passage clearly shows that Mr. Darcy is well and truly humbled.

Mr. Darcy and Fan

I have noted that, initially, Mr. Darcy does not take "intimate" considerations into account. Indeed, he does not seem to understand why the Bennets, and Elizabeth in particular, give such weight to them. When the Bennets refuse to release Fan to Mr. Wickham, Mr. Darcy is baffled:

> Which daughter could possibly object to removing the cause of their shame? Why had they not been comforted by the solution set before them? Did they not wish to marry well? (Chapter 5)

This reaction contrasts with Elizabeth's. After he has witnessed Mr. Wickham's proposal, Mr. Darcy invites Elizabeth to confide in him (Chapter 5). She explains that she does not "trust Mr. Wickham" and that she cannot let Fan go to a school for illegitimate children, subjecting her "to the misery of leaving the only family she knows, the only people who love her" (Chapter 5). While Mr. Darcy puts the family's reputation above the emotional needs of the child, in other words, Elizabeth thinks first and foremost of the child's well-being.

In the course of the narrative, Mr. Darcy comes to adopt Elizabeth's point of view. When he first begins to consider proposing to Elizabeth, his greatest concern is Fan:

> The thought of Elizabeth as my wife filled me with pleasure while rearing Wickham's child as my own left a bitter taste in my mouth. Did I love her enough to take the child, too? (Chapter 6)

Even in his most optimistic fantasies, he learns to "eventually tolerate the child" (Chapter 6). When he asks Mr. Bennet permission to propose to Elizabeth, his thoughts reveal that, while Mr. Darcy is willing to provide for Fan and allow Elizabeth to raise her, the thought of "nurturing Wickham's offspring" himself makes him feel "as though someone had placed [his] head in a vise" (Chapter 6). During his proposal, he makes it very clear that

> "[t]o feel affection for a child of Wickham's is beyond my ability at present, but be assured that she will not be slighted in my household. It is common practice for a man of my position to rear his ward. The child will want for nothing, and she will, of course, have a place at the table with my own children." (Chapter 6)

He also assures her that he will not demand that they produce these heirs before she is ready (Chapter 6). Finally, he tells Elizabeth that the woman he loves does not love him, so he does not lose anything in the bargain (Chapter 6). While he first hopes that he will be able to win Elizabeth's affections in the course of their marriage, and tries to be alone with Elizabeth on their way to London, he is soon annoyed because Fan claims her attention (Chapter 7). The closer he observes Fan, the more he sees "Wickham's imprint upon her features" (Chapter 7). This makes him wonder if he will "*ever be able to hold her in any regard*" (Chapter 7). When Elizabeth retires early on their wedding night, he goes out to drown his sorrows, and begins to fear that Elizabeth will avoid him as much as possible (Chapter 7). A few days later, Fan finds him sleeping in the library and starts pulling his hair (Chapter 8). Mr. Darcy can tell Elizabeth finds this amusing, and he blames Fan:

> Unaccustomed to being the butt of anyone's joke, a growing resentment settled in my heart toward the child. If not for her, my wife's attentions might be gracious and warm, rather than mocking. If not for her, I might have awakened in my own bed with my wife lying in my arms. If not for her…
>
> Oh yes, I began to resent Wickham's spawn. Unfortunately, as the weeks of my marriage passed, the deeper my resentment grew. (Chapter 8)

Annoyed by Fan's tendency to monopolise Elizabeth's attention, give her nursemaid the slip, and wander around the house unsupervised, Mr. Darcy hires a professional nurse without consulting Elizabeth (Chapter 8). While Elizabeth feels that a nurse should be "warm and loving," Mr. Darcy thinks the nurse should "train" Fan, and teach her "her proper place" (Chapter 8):

> "Even you, growing up without a governess, can see that a child in *my* house must be reared with more discipline. How can she take her place in society if she is allowed to grow up wild and untamed? She will embarrass us at every turn!" (Chapter 8)

Elizabeth concludes that he thinks she and her sisters are "wild," "untamed," and embarrassing—which Mr. Darcy denies (Chapter 8). He also assures her that Fan's "proper place" is not in the attic or with the servants, but that he simply wants Fan to understand that she cannot interrupt their lives at every turn (Chapter 8). They come to an understanding, and agree that they still need to learn how to behave as husband and wife (Chapter 8). Though there are a few setbacks, such as Mr. Darcy's unwillingness to call on the Gardiners with Elizabeth (Chapter 8),[36] their intimacy continues to grow. After a visit

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[36] As this suggests, Mr. Darcy's growing closeness to Fan and its effect on his relationship with Elizabeth is mirrored in his attitude towards Elizabeth's relations. When Mr. Darcy finally meets the Gardiners, this meeting improves Elizabeth's opinion of him, as it does at Pemberley in Austen's novel (Chapter 10). This leads Mr. Darcy to conclude: "Did I dare hope that my overtures toward her family might thaw our own relations a bit further?" (Chapter 10). In this respect, the plot of *The Child* clearly resonates with the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* (see Section 3.3.2.1).

from Lady Catherine (Chapter 8), Elizabeth begins to see that Mr. Darcy is risking his reputation by taking in Wickham's illegitimate child, and she believes that their marriage is depriving him of a life with the woman he loves (Chapter 9). Mr. Darcy points out that she has deprived herself of a marriage for love too, and Elizabeth answers that she married him for love of Fan (Chapter 9). He assures her that he still has his love for Pemberley, too (Chapter 9). It soon becomes clear, however, that something is shifting in Mr. Darcy's attitude toward Fan. When Mr. Bennet falls ill, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy travel to Netherfield with Fan (Chapter 9). Responding to Miss Bingley's barbs about the child, Mr. Darcy replies:

> "The child is now my ward, Miss Bingley. I signed the papers right before we left Town. We have become a family." Although my comments were directed at Bingley's sister, my eyes were upon Elizabeth. (Chapter 9)

When the nursemaid loses Fan at Netherfield, and Mr. Darcy finds her curled up in Elizabeth's wardrobe, he comforts her (Chapter 10). As a consequence, he begins to change his opinion of Fan:

> The child really was rather fetching. I could still feel her tiny arms around my neck and the warmth of her little body sitting on my lap. But still, there was no excuse for the upheaval she had caused at Netherfield. (Chapter 10)

As this comment suggests, Mr. Darcy still keeps his distance from Fan. When he asks Elizabeth if it is wise to let Fan call her "Mamá," it becomes clear that Elizabeth feels Fan needs parents, while Mr. Darcy thinks she needs guardians (Chapter 10). He admits that he finds Fan's closeness to Elizabeth unsettling because he "never thought to hear any child call [her] Mamá but [his]" (Chapter 10). After Fan has spent a couple of days at Longbourn, he helps Elizabeth put Fan to bed, even though he is reluctant to hold her at first (Chapter 11). When he is the one who figures out that Fan is trying to tell them that she saw her nursemaid with a man, he gets a "feeling of well-being" at their moment of understanding (Chapter 11).

Mr. Darcy only truly realises how much he has come to care for Fan, however, when Mr. Wickham kidnaps her. Mr. Darcy has been aware for a while that Mr. Wickham has returned to the neighbourhood (Chapter 12, 13). He becomes worried when, returning from a shooting party, the servants tell him that Fan and the nursemaid are missing (Chapter 13). Mr. Darcy feels guilty for not checking on her, even though Elizabeth does not blame him, and his uneasiness grows as the search continues (Chapter 13). He is horrified when he reads Mr. Wickham's ransom note, and realises that "[t]he rogue has possession of that innocent little girl" (Chapter 14). When he cannot find Fan in London, he becomes even more worried:

> The more time that passed, the more I worried about the condition of the child. Had Fan even survived the first night's abduction? A tremor ran over me at the thought of

the little girl out in that weather! Surely, that ignorant Maggie knew enough to protect her young charge from the elements. What was I thinking? The maid could not even keep up with the child in the house! (Chapter 15)

When a Mr. Barlow tells him that one of his servants is harbouring the nursemaid and Fan, and takes him to them, Mr. Darcy is grateful and happy to see Fan (Chapter 15). He takes her back to Hertfordshire, and when Fan tells him she loves "Papá," he loses his "heart for the second time" (Chapter 15). This increased intimacy pushes Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth closer together after their argument has driven a wedge between them:

> Naturally, Elizabeth crossed the expanse between us and reached out to take Fan from me, but that was not the little girl's wish. With one arm, she clasped Elizabeth's neck while keeping the other arm firmly around mine, thus drawing the three of us close. "Mamá and Papá," she announced with a triumphant squeal.
>
> Losing her balance, Elizabeth fell against me slightly, and I instinctively reached out to steady her, placing my hand at her waist. She immediately stiffened and, within moments, we parted in a somewhat awkward act. (Chapter 16)

When Wickham contacts them again, it is clear that Mr. Darcy is fully invested in his family: "She is our child," I said, "and this is my responsibility. I will protect her and you with my life" (Chapter 16). After his confrontation with Mr. Wickham, seeing Fan does him as much good as seeing Elizabeth:

> Seeing the child had done me great good like a medicine. I had not realized how hungry I was to view her sparkling brown eyes and hear the infectious giggles that erupted quite frequently. And when she called me Papá, it warmed my heart as much as it had upon hearing it for the first time. (Chapter 17)

His growing bond with Fan eventually brings him closer to Elizabeth:

> Elizabeth and I had made gradual progress in making peace between us. I am not certain how much involved her journey toward forgiveness of me—for we had not discussed the subject again—and how much was due to my growing relationship with Fan.
>
> The child besieged me with affection whenever we encountered each other, and I responded in kind. I know not whether it was her own winsome personality or the threat of losing her that had untied the knots in my heart. I simply know that she brought me constant delight. I discovered that she possessed a keen intelligence and a natural curiosity. I took great pleasure in hearing each new word she learned to pronounce, and when she crawled into my lap begging for a story, I was more than pleased to read to her. I began to wonder why I had ever considered her a burden.
>
> And Elizabeth did not fail to notice. (Chapter 17)

In the epilogue, Mr. Darcy leaves no doubt about his affection for his daughter:

> I know not when I began to think of the child as my daughter. Perchance, the seed was planted when she first called me Papá on the ride from London to Longbourn. At the time, however, I was reeling from all that had transpired in our lives, and I failed to appreciate the truth of the matter. I only know that it did not take long before I found myself forgetting that Wickham had fathered her. As the years passed, and she grew into a beautiful, obedient but lively lass under Elizabeth's gentle guidance, I rarely thought of Fan's natural parentage. (Chapter 18)

Mr. Darcy does not only overcome his pride, in other words, but also learns to be a father to Fan—seeing the value of "intimate" considerations.

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth: Emotional and Physical Intimacy

In *The Child*, emotional and physical intimacy are two sides of the same coin, which reflect and reinforce each other. When Elizabeth marries Mr. Darcy, they both keep their distance on an emotional level. Involuntarily, however, they take steps toward physical intimacy. Having attended to Fan on their wedding night, in the middle of the night and in a new house, Elizabeth accidentally climbs into Mr. Darcy's bed rather than her own (Chapter 7). She snuggles up to him in her sleep, and he starts to kiss her in his (Chapter 7). While Elizabeth is the one who, unconsciously, takes the initiative, and kisses Mr. Darcy back when he, unconsciously, follows through, the intimacy evaporates as soon as Elizabeth wakes up (Chapter 7). However, it gives Mr. Darcy a taste of physical intimacy, and he craves it more than ever (Chapter 7, 8). Elizabeth, in contrast, initially distances herself from him, because she is convinced that his absence on their wedding night and his experience as a kisser suggest that he has a mistress (Chapter 7). When he angrily tells her that he has not, she finally agrees to spend time with him (Chapter 7). When Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy travel to Hertfordshire to nurse Mr. Bennet back to health, they agree to share a room at Netherfield because they do not want the servants or their hosts to find out that their "marriage was not all that it appeared" (Chapter 9, 10). They agree to share the bed with a pillow between them (Chapter 9). Mr. Darcy is still overwhelmed by desire and love, however (Chapter 9). The next morning, Elizabeth helps him undress to keep up the pretence (Chapter 10). When they are in bed after a long night of Christmas celebrations with the Bennets, Elizabeth offers him her hand, allows him to kiss it, and uses his first name for the first time (Chapter 11). After he has helped her put Fan to bed, Elizabeth tells him that she is trying to reach a point where they can consummate the marriage (Chapter 11). She asks him to start slowly, and he kisses her goodnight (Chapter 11). He goes to the library afterwards, because he may act on his desire if he stays (Chapter 11). He is happy with their progress, but wonders: "Would she ever come to me with a longing that matched mine, or would it only be in grim fulfilment of her marital duty?" (Chapter 11). The next morning, Elizabeth jokingly tells Mr. Darcy that she is grateful to Mr. Bingley:

> "I confess I did not anticipate that marriage could be like this."
>
> I looked up. "Like this?"
>
> "This snug, cozy beginning to the day—I feared that we might never feel this comfortable with one another. I believe we owe Mr. Bingley our gratitude."
>
> "Bingley?"
>
> "By forcing us to share this suite of rooms. I think it has lessened the distance between us in this marriage of convenience, do you not?"
>
> I nodded. (Chapter 12)

The following night, he lets his kiss linger (Chapter 12). The morning after that, she has removed the pillow and allows him to touch and kiss her wrist, to watch her get out of bed, and she kisses him (Chapter 13). When Mr. Darcy prepares to search the countryside for the kidnapped Fan, he and Elizabeth share their first public kiss (Chapter 13). He returns without Fan, and Elizabeth's anguish brings them closer together[37]:

> When I shook my head, tears spilled down her cheeks. My heart ached at her anguish. I took her by the shoulders and gathered her into my arms where she cried upon my chest. (Chapter 13)

Similarly, Mr. Darcy takes care of Elizabeth after she has gone out to look for Fan on her own, and he finds her in the snow with a twisted ankle and hypothermia (Chapter 14). While Mr. Darcy is in London searching for Fan, Elizabeth becomes more distant. She does not reply to any of his letters, and he wonders why she does not "share her worry and fear over Fan" with him (Chapter 15). When he returns to Hertfordshire, it is clear that their emotional intimacy has disappeared. During their argument, Elizabeth suggests that she does not love or trust Mr. Darcy (Chapter 16). This lack of emotional intimacy is also reflected in their physical intimacy: when Mr. Darcy tries to reach for her hand, she does not want him to touch her (Chapter 16). In fact, she sends him to Netherfield, out of her presence (Chapter 16). When Fan forces them to touch, Elizabeth stiffens and distances herself as soon as possible (Chapter 16). The ordeal with Mr. Wickham, however, serves to bring them together again. When Mr. Darcy declares that he will meet Mr. Wickham on his own, to protect Elizabeth and Fan, their intimacy increases:

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[37] In this respect, the suffering of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy has the same function as the suffering in a Hurt/Comfort story (cf. Bacon-Smith 255). Ultimately, it is not about the suffering itself, but about the result of the suffering. It helps Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy overcome the obstacles that stand between them—in this case, the obstacles that stand between them and emotional and physical intimacy.

I knew not the meaning of the look that passed between us. She seemed to implore me with her eyes not to engage in this undertaking. Was I hoping for too much? Did she care for me in spite of the wrong I had done? Or was her concern simply apprehension she would feel for anyone contemplating a situation fraught with danger? (Chapter 16)

Elizabeth does not return to Longbourn, and he hopes that she cares enough to wait until he has returned unharmed (Chapter 16). He goes to the meeting point, and when Mr. Wickham draws a gun, Elizabeth appears behind her husband (Chapter 16). They hold hands (Chapter 16). Mr. Wickham retreats, trips, and fires his gun as he keels backwards into a ravine, shooting Mr. Darcy in the shoulder (Chapter 16). Just like Elizabeth's suffering, Mr. Darcy's suffering brings them closer together again. Elizabeth nurses him back to health (Chapter 17). When he is well enough, they discuss their situation, and he finally admits that he has always loved her—that the "other" woman he loves is her (Chapter 17). She is happy to hear that he did not marry her out of pity, and begins to see nobility in his actions (Chapter 17). By the time they leave for Pemberley, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy have made "gradual progress in making peace between" them—partly due to his growing intimacy with Fan (Chapter 17). When they visit the bedroom they shared at Netherfield one last time, they reflect how circumstances (such as sleeping together, reading together, talking together, looking for Fan, and nursing each other back to health) have forced them to grow closer to one another and to Fan—before Mr. Darcy's confession tore them apart (Chapter 17). Elizabeth concludes:

> "Our intimacy was founded on dishonesty. That is not the basis for a true marriage. Perchance, it took all the horror we experienced to bring us to this moment." (Chapter 17)

She then confesses that she tried to hate him but could not, because she loves him (Chapter 17). Finally, they are ready for a true, "intimate" marriage:

> I breathed her name and gathered her into my arms, placing her head on my chest. I could feel her resistance, her reluctance to give herself completely, but little by little, I sensed that she was yielding until at last she surrendered and leaned into my embrace. Our hearts beat in unison, as I cradled her. Slowly, she raised her face to meet mine. I placed my lips on hers, and all the tension I had borne for so long flowed out of me. I had found my way home after a tumultuous voyage. Again and again, I captured her mouth. I wished for this ecstasy to go on and on, but it was not long before she pulled away.

> Clasping hands, we stood at arms' length. "Not yet. Not here, William. This room holds too many ghosts. Let us begin anew at Pemberley." (Chapter 17)

As soon as they arrive at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy helps Elizabeth put Fan to bed and he explains that Pemberley belongs to the three of them (Chapter 18). The implied author

emphasises this final move towards intimacy by drawing parallels between the plot of *The Child* and the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, and particularly the 1995 BBC/A&E adaptation. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy visit the portrait gallery of Pemberley (Chapter 18). There, Elizabeth tells Mr. Darcy that she wanted to get to know him after she saw his portrait when she first visited Pemberley (Chapter 18). This creates the impression that, on this second visit, the protagonists are picking up where they left off before the point of divergence from canon. In effect, their visit to the portrait gallery make Jan H's Mr. Darcy hope that Elizabeth began to love him much earlier than he thought (Chapter 18). This is confirmed by their visit to the music room, where Elizabeth sings "Voi Che Sapete"—as she does during her visit to Pemberley in the adaptation (Chapter 18; Sc. 25). In the adaptation, the protagonists exchange a loving gaze during this scene (Sc. 25; see Section 1.3.3.2). In *The Child*, the song is similarly associated with Elizabeth's growing feelings for Mr. Darcy. She confesses that she was drawn to "Voi Che Sapete" after her refusal at Hunsford (Chapter 18). Mr. Darcy is elated that Elizabeth's love "had its beginning" before he made his second proposal at Longbourn (Chapter 18). That night, they make love for the first time (Chapter 18). While the narrator briefly mentions the fates of the Bennets, Georgiana's family, Lady Catherine, and the Bingleys in the epilogue, he devotes most of his attention to the fate of their children, and particularly Fan (Chapter 18). The narrative ends when Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy look back on his relationship with Fan on the eve of her wedding, and with Elizabeth promising that she will always love Mr. Darcy (Chapter 18). This ending clearly emphasises that the plot moves towards the integration of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy in an "intimate" family, rather than society as a whole. In doing so, this plot organisation encourages the reader to understand the events of the plot in sociopsychological terms.

5.3.2.6 Immediacy in *The Child:* the Recognition and Reunion of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy

I have noted that the fan readers of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* anticipate a moment of "recognition" and "reunion" between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet.[38] That

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[38] As in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the moments of "recognition" and "reunion" are fundamentally romantic: they refer, not to the recognition and reunion of long-lost family members, but to the moment when the lovers recognise their feelings for one another, and are united as a couple (Dannenberg 95-6). Like most formulaic "romances," such as the ones published by Harlequin or Mills & Boon, the romantic plots of Jane Austen fan fiction have a very clear "moral" (Cawelti 38). They prove the power of love, demonstrating its force and permanency in the face of difficulties (41-2). They tend to express a "moral fantasy," in other words, in which love is "triumphant" and has a "lasting" impact—in which love lasts eternal (41-2). In Jane Austen fan fiction, this "fantasy" is not just implied by the love stories themselves—although most fan fiction texts recount how Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, in particular, overcome "social" and "psychological barriers" and develop a strong and fulfilling romantic relationship that is cemented by a wedding (cf. Cawelti 41-2). It can be argued that the incessant repetition in numerous fics of the love story between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth gives the love that is depicted in it a "fated" or "transcendental" feel. The fact that fans tend to drive Austen's characters apart in order to bring them

is, they look forward to the moment when Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are truly and intimately acquainted with themselves and with each other. This is a very strong fantextual convention in this community, and perhaps in the Austen fandom as a whole. Although fans are, in principle, free to do anything they want in fan fiction, there is a very strong resistance in the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* against stories in which Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy do not get together, for instance because they fall in love with other characters. This aspect of the fandom is thematised in Kate P and Sarah A Hoyt's humorous metafic "The Austenite Religion." This is a mock-anthropological report on the "Austenite faith," a cult that is now disbanded (or so it is believed). The writers of the report explain that the members of this underground cult worshipped the "twin deity" LizzyDarcy, which is believed to be a fertility symbol, and lesser "twin deities" ("Austenite"). They sacrificed thousands of words in honour of these deities in virtual temples ("Austenite"). Though devoted to true love and the joining of the twin deities, the cult's members had their share of conflicts. The "2137 Tea and Battle Scone Murders" were inspired, for instance, by one offering to the Dwiggie branch of the cult, in which LizzyDarcy was separated ("Austenite"). Still, the cult was fairly tolerant when it came to its "scripture" ("Austenite"). Even though there are many forms of the "Austenite scripture," there has never been a schism ("Austenite"). Any scripture featuring the union of the beloved deity was acceptable ("Austenite"). Although this story is obviously satirical, and fans do not really worship the characters of Austen's novel, it is humorous precisely because Jane Austen fics tend to explore, again and again, the love relationship between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth.

The effect of this preference is also reflected in the reader comments to *The Child*. I have already suggested that the opening chapter of *The Child* creates "what" suspense because it is by no means certain that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy will find their way back to each other (Section 5.2.1). This effect is closely related to the fantextual convention just mentioned, namely the clear preference for stories in which Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth get together. It seems, in other words, that the instance of ontological plotting discussed in Section 5.2.1 is primarily chosen for its immediate impact on the readers of this fan community. In much the same way, the narrator uses ontological plotting to emphasise the tragic nature of their "missed" meeting. This strategy is used just after Elizabeth has revealed the truth about Fan's parentage (Chapter 3). This conversation is full of "angst" because it deals with a difficult situation and the characters' feelings of guilt and hurt. However, the narrator also increases the angst level of the moment by juxtaposing the actual world of the fic with a strategically chosen possible world. When Elizabeth tells Mr. Darcy, at one point during this conversation, that she was staying in Lambton when he decided to cancel the Bingleys' invitation, he exclaims:

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back together in fan fiction supports the idea that these fans, at least, prefer to represent a love that conquers all and lasts eternal.

"About that same time, I was on my way to my estate. In truth, I had ridden almost half-way there before I changed my mind and returned to Town and from there travelled to Portsmouth to catch a ship to Naples. If only I had found you at Lambton, all might have been avoided." (Chapter 3; cf. Chapter 16)

Mr. Darcy's counterfactual statement covers the storyline of *Pride and Prejudice*: the "actual" event of *The Child* ("Mr. Darcy decides not to go to Pemberley after all") is turned into a "possible" event that resembles the event from Austen's novel ("Mr. Darcy decides to go to Pemberley and meets Elizabeth at Lambton"). This leads to the outcome of canon ("Mr. Darcy discovers that Lydia has eloped with Mr. Wickham, finds them in time, and makes them marry"). While the counterfactual statement in *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* draws attention to the fact that things *would not* have been different, the counterfactual of *The Child* invites the reader to imagine that things *could* have been different.[39] By juxtaposing the actual world of this fic with a possible world that closely resembles *Pride and Prejudice*, in short, the narrator draws the reader's attention to the tragic consequences of the missed meeting, inviting the reader to feel a greater sense of anxiety and loss. This makes the strategy decidedly melodramatic.

Although it is difficult to determine the impact of this strategy, it is certain that this chapter of *The Child*, as a whole, was experienced as "angsty" by several fan readers. One fan tells Jan H that the chapter was "agony" for the characters, and hopes that "joy" will follow angst, as it usually does; another fan tells her that she is feeling "sweet agony"; another fan simply says that the chapter is "agony," and that she is looking forward to the "happiness" that usually follows, but does not specify if she is talking about the characters or herself (comments to Chapter 3). Another tells Jan H that she needs "chocolate" to soothe her "[a]ngst induced anxiety" (comments to Chapter 3). In many posts, the characters' emotions and the reader's responses are related. One fan notes that the characters are left "in pain, embarassed to look at each other and eager to part," and thinks it is "[d]eliciously sad" (comments to Chapter 3). Another fan is even more explicit and writes:

"You are so good at leading us to the very brink of despair, and then somehow carrying us up to the heights of happiness. I pray that's going to happen here...soon...please!

Wait - did I say "us?" I mean Darcy & Elizabeth, of course. It must be the first person POV; it makes the emotion even more powerful." (comments to Chapter 3)

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[39] Naturally, it can be argued that Mr. Darcy is labouring under a misapprehension here. In *The Child*, the narrator introduces his counterfactual statement in the first stages of the plot, before Mr. Darcy's "Hunsford." Mr. Darcy's conversation with Elizabeth spurs Mr. Darcy on to track down Mr. Wickham and make him acknowledge the child, an action that eventually makes him realise that he has not changed as much as he thought after Hunsford (see Section 5.3.2.5). Nonetheless, his statement invites the reader to focus on a particular part of *Pride and Prejudice*: the happy ending, rather than the struggle to get there. I believe that this serves to create a feeling of loss.

Several other fans praise Jan H's writing in similar terms. One fan says that her stories are usually "superbly crafted, well written, emotionally stirring and entertaining by turn" and another tells her that her storytelling is successful, not only because of "the original and very readable plotlines and characterisations," but also because it has a "blend of sadness and humour that is so essential to making something enjoyable to read" (comments to Chapter 3). These comments clearly suggest that the emotional punches of this story, which are delivered by means of the story content and plotting principles, are appreciated by Jan H's audience.

I believe that *The Child* "works" so well because the narrator uses plotting principles that, on the level of the reader, are attuned to the fantextual conventions of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. Mr. Darcy focalises the events of the narrative through his younger self, which means that his account is limited and selective. I believe that the "gaps" in his account are attuned to the community's knowledge of canon and fantextual conventions. In the first chapters, the narrator of *The Child* leaves some questions unanswered, creating what Marie-Laure Ryan believes to be a key feature of "temporal" immersion: it incites the reader "to rush through the text toward the blissful state of retrospective omniscience" (Ryan, *Virtual* 140). Amongst others, he uses several textual strategies that make the reader curious about what happened to the characters between the moment of divergence from canon and the opening event of the plot. In the first chapters, the main question is: "who is the child Mr. Darcy has seen Elizabeth with, near the church?" This question is explicitly formulated by Mr. Darcy's younger self: "Who was that child? Could it be hers?" (Chapter 1). This question, and Mr. Darcy's speculative answer, clearly invite the reader to ask the same question. In the course of the chapter, the narrator leaves the reader to wonder whether Mr. Darcy's conclusions (namely, that Elizabeth eloped with Mr. Wickham and is raising their natural child) are facts or mere beliefs.

Empirical readers clearly pick up on this, but are not as uncertain as one might expect. In several comments, readers discuss the parentage of the child. Many fans speculate that the child is Lydia's (comments to Chapters 1-2). Others simply assume that Elizabeth is not the mother of the child, and scold Mr. Darcy for thinking otherwise (comments to Chapters 1-2). One reader, finally, challenges the author to make Elizabeth the mother of the child (comments to Chapters 1-2). As my previous discussion suggests, these speculations are both shaped by canon and by fantextual conventions. On the one hand, they suggest that readers of fan fiction apply the "principle of minimal departure" from canon (cf. Ryan, "Transfictionality" 391). Fan readers assume, in other words, that the fan fiction text does not deviate from canon unless the narrator or the author explicitly says so. In this case, readers assume that Lydia's elopement actually happened in the storyworld of *The Child*, simply because it happened in the storyworld of *Pride and Prejudice*. The final comment, on the other hand, seems to confirm that this community finds it easier to tolerate the idea that Lydia has a child out of wedlock, than the thought that Elizabeth does. This suggests that the writing practice used in *The Child*, where the child is Lydia's, is perfectly attuned

to the reading practices of this audience. After all, these readers bring a number of assumptions and interpretations to bear on Jan H's narrative that are later confirmed by the actual plot. This suggests that these writing and reading practices are shaped by the same discourse domain.

In much the same way, Jan H's narrative seems to be attuned to the fact that this fan community values intimate integration more than social integration. *The Child* encourages readers to link the events of the plot together in a sociopsychological thread, and several fan readers are happy to oblige. This is suggested by the liminal plotting mentioned in the reader comments. As I have noted, the revelation of Fan's true parentage is not the final moment of "recognition," even though it inspired a lot of liminal plotting in the reader comments. In effect, Mr. Darcy's attempts to separate Fan from the Bennets caused a greater stir on the boards. The reader comments to this chapter and the ones that immediately follow it show that many fans anticipate key events of the plot, including those that are directly tied to the moment of "recognition." Many fans are frustrated with Mr. Darcy's arrogance and inability to learn, and are convinced that the Bennets will not let Fan go without a fight (comments to Chapter 4). As my example suggests, Mr. Darcy's ability to "learn" does not need to be understood in terms of the classical *Bildungsroman*, where the individual develops a stable identity that is perfectly attuned to society. Mr. Darcy's "lessons" are of a sociopsychological nature. Some readers take issue, for instance, with the fact that he reduces Fan to a "problem" while she is "a human being, a child" (comments to Chapters 4, 5).[40] Several fans hope that Mr. Darcy will come to accept Fan "as his own daughter," and that she will "be the means to lead to his reform" and the gateway to Elizabeth's heart (comments Chapter 5, 6, 7). Other fans anticipate that Mr. Wickham will cause trouble, for instance by blackmailing Mr. Darcy (comments to Chapter 4, 6). Some fans feel that Mr. Darcy's lie about his feelings will make things more difficult (comments to Chapter 6). Most importantly, however, many fans expect that there will be hell to pay when Elizabeth finds out what Mr. Darcy has done, and that this will be the "second Hunsford" he sorely needs (comments to Chapter 4). Indeed, it is suggested that Mr. Darcy needs a lesson in intimacy: one fan feels that Mr. Darcy has not "quite learned his lessons of respect and selfless love yet" (comments to Chapter 4).

This is also reflected in early speculations about the state of Elizabeth's mind and feelings. One fan notes that, in the early chapters, Elizabeth does not seem to have "that total abandonment and trust that being in love implies" (comments to Chapter 7). Another fan agrees, associating love with unconditional trust, with accepting the other person's "true self and 100% of it," and with wanting them "unequivocally" (comments to Chapter 7). Yet another reader wants Elizabeth to "[r]eally see" Mr. Darcy (comments to Chapter 9). Some fans make similar remarks about the plot as a whole. One fan writes that she wants to "have

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[40] Notably, a few fans qualify this opinion, pointing out that it was not unusual to send illegitimate children to live at a school (comments to Chapter 5). Even they tend to indicate that they do not like Mr. Darcy's solution, however.

the very great pleasure of reading about how these two misunderstand and then eventually come to a great understanding and love for one another" (comments to Chapter 6). Another fan puts this more poetically, saying that "[t]he threads of intimacy are being stitched and we would have its work complete so as to not unravel under duress" (comments to Chapter 9). Yet another fan says: "I look forward to when the child in Elizabeth and Darcy is left behind and they move forward into the loving and strong adults they can best be together, taking care of Fan and their own children" (comments to Chapter 13). This seems to confirm that these fans expect the plot to move first and foremost toward a moment of intimate integration rather than a moment of social integration. This suggests that, in the discourse domain that produced these texts, a sociopsychological perspective is preferred over a sociopolitical one.

5.4 Conclusion

The plots of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, and *The Child* are all focused on the courtship of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet. As I have demonstrated, however, both the completed and the unresolved dimensions of their organisation throw different aspects of this theme into relief. While Austen's novel encourages the reader to look for sociopolitical themes, the narratives of Jan H and Beth AM encourage the reader to find sociopsychological links between the events. More specifically, I have approached Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* as a classical *Bildungs*roman in Franco Moretti's sense of the word. On the completed level of plot, this manifests itself in an emphasis on Elizabeth's social integration. In this context, Lydia's seduction functions as a counterpoint, a negative example that serves to highlight Elizabeth's "maturity." On the unresolved level of plot, this is emphasised with the use of mediation, which draws the reader's attention away from the actual seduction and towards Elizabeth's reactions and conclusions. In *The Child* and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, in contrast, the emphasis lies on the "intimate" integration of the characters. This drastically changes the representation of seduction and illegitimacy. In *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, Elizabeth is ultimately "rewarded" with a marriage that is emotionally and physically intimate. In *The Child*, the illegitimate child of Lydia Bennet has a positive influence on Mr. Darcy's *Bildung*, and she, too, becomes an integral part of the "intimate" family unit of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. On the unresolved level of plot, this is emphasised with plotting principles that take advantage of the community's knowledge of canon and fantextual convention, and make fan readers long for a moment of "intimate" recognition and reunion. I believe that emotionally intense events, such as Elizabeth's rape and Mr. Wickham's kidnapping, should be understood in this context. The very fact that fics like *The Child* and *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*

are allowed to use such elements, and to play to the reader's emotions with plotting principles, implies that the evocation and display of emotions is acceptable in this community. It suggests, in other words, that this community's aesthetic preferences are more "melodramatic" than the ones implied by Q. D. Leavis's reading of Austen's novels, or, indeed, by Franco Moretti's. I believe that this difference is rooted in a difference in discourse domains.

General Conclusion

It is now possible to delineate some characteristics of the "discourse domain" of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. I will first discuss how this discourse domain manifests itself on the level of the "text." In this dissertation, I have pointed out a number of patterns on the level of the "fantext"—which, in the context of this dissertation, refers to the entirety of fan fiction texts and metatexts written between 2008 and 2011 by the fan community of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. Some of these patterns, such as the recurrence of the "ton" and rose gardens, are prototypical instances of "fanon." Other patterns, such as the recurrence of "Hunsfords" or the intimate reunions of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, belong to the grey area between "canon" and "fanon." The most fundamental patterns, however, only became visible when I performed a comparative close reading of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and specific fan fiction texts. These patterns are closely related to the process of storyworld-building, which is centred around textual strategies that invite readers to imagine certain elements rather than others, to come to a particular understanding of them, and to respond to them in a certain way. I brought a number of these recurring textual strategies and their effect on the implied reader into focus with a "toolbox" of concepts from cognitive narratology.

In Chapter 2, I contextualised Philippe Hamon's theory of evaluation using Alan Palmer's theory of "fictional minds." Taken together, these theories throw textual strategies into relief that revolve around the nexus between evaluation, mind reading, and character. I used this framework to examine how Elizabeth's *savoir-vivre* is represented in Jane Austen's novel, Jack C.'s *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner*, and Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth." These three texts all use the same textual strategy, because they all enrich the meaning of evaluations by placing them in a particular context. However, both the context and the effect on the reader are fundamentally different. Jane Austen's narrator refers repeatedly to moral concepts that resonate with Christian ethics. As a result, the reader is invited to evaluate the epiphany of Elizabeth and other key moments by ethical norms, and to connect them to ethical themes. In *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and "Goodnight Elizabeth," in contrast, Austen's moral concepts are "reframed," because they are placed in the context of the characters' minds and circumstances. As a result, the moral concept in

question lose some of their "absolute" overtones. The reader is invited to evaluate the "rightness" or "wrongness" of the characters' behaviour in the light of many factors, such as the characters' intentions, personal feelings, and a myriad of "rules" that regulate the different spheres of their lives.

In Chapter 3, I brought a different textual strategy into focus through the use of Alan Palmer's discussion of "social minds." I used this framework to compare the representation of "manners" in *Pride and Prejudice*, Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears*, GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and hele's *Not Every Gentleman*. These texts all evoke "group frames"—which implies that they depict intermental units governed by particular group norms on the level of the storyworld. Once again, however, both the units themselves and their effect on the reader are different. In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth breaks free from the mental habits of the inhabitants of Meryton while Mr. Darcy breaks free from the cognitive patterns that were encouraged by his family. Yet the novel preserves what Claudia L. Johnson would call the "basic outline" of the traditional social order, which is organised around such categories as the family, class, and gender. In the intermental unit that is set up at Pemberley at the end of Austen's novel, several norms that are fundamental to these categories are accepted without question. As a result, the reader is invited to approach these norms as certainties. In *No More Tears*, *Given Good Principles*, *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and *Not Every Gentleman*, in contrast, these norms are "denaturalised," precisely because the characters are confronted with different intermental units. In *No More Tears*, Mr. Darcy's confrontation with the "ton," in general, and his extended family, in particular, make him question the parental norms of his mother. In *Given Good Principles*, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth both form an intermental unit with religious characters before they form one with each other. Mr. Darcy's relation with Mr. Bradley, in particular, makes him question the "principles" of his father, and adopt Christian principles instead. In *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, Elizabeth is confronted with the Darlingtons, and particularly the "free thinker" James, who make her question the norms that underpin the gentry's class system. In *Not Every Gentleman*, finally, Elizabeth's experiences as Edward make her question gender norms. She eventually forms an intermental unit with Mr. Darcy in which it is possible to have a hybrid gender identity. Unlike Austen's novel, in short, these fan fiction texts invite the reader to approach parental norms, religious norms, class norms, and gender norms as options rather than certainties.

In Chapter 4, I used the concepts of Marco Caracciolo to come to an understanding of textual strategies that create a "sense of place." I examined the representation of Pemberley in Austen's novel, JessicaS's "So Gradually," Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*, and a number of other fan fiction texts. All of these texts create a "sense of place" by associating the spaces of Pemberley with specific connotations. However, Jane Austen tends to develop her spaces with visual and thematic cues, while the fan fiction texts in question tend to relate them to the characters' embodied experiences, emotions, and personal memories. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the narrator calls attention to views, the harmony between nature and

artificial improvement, and the interdependence of the individual and the estate. This gives her representation of Pemberley a distinctive thematic dimension, because it suggests that there should be a fundamental harmony between individual initiative, on the one hand, and material and immaterial forms of heritage, on the other. Austen's representation invites the reader, in other words, to interpret Mr. Darcy's estate in the light of larger socioeconomic and sociopolitical ideas. The fan fiction texts I discussed, in contrast, expand Mr. Darcy's estate with idyllic rose gardens, with the characters' roles in their personal relationships, and moments where they change social roles to suit particular circumstances and personal needs. This changes the thematic meaning of Austen's Pemberley, because it suggests that, in some circumstances, the individual's identity, personal relationships, and needs take precedence over "heritage." This encourages the reader to relate the representation of space, not to socioeconomic and sociopolitical themes, but to the individual's mind and personal relationships with others.

In Chapter 5, finally, I used Hilary P. Dannenberg's conceptualisation of plot to bring "plotting principles" into focus—textual strategies that encourage the reader to forge meaningful connections between characters and events, and to become immersed in the storyworld. I focused on textual strategies that encourage the reader to tie events, and the characters' experiences of those events, together in thematic threads. I used this framework to examine the representation of courtship and seduction in *Pride and Prejudice*, Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble*, and Jan H's *The Child*. I noted that *Pride and Prejudice* juxtaposes the courtship of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy with the seduction of Lydia by Mr. Wickham. Ultimately, Lydia's "failed" development serves to highlight Elizabeth's *Bildung*, and particularly the social dimension of that *Bildung*. This is emphasised on the unresolved level of the plot, because the narrator's use of mediation draws the attention away from the seduction itself and towards Elizabeth's reaction. Both on the completed and the unresolved level of plot, in short, the reader is invited to tie the characters and events together in a thread that revolves around the theme of social integration. In *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* and *The Child*, in contrast, instances of seduction and illegitimacy no longer function as "negative" counterpoints to the development of the protagonists. Indeed, they become an integral part of it as the characters work to develop "intimate" relationships. This is highlighted by textual strategies that have their greatest impact on the unresolved dimension of plot. These textual strategies take advantage of the existence of fantextual conventions, using them to create "angst" and to make the reader long for the moment when Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are "reunited" in an intimate relationship. Ultimately, the plotting principles of *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* and *The Child* invite the reader make "meaningful" connections that revolve around the theme of "intimate" integration. I have noted that, in each case, these shifts in focus are also apparent in the comments of actual readers. Ultimately, in short, the fan fiction texts and the metatexts point to similar preferences.

As this overview shows, the close readings used in this research throw the intricacy of fan fiction texts into relief. However, I firmly believe that my approach also offers a valuable addition to studies of fan fiction in which the close analysis of texts is "denigrated." After all, the patterns on the level of the fantext I have mentioned are shaped by, and help to maintain, the frames of value and conduct that make the fan community of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* different from Austen's other readerships. The very fact that fans use these textual strategies implies, for example, that the writing and reading practices of the Derbyshire Writers' Guild are different from, say, the writing and reading practices that lead to academic studies such as those of Marilyn Butler, Claudia L. Johnson, or Alistair Duckworth. Most obviously, fans approach Austen's novel in a different way, using it as a springboard for creative fiction rather than academic texts. Within the frames of value and conduct that govern the writing and reading practices of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*, in short, it is acceptable to reimagine Austen's storyworld in fan fiction. More importantly, the cluster of the patterns I have discussed suggests that the members of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* see Austen's storyworld as an "appropriate" means for the exploration of "individualisation," in the sense of Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim. According to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, the process of individualisation involves a disintegration of traditional social categories, such as the family, religion, class, and gender. As these categories disintegrate, the individual becomes a centre of organisation in its own right. This means that individuals are forced to give direction to their own lives, by actively selecting some of the rules and regulations that are geared to them. This "way of apprehending the world," as Brownstein would put it, is most obviously implied by the fan fiction texts discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation. While Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* preserves the outline of established social norms, presenting them as certainties, the characters of Linnea Eileen's *No More Tears*, GraceCS's *Given Good Principles*, Jamie's *Pride Prejudice and Prodigy*, and hele's *Not Every Gentleman* clearly approach them as options. While Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's discussion of individualisation stays on this abstract level, however, my close readings throw additional aspects of individualisation into relief. They reveal that, in the discourse that is produced by the fan fiction texts I have discussed, the individual's entire being becomes a centre of organisation. This is implied by the focus on individual circumstances in Jack C.'s *Mr. Darcy Came to Dinner* and Karen Apenhorst's "Goodnight Elizabeth;" it is implied by the embodied, personal experience of space represented in JessicaS's "So Gradually," Juliecoop's *Nothing Wanting*, and other fan fiction texts; finally, it is suggested by the emphasis on intimate integration of Beth AM's *Brave New World of Toil and Trouble* and Jan H's *The Child*. On the level of character, space, and plot, Austen's storyworld is organised by a fundamental harmony between individual initiative and an established social order. The storyworlds of the fan fiction texts I have discussed, in contrast, are first and foremost organised around the unique circumstances, body, mental life, and personal relationships of the individual. Ultimately, in short, the textual strategies I have discussed all resonate with each other.

They are all shaped by, and help to reproduce, an image of the relation between the individual and the world that differs from the relation implied by Austen's novel. This dissertation homes in on a small part of the discourse domain of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*. I also believe, however, that the very existence of the patterns and frame of value I have discussed creates the right "climate" for more of these explorations to take place, and perhaps even for other "socially situated practices and activities" to develop. The interest in individualisation I discuss here is also reflected on a meta-level, for instance. After all, in the age of the internet, the fan reader is expected to give direction to their own reading, to create their own understanding of fan fiction and Austen's storyworld. In addition to this, they are expected to engage with commonly used interpretive paradigms and creative practices that are created by the fan community. The notion of individualisation, in short, may be key to understanding why the discourse domain of the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild* is constantly being defined, confirmed, and questioned.

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[1] I have included a link to *Fanfiction.net* because the author prefers this profile to the one used on the *Derbyshire Writers' Guild*.

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Appendix
Selected Glossary of Fan Fiction Terms

In this section, I summarise the definitions of a number of key concepts from fan fiction studies that are used in this dissertation (such as "fantext" and "fan object"). In addition, I provide brief definitions for several concepts from fandom that I use without an explicit definition, such as "fan(nish)," "fan community," or "Author's Note." While I believe that this glossary contains the definitions needed to understand my discussion, I do not pretend that it is is exhaustive. For a more comprehensive encyclopedia of concepts from fandom, in particular, I refer the reader to *Fanlore.org*. This wiki was founded by, and is still associated with, the Organisation for Transformative Works (*Transformativeworks.org*). It is just one of the organisation's many projects, which also include a refereed academic journal for scholarship on fan works and fan practices called *Transformative Works and Cultures* (*Transformativeworks.org*, "Transformative"). Unlike this academic journal, however, the Fanlore wiki "provides a framework within which fans can document their understandings of and experiences in fandom," enabling them to "preserve the history of transformative fanworks and the fandoms from which they have arisen" (*Transformativeworks.org*, "Fanlore"). As a consequence, the lemmas of Fanlore achieve what my own, printed glossary of "fannish" concepts can never truly achieve. They show that "fannish" concepts are the result of many voices, and that they are never truly definitive or fixed.

Angst	Fanfic genre or description of the defining feature of this genre. By my definition, a fan fiction text is "angsty" when it invites the reader to imagine things that may be distressing to them (see Section 5.2.2).
Author's Note	Author's Notes tend to be part of the "header" of a fan fiction text. This is a section at the top (or bottom) of the page where authors can provide meta-information about the fan fiction

text, or give credit to other fans or to the copyright holders of the source materials (*Fanlore.org*, "Author's Note"). This is just one way in which fan authors may interact with their audience. As the examples of Barbara A., Jack C., and other fan writers show, they may also discuss their text with specific readers on message boards like the "Tea Room" or in the comment section of their text (see Sections 1.3.3.2, 2.2.2, and others).

Canon:	By my definition, the term "canon" has a textual and an imaginative dimension. I use it to refer both to the specific texts about which a fan writes, and to "the events presented in the media source that provide the universe, setting, and characters" of a fic (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 9; see Section 1.3.1). What belongs to canon is debatable, especially in multimedia fandoms like *Lord of the Rings* and, to a lesser extent, Jane Austen (Pugh 27; Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 9-10). Such communities are typically devoted to a particular configuration of books and / or films, most often the one preferred by "the website owner" (Parrish 86). Even in single-medium fandoms, however, fans tend to make a selection of the material available—focusing predominantly on material relating to a favourite romantic pairing (Parrish 86; Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 15), for instance, or excluding what they do not like (H. Jenkins, *Poachers* 155, 103). I use this term as a synonym for Sandvoss's "fan text" (see "fan object" and "fantext" below).
Fan, fannish:	A person who has "developed a relationship with an artifact of popular culture," and participates "in a range of activities that extend beyond the private act of viewing," reading, or playing (Davisson and Booth 33, 34). Fans typically have "an extensive and expansive knowledge" of their favoured text (Parrish 11). In fan fiction studies, it is usually accepted that fan fiction is written by fans of particular source texts (11). The adjectival form of fan is "fannish" (*Fanlore.org*, "Fan"). "Fannish" was coined by sci-fi fans to refer to the "quality of being a fan" (*Fanlore.org*, "Fan").
Fan community, online:	Sometimes used as a synonym for "fandom" (Parrish 23-4; see for example Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 6). However, these terms have grown apart ever since fans moved

their activities to the Internet in the 1990s (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 13). In the strictest sense, an online community is a specific group of fans who interact socially on mailing lists, bulletin boards, forums, blogs, and other technologies (Parrish 26). Apart from social conventions, these groups develop interpretive conventions by accepting "particular details or character readings," which do not necessarily conform to the source text (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 9; Parrish 84-5; see Section 1.3.2). Because of blogging technologies like *LiveJournal* and *Dreamwidth*, fan communities have become less extensive and less exclusively focused on fandom (Busse and Hellekson 14). In addition, "fanfic libraries" (Pugh 229) like *Fanfiction.net* and *Archive of Our Own* have made it easier to read fan fiction across communal boundaries. As a consequence, the interpretive conventions of separate communities tend to converge around a shared point of interest. Most often, "various fan-favored romantic pairings" will evoke particular sets of expectations, which fan writers may or may not fulfil (Stein 248). Every fic, then, can negotiate overarching interpretive conventions. I therefore define online fan communities by shared interpretive conventions, rather than social interaction.

Fan fiction:
I define fan fiction as narrative fiction, written by and for fan communities, that is founded on the storyworld constituents of antecedent texts (such as characters, settings, concepts, or events). A fan fiction text is commonly referred to as a "fic" or "fanfic."

Fandom:
In its most concrete sense, a group of fans "assembled around common fan interests" (Parrish 26), such as a TV show or a novel. Fandoms may overlap, as groups of fans can share several fields of interest (Parrish 26). Every fandom is a non-cohesive "collective" (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 6), divided into smaller regulating centres according to specific interests (see "fan community") (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 6). In a more abstract sense, "fandom" also refers to the fannish phenomenon in general (see Coppa, "Brief History" 44 for an example of this usage).

Fan object:
I use the term "fan object" to refer to the object that inspires fans to write texts that belong to the genre of fan fiction, but

also to make fan vids, to participate in cosplay, or to join in other fan activities. Following Cornel Sandvoss, I believe that the fan object can be approached as a complex of texts because even when the fan object is an actor or rock band, rather than an actual text, fans approach them as a collection of "signs" that have a particular meaning (Sandvoss 22). A fan's understanding of the fan object functions as a centre of gravity that holds together a collection of textual elements. Sandvoss calls this complex of texts the "fan text" (Sandvoss 23), but I refer to it as the "canon" to avoid confusion (see "fantext" below; see Sections 1.2.2.1 and 1.3.4.1). After all, Sandvoss's understanding of the "fan text" and my understanding of "canon" roughly coincide in the context of fan fiction writing and reading (see "canon" above).

Fanon:

The opposite of "canon." Events are "fanon" when they are "created by the fan community in a particular fandom" (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 9). Technically, an addition only becomes fanon when "it is generally accepted and used by other writers" (Pugh 41), to the extent that it has become cliché (Driscoll 90; Marley). According to Catherine Driscoll, "fanon" implies "undiscerning identification with an unreal object" (90), as well as "naive writing styles" rather than "stylistic sophistication" (90). I treat fanon as a subcategory of "fantextual conventions" (see Section 1.3.1).

Fantext:

By reading, writing, and reviewing fics, fans constantly add to the "fantext" of their fandom, i.e. "the entirety of stories and critical commentary written in a fandom (or even in a pairing or genre)" (Busse and Hellekson 7). Because each community produces texts from particular character readings, this fantext contains "multitudes of interpretations of characters and canon scenes," which are "contradictory yet complementary to one another and the source text" (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 7; Kaplan, "Costruction" 137). The impact of this fantext is enormous, as every fan's "understanding of the source is always already filtered through the interpretations and characterizations" that it contains (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 7). The fantext changes constantly, moreover, as "[f]ans' understanding of the characters and the universes the characters inhabit" evolves (7). This is why Busse and

	Hellekson characterise it as a "work in progress," which, in the world of fan fiction, is "a piece of fiction still in the process of being written but not yet complete" (6). Notably, Cornel Sandvoss uses the term "fan text" as a synonym for what I call the "canon" (see Sections 1.2.2.1 and 1.3.4.1). In the work of Sara Gwenllian-Jones, finally, it seems to be a part of what she calls the "metatext" (see Section 1.3.4.3 and below).
Metatext	I use the term "metatext" to refer to any text about fan fiction—whether that text is a reader comment, an online discussion, or a critical essay. This makes my use of the term different from Sara Gwenllian-Jones's. Her understanding of the term "metatext" is closely related to the process "in which cult fictions extend themselves beyond the bounds of their primary texts, migrating across other media, morphing into countless versions, both official and unofficial, material and immaterial" ("Virtual" 85). More specifically, she uses it to refer to the textual elements that make up what I would call the "canon" of *Xena: Warrior Princess*, and perhaps even the "fantext" that accumulates around it (Gwenllian-Jones, "Virtual" 88; see Section 1.3.4.3).
Rating (such as G or PG-13)	As is the case for films, television shows, and other art works, the rating of a fan fiction text indicates whether it is suitable for particular audiences. Like many other fan communities, the Derbyshire Writers' Guild uses the ratings of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) (*Fanlore.org*, "Rating"). Its PG-13 limit indicates that some of the narratives on the website contain content that may not be suitable for children under the age of thirteen, such as mild strong language and allusions to sexual content. The parents of young visitors to the website are advised, in other words, to be cautious and to take action if they feel that their children are too young to be exposed to the content in question.
Slash fiction:	Fan fiction in which "the sexual orientation of characters is altered from straight to gay to suit the fan's needs" (Jones 264). This is usually presented as an act of resistance on the part of its writers (see, for example, Kustritz, "Slashing" 380). Fan scholars have paid a "disproportionate" amount of attention to slash (Busse and Hellekson, "Introduction" 17). Usually, the term "slash" is reserved for male/male fiction,

while the term "femslash" refers to the female/female variety (*Fanlore.org*, "Slash"). More generally, "slash" is the opposite of "het," which indicates that fan fiction focuses on heterosexual relationships, and "gen," which denotes fan fiction that does not contain sex (Pugh 90) or romance (Driscoll 83-4).