

The Tone of Elizabeth's Speech in *Pride and Prejudice*

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—The trivial dialogues are constantly being illuminated by a fine sense of the complexity of human nature and by a steady belief in the possibility of making sound judgments.

—R. A. Brower¹⁾—

It is well known that Jane Austen herself entertained a deep affection toward the heroine Elizabeth.²⁾ One of her most typical characteristics is 'a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous'³⁾ as Austen puts it. We see Elizabeth often finding diversion in laughing at follies and nonsense. At the same time, however, she has an intellectual mind with which she always examines into the motive of what is said and done, while her tenderness and sincerity is seen through her sisterly consideration for Jane. All in all, she is so lively, intellectual, sensitive and sincere as to make us forget her defects and weaknesses which she has in many ways, as will be shown later.

The delightful mingling of such elements reminds us of Rosalind in *As You Like It*, whose speech has been treated in a former paper.⁴⁾ She seems to be one of the most charming heroines in Shakespeare's plays. She is witty, ironical and playful on one hand, but sensitive and womanly on the other.

Here, in *Pride and Prejudice*, the condition is of course different, because it is not

1) Reuben A. Brower, *Light and Bright and Sparkling: Irony and Fiction in Pride and Prejudice* (Jane Austen, ed. by Ian Watt, Prentice-Hall, INC, 1963), p. 70.

2) 'I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like her at least I do not know.' (Austen-Leigh, *Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters*, 1913, p. 297)

3) Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. by R. W. Chapman, Oxford, 1965, p. 12.

4) Cf. E. Suhama, *Rosalind's Expression in As You Like it* (山本忠雄先生学士院賞記念「英語英文学研究」研究社, 1957) pp. 289—301.

a play but a novel in which elements other than speeches also play an important part. The descriptive and narrative passages help the advance of plot and the representation of characters.

However, as W. L. Cross says,⁵⁾ the structure and technique of *Pride and Prejudice* is very close to that of Shakespearean comedies, and Austen's 'novels have their momentum mostly in conversation, with which is combined narration in little patches'.⁶⁾

Her mastery of dialogue may be seen in its simplest form in the famous opening scene of the novel, where Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are introduced with dramatic effect. Their talk characterize themselves—especially Mrs. Bennet discloses her mean understanding and uncertain temper by using too many impulsive exclamations, unaware of her husband's satirical humour. The narrowness and shallowness of her mind is impressed on the readers and suggests the comic atmosphere of the novel.

Other minor and comic characters, such as Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine, etc. are also easily detected by their speeches—they use exaggerations, ornamentations, conceits and exclamations.

On the contrary, it is difficult to detect the superficial distinctions of the major and intellectual persons, such as Elizabeth, Jane, Darcy, etc. in their speeches. But when we read attentively, we find that the tone of their speeches change delicately in accordance with their state of mind and various situations.

In this paper, it is the intention of the writer to present dialogues between I. Elizabeth and Jane, II. Elizabeth and Darcy, III. Elizabeth and Wickham, and IV. Elizabeth and Mr. Collins, and Lady Catherine, since Elizabeth's character and psychological movement can be traced in these dialogues, and to inquire into the effect of her various tones.

I.

Elizabeth loves and admires her sister Jane above anyone else, though they are quite different in character—Jane is gentle, naive, kind and never thinks ill of anybody. The dialogue between them in Vol. I, Chap. IV reminds us of the one between Rosalind

5) W. L. Cross, *The Development of The English Novel*, Macmillan, 1927, pp. 118—9.

6) *Ibid.*, p. 120.

and Celia in *As You Like It* ⁷⁾ because of its liveliness and playfulness.

After the ball at Netherfield, Jane tells her sister how much she admires Mr. Bingley :

“He is just what a young man ought to be,” said she, “sensible, good humoured, lively ; and I never saw such happy manners ! —so much ease, with such perfect good breeding !”

“He is also handsome,” replied Elizabeth, “which a young man ought likewise to be, if he possibly can. His character is thereby complete.”

“I was very much flattered by his asking me to dance a second time. I did not expect such a compliment.”

“Did not you ? I did for you. But that is one great difference between us. Compliments always take *you* by surprise, and *me* never. What could be more natural than his asking you again ? He could not help seeing that you were about five times as pretty as every other woman in the room. No thanks to his gallantry for that. Well, he certainly is very agreeable, and I give you leave to like him. You have liked many a stupider person.”

“Dear Lizzy !”

“Oh ! you are a great deal too apt you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in any body. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my life.”

“I would wish not to be hasty in censuring any one : but I always speak what I think.”
 “I know you do ; and it is *that* which makes the wonder. With *your* good sense, to be so honestly blind to the follies and nonsense of others ! Affectation of candour is common enough ; —one meets it every where. But to be candid without ostentation or design—to take the good of every body’s character and make it still better, and say nothing of the bad—belongs to you alone. (pp. 14—5)⁸⁾

Jane expresses her happy feelings frankly, and Elizabeth encourages her to be more confident of her attractiveness. Compared with Jane’s simple and natural speech, Elizabeth’s style of speech is conspicuous because of its jesting tone, such as found in ‘I give you leave to like him. You have liked many a stupider person’. Her pungent criticism of Jane’s character is expressed with a somewhat complicated technique, such as rhetorical questions, hypotheses and words which reveal her logical mind.

But her tone changes when she hears of Jane’s illness at Bingley’s ; her sisterly anxiety for Jane makes it simple, pointed, and a little emotional. (cf. p. 32)

The following is the dialogue between them when they received a letter from Miss Bingley :

7) Cf. *As You Like It*, I. iii. 1—5.

8) The page numbers after the quotation refer to the Oxford Edition by R.W. Chapman, 1965.

“It is evident by this,” added Jane, “that he comes back no more this winter.”

“It is only evident that Miss Bingley does not mean he *should*.”

“Why will you think so? It must be his own doing. —He is his own master. But you do not know *all*. I *will* read the passage which particularly hurts me. I will have no reserves from *you*.”.....

.....

“What think you of *this* sentence, my dear Lizzy?..... “Is it not clear enough?— Does it not expressly declare that Caroline neither expects nor wishes me to be her sister; that if she is perfectly convinced of her brother’s indifference and that she suspects the nature of my feelings for him, she means (most kindly!) to put me on my guard? Can there be any other opinion on the subject?”

“Yes, there can; for mine is totally different.—Will you hear it?”

“Most willingly.”

“You shall have it in few words. Miss Bingley sees that her brother is in love with you, and wants him to marry Miss Darcy. She follows him to town in the hope of keeping him there, and tries to persuade you that he does not care about you.” (pp. 117—8)

While Jane simply believes that Miss Bingley ‘is incapable of wilfully deceiving anyone’, Elizabeth entertains doubt about her words, because she is instinctively conscious of her ‘interested wishes’ (cf. p. 120). So she tries hard to persuade her sister not to be disturbed by such words, and her tone is full of anxiety and sympathy. But having found that her love for Mr. Bingley is strongly rooted, she feels rather easy and recovers her usual tone :

“That is right.—You could not have started a more happy idea, since you will not take comfort in mine. Believe her to be deceived by all means. You have now done your duty by her, and must fret no longer.”

“But, my dear sister, can I be happy, even supposing the best, in accepting a man whose sisters and friends are all wishing him to marry elsewhere?”

“You must decide for yourself,” said Elizabeth, “and if upon mature deliberation, you find that the misery of disobliging his two sisters is more than equivalent to the happiness of being his wife, I advise you by all means to refuse him.”

“How can you talk so?”—said Jane faintly smiling.—“You must know that though I should be exceedingly grieved at their disapprobation, I could not hesitate.”

“I did not think you would;—and that being the case, I cannot consider your situation with much compassion.” (pp. 119—120)

She wants to cheer up Jane by using such playful and apparently pitiless expressions as ‘I advise you by all means to refuse him’, ‘I cannot consider your situation with much compassion’, etc.

When Miss Bingley's letter arrives for the second time, however, telling them that they all would be settled in London for the winter, Elizabeth is quite indignant. Upon hearing Jane's resignation that he would be forgot and that she was thankful of doing no harm to any one but herself, Elizabeth cannot but exclaim as follows:

"My dear Jane!...you are too good. Your sweetness and disinterestedness are really angelic; I do not know what to say to you. I feel as if I had never done you justice, or loved you as you deserve."

Miss Bennet eagerly disclaimed all extraordinary merit, and threw back the praise on her sister's warm affection.

"Nay," said Elizabeth, "this is not fair. *You* wish to think all the world respectable, and are hurt if I speak ill of any body. *I* only want to think *you* perfect, and you set yourself against it. Do not be afraid of my running into any excess, of my encroaching on your privilege of universal good will. There are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well. The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it; and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense. (pp. 134—5)

In her tone, there is admiration for Jane's impartiality and forbearance — Jane would not like to think others too badly and always condemns her own weakness. But Elizabeth cannot bear the unreasonable, cruel situation Jane has been put into. Here, the difference of their temperament, attitude and judgment can be seen. Though Elizabeth always has warm affection and sincere solicitude toward her sister, she cannot agree with her. She again tries to reason to her sister that the basis of her thinking is wrong:

"Your first position is false. They may wish many things besides his happiness; they may wish his increase of wealth and consequence; they may wish him to marry a girl who has all the importance of money, great connections, and pride." (p. 136)

Such difference is also seen in their dialogue when the misunderstanding is dissipated and Bingley's engagement with Jane is formed. She is really glad to find that Jane looks happy, but at the same time she realizes that she herself cannot be happy to have such a man as Bingley. She objectively perceives the difference in their natures. In her tone, there is some playfulness and self-complacency because she has a secret which has not been revealed before Jane. She has become to have the wisdom to judge whether it is appropriate to give the secret away.

There is always an intimate and confidential atmosphere between Jane and Elizabeth,

because they are able to understand their feelings and sympathize with each other. But there is no development between their dialogue because they keep the same relationship from the beginning to the end. Where there is no such feelings as hatred or hostility, there is no dramatic complication, and the varieties of tone cannot be expected.

III.

On the other hand, the dialogue between Elizabeth and Darcy contains different elements. A psychological development of Elizabeth's mind is reflected in her speech.

It was very unfortunate that her first impression of Mr. Darcy had been made by his unprepared opinion of herself. When she heard him say to Bingley, 'She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men.', she, of course, 'remained with no very cordial feelings towards him'. Outwardly she pretended not to be injured, but deep in her heart, she was, undoubtedly, hurt. Her prejudice hereafter is formed on this experience. Though Darcy began to be caught by 'the beautiful expression of her dark eyes', and the easy playfulness of her manner, she only looked at him as a man who had not thought her 'handsome enough to dance with', which had been a great disgrace to her. So when she was requested to dance, she retaliated upon him by saying, 'Indeed, Sir, I have not the least intention of dancing.—I entreat you not to suppose that I moved this way in order to beg for a partner.' and added ironically, 'Mr. Darcy is all politeness'—a statement which has a teasing variety of meanings. But he was not injured by her refusal and began to think of her with some warmth.

Vol. I, Chap. IX presents one of the famous scenes at Netherfield. Elizabeth was by no means polite when she talked with Bingley about the study of character. She was not afraid of speaking what she thought right. But she was in constant fear of her mother's long and boastful talk, and when her mother exposed her silliness by misunderstanding Darcy's words, she became quite uneasy and impatient. As for herself, she was able to judge what he said fairly :

"Indeed, Mama, you are mistaken," said Elizabeth, blushing for her mother. "You quite mistook Mr. Darcy. He only meant that there were not such a variety of people to be met with in the country as in town, which you must acknowledge to be true." (p. 43)

Though she could not respect her mother, she, none the less, could not help covering her stupidity because she felt a kind of responsibility as her daughter. Elizabeth's complicated feeling caused by Darcy and her mother can be seen in her speech.

The conversation in the drawing-room shows Austen's skill in a delicate way. According to the lively Scotch air, Darcy draws near Elizabeth and asks her to dance a reel. As she makes no answer he is surprised and repeats the question :

"Oh !" said she. "I heard you before ; but I could not immediately determine what to say in reply. You wanted me, I know, to say 'Yes,' that you might have the pleasure of despising my taste ; but I always delight in overthrowing those kind of schemes, and cheating a person of their premeditated contempt. I have therefore made up my mind to tell you, that I do not want to dance a reel at all—and now despise me if you dare." "Indeed I do not dare." (p. 52)

Elizabeth felt a 'premeditated contempt' in the tone of his question and thought that he would scorn her taste. Therefore, she intentionally used such impertinent words to make him angry. But, contrary to her expectation, he was not indignant but rather gallantly showed his interest in her archness. Her refusal to dance with him only set him to thinking of her attractiveness.

The next chapter also presents Elizabeth as a creature who challenges Darcy :

"Mr. Darcy is not to be laughed at!" cried Elizabeth. "That is an uncommon advantage, and uncommon I hope it will continue, for it would be a great loss to *me* to have many such acquaintance. I dearly love a laugh."

"Miss Bingley," said he, 'has given me credit for more than can be. The wisest and best of their actions, may be rendered ridiculous by a person whose first object in life is a joke."

"Certainly," replied Elizabeth—"there are such people, but I hope I am not one of *them*. I hope I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies *do* divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can.—But these, I suppose, are precisely what you are without."

"Perhaps that is not possible for any one. But it has been the study of my life to avoid those weaknesses which often expose a strong understanding to ridicule.".....

.....

"I am perfectly convinced by it that Mr. Darcy has no defect. He owns it himself without disguise."

"No"—said Darcy, "I have made no such pretension. I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding. My temper I dare not vouch for.—It is I believe too little yielding—certainly too little for the convenience of the world. I cannot forget the follies and vices of others so soon as I ought, nor their offences myself. My feelings are not puffed about with every attempt to move them. My temper would perhaps be called resentful.—My good opinion once lost is lost for ever."

“That is a failing indeed!” cried Elizabeth. *“Implacable resentment is a shade in a character. But you have chosen your fault well.—I really cannot laugh at it. You are safe from me.”*

“There is, I believe, in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome.”

“And your defect is a propensity to hate every body.

“And yours,” he replied with a smile, *“is wilfully to misunderstand them.”* (pp. 57—8)

The above dialogue is a kind of wit-combat. They seem to enjoy the atmosphere created by their wit and irony. Both of them make efficient use of their intelligence which responds promptly to each other. In contrast to Elizabeth’s playful tone, however, Darcy’s speech expresses his earnest feelings. He is more calm and objective than Elizabeth who has got a little irritated and uses exclamations, emphasis written in the text in Italics, and such intensive adverbs as ‘indeed’, ‘certainly’, ‘really’, ‘perfectly’, etc. At any rate, they are speaking from their own standpoint, without considering the other’s feeling or situation.

At the ball-room in Netherfield in Chap. XVIII, Elizabeth is placed in an awkward situation. She, having expected to meet Wickham there, dressed with more than usual care. But when she could not find him, her antipathy toward Darcy was provoked by her disappointment. Yet she had to dance with him this time, because she accepted him in spite of herself when he asked for her hand. Her speech indicates her ill-feeling toward him :

“It is your turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy.—I talked about the dance, and you ought to make some kind of remark on the size of the room, or the number of couples.”

He smiled, and assured her that whatever she wished him to say should be said.

“Very well.—That reply will do for the present.—Perhaps by and bye I may observe that private balls are much pleasanter than public ones.—But now we may be silent.”

“Do you talk by rule then, while you are dancing?”

“Sometimes. One must speak a little, you know. It would look odd to be entirely silent for half an hour together, and yet for the advantage of some, conversation ought to be so arranged as that they may have the trouble of saying as little as possible.”

“Are you consulting your own feelings in the present case, or do you imagine that you are gratifying mine?”

“Both,” replied Elizabeth archly; *“for I have always seen a great similarity in the turn of our minds.—We are each of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak, unless we expect to say something that will amaze the room, and be handed down to posterity with all the eclat of a proverb.”*

“This is no very striking resemblance of your own character, I am sure,” said he. *“How*

near it may be to *mine*, I cannot pretend to say.—*You* think it a faithful portrait undoubtedly.’
 “I must not decide on my own performance.” (p. 91)

Here, she speaks archly and Darcy answers sparingly. After W. Lucas's interruption, there is a further gap between them. Though Darcy would like to become intimate with her, she never opens her heart. On the contrary, she intentionally makes rude remarks:

“What think you of books?” said he smiling.

“Books—Oh! no.—I am sure we never read the same, or not with the same feelings.”

“I am sorry you think so; but if that be the case, there can at least be no want of subject.—We may compare our different opinions.”

“No—I cannot talk of books in a ball-room; my head is always full of something else.”

“The *present* always occupies you in such scenes—does it?” said he, with a look of doubt.

“Yes, always,” she replied, without knowing what she said, for her thoughts had wandered far from the subject, as soon afterwards appeared by her suddenly exclaiming, ‘I remember hearing you say, Mr. Darcy, that you hardly ever forgave, that your resentment once created was unappeasable. You are very cautious, I suppose, as to its *being created*.’”

“I am,” said he, with a firm voice.

“And never allow yourself to be blinded by prejudice?”

“I hope not.”

“It is particularly incumbent on those who never change their opinion, to be secure of judging properly at first.”

“May I ask to what these questions tend?”

“Merely to the illustration of your character,” said she, endeavouring to shake off her gravity. “I am trying to make it out.”

“And what is your success?”

She shook her head. “I do not get on at all. I hear such different accounts of you as puzzle me exceedingly.”

“I can readily believe,” answered he gravely, “that report may vary greatly with respect to me; and I could wish, Miss Bennet, that you were not to sketch my character at the present moment, as there is reason to fear that the performance would reflect no credit on either.”

“But if I do not take your likeness now, I may never have another opportunity.”

“I would by no means suspend any pleasure of yours,” he coldly replied. (pp. 93—4)

In the latter half, Darcy's tone of speech changes because of his anger toward Wickam, of which she is not aware. But Darcy is more and more fascinated by her lively spirit and charming figure, while she still wants to assume a defiant attitude toward him.

Darcy's proposal was made in a most untimely condition—Elizabeth had been angry at his insolence, impudence, interference in Jane's happiness. Having heard him say in an agitated manner, ‘In vain have I struggled.....My feelings will not be repressed.

You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.' she was of course very much surprised—she 'stared, coloured, doubted and was silent' and 'was at first sorry for the pain he was to receive.' But when he hoped that 'it would now be rewarded by her acceptance of his hand', she could easily see that he had no doubt of a favourable answer, and she was gradually angered by the tone and implication of his remarks :

"In such cases as this, it is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of obligation for the sentiments avowed, however unequally they may be returned. It is natural that obligation should be felt, and if I could *feel* gratitude, I would now thank you. But I cannot—I have never desired your good opinion, and you have certainly bestowed it most unwillingly. I am sorry to have occasioned pain to any one. It has been most unconsciously done, however, and I **hope** will be of short duration. The feelings which, you tell me, have long prevented the acknowledgment of your regard, can have little difficulty in overcoming it after this explanation." (p. 190)

Both speak as their inner emotions order, regardless of the feeling of the other. Harsh words for harsh words make them more emotional. She could not help reproaching Darcy with strong words :

"But it is not merely this affair...on which my dislike is founded. Long before it had taken place, my opinion of you was decided. Your character was unfolded in the recital which I received many months ago from Mr. Wickham. On this subject, what can you have to say? In what imaginary act of friendship can you here defend yourself? or under what misrepresentation, can you here impose upon others? (p. 191)

Elizabeth's refusal was so unexpected to Darcy that he was disturbed and silent with anger. And Elizabeth, too, grew more angry every moment :

"And of your infliction," cried Elizabeth with energy. "You have reduced him to his present state of poverty, comparative poverty. You have withheld the advantages, which you must know to have been designed for him. You have deprived the best years of his life, of that independence which was no less his due than his desert. You have done all this! and yet you can treat the mention of his misfortunes with contempt and ridicule."

"And this," cried Darcy, as he walked with quick steps across the room, "is your opinion of me! This is the estimation in which you hold me! I thank you for explaining it so fully. My faults, according to this calculation, are heavy indeed! But perhaps," added he, stopping in his walk, and turning towards her, "these offences might have been overlooked, had not your pride been hurt by my honest confession of the scruples that had long prevented my forming any serious design..."

"From the very beginning, from the first moment I may almost say, of my acquaintance with you, 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 ground-work of disapprobation, on which succeeding events have built so immoveable 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." (pp. 192—3)

She could not hold her tongue—she enumerates his defects, such as 'arrogance, conceit, selfish disdain of others', etc. But after he quits the house, saying 'Forgive me for having taken up so much of your time, and accept my best wishes for your health and happiness.' in formal calmness, she sits down and cries for half an hour. The tumult of her mind is expressed in Represented Speech. Though she hated Darcy for his abominable pride, she felt 'it was gratifying to have inspired unconsciously so strong an affection.' Most women have a secret desire to be loved even by those men for whom they have intense hatred. And Elizabeth is no exception in spite of her reasonable mind.

Next day she was handed his letter which offered some new light on her suspicions. She was very much shocked and even felt miserable to know that she had been blind, absurd, and had made a great mistake :

"How despicably have I acted!" she cried.—"I, who have prided myself on my discernment! —I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity, in useless or blameable distrust.—How humiliating is this discovery —Yet, how just a humiliation!—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." (p. 208)

The perturbation of her mind is represented mainly in the descriptive part, especially in Represented Speech. But the above speech, though she cried to herself, is more appealing because it is expressed in Direct Speech.

When she received Jane's letter informing her of Lydia's elopement with Wickham, she was beside herself with confusion, crying, 'Oh, where, where is my uncle?' As she was going to find her uncle and aunt, she met Darcy. He, too, showed his astonishment and anxiety frankly, but he did not lose composure and offered his practical aid. He said in 'a tone of gentleness and sympathy' :

"Let me call your maid. Is there nothing you could take, to give you present relief?—A glass of wine; shall I get you one?—You are very ill."

"No, I thank you;" she replied, endeavouring to recover herself. "There is nothing the

matter with me. I am quite well. I am only distressed by some dreadful news which I have just received from Longbourn." (pp. 276—7)

When Darcy saw Elizabeth burst into tears and unable to speak another word, he observed her in compassionate silence. She did not hide her wretched situation now, and revealed it honestly to Darcy:

"I have just had a letter from Jane, with such dreadful news. It cannot be concealed from any one. My youngest sister has left all her friends—has eloped;—has thrown herself into the power of—of Mr. Wickham. They are gone off together from Brighton. *You* know him too well to doubt the rest. She has no money, no connections, nothing that can tempt him to—she is lost for ever.

Darcy was fixed in astonishment. "When I consider," she added, in a yet more agitated voice, "that *I* might 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! Had his character been known, this could not have happened. But it is all, all too late now."

"I am grieved, indeed," cried Darcy; "grieved—shocked. But is it certain, absolutely certain?"

"Oh yes!—They left Brighton together on Sunday night, and were traced almost to London, but not beyond; they are certainly not gone to Scotland."

"And what has been done, what has been attempted, to recover her?"

"My father is gone to London, and Jane has written to beg my uncle's immediate assistance, and we shall be off, I hope, in half an hour. But nothing can be done; I know very well that nothing can be done. How is such a man to be worked on? How are they even to be discovered? I have not the smallest hope. It is every way horrible!"

Darcy shook his head in silent acquiescence.

"When *my* eyes were opened to his real character.—Oh! had I known what I ought, what I dared, to do! But I knew not—I was afraid of doing too much. Wretched, wretched, mistake!" (p. 277)

She did not stand on guard at all. Her speech was emotional, fragmentary with a tone of self-reproach. She was the more miserable because she had had great confidence in her judgment. Though Darcy was greatly shocked, he never lost his sincere consideration toward her miserable condition. And Elizabeth's feminine feelings can be seen vividly through her emotionally honest speech. When we have a great shock, we usually forget our intellectual or logical attitude and suddenly become like little children—so feeble and obedient. Elizabeth could accept his kind offer without asking why and without sticking to her former opinion.

The dialogue in this chapter suggests the future reconciliation and happiness made by their mutual gratitude and modesty.

The last chapter of this novel shows us the intimate, trustful and yet lively mind of Darcy and Elizabeth. There, they stand on an equal level without any pretension or sense of obligation. She recovers her playful tone :

“How could you begin?...I can comprehend your going on charmingly, when you had once made a beginning; but what could set you off in the first place?”

“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.”

“My beauty you had early withstood, and as for my manners—my behaviour to *you* was at least always bordering on the uncivil, and I never spoke to you without rather wishing to give you pain than not. Now be sincere; did you admire me for my impertinence?”

“For the liveliness of your mind, I did.”

“You may as well call it impertinence at once. It was very little less. The fact is, that you were sick of officious attention. You were disgusted with the women who were always speaking and looking, and thinking for *your* approbation alone. I roused, and interested you, because I was so unlike *them*. Had you not been really amiable you would have hated me for it; but in spite of the pains you took to disguise yourself, your feelings were always noble and just; and in your heart, you thoroughly despised the persons who so assiduously courted you. There—I have saved you the trouble of accounting for it; and really, all things considered, I begin to think it perfectly reasonable. To be sure, you knew no actual good of me—but nobody thinks of *that* when they fall in love.”

“Was there no good in your affectionate behaviour to Jane, while she was ill at Netherfield?”

“Dearest Jane! who could have done less for her? But make a virtue of it by all means. My good qualities are under your protection, and you are to exaggerate them as much as possible; and, in return it belongs to me to find occasions for teasing and quarrelling with you as often as may be; and I shall begin directly by asking you what made you so unwilling to come to the point at last. (pp. 380-1)

Elizabeth depreciates herself, using the word ‘impertinence’ concerning her behavior, and Darcy appreciates it, saying the ‘liveliness’ of her mind. Once their misunderstandings were removed, their affections rapidly deepened, and their speeches showed us the perfect harmony of their mind. Yet she never lost her ‘lively, sportive manner of talking’ to Darcy, which astonished his sister, Georgiana, who had never been accustomed to such conversation.

III.

The dialogue between Elizabeth and Wickham is quite different in atmosphere from the dialogue between Elizabeth and Darcy. She is at first sight attracted by his

gentlemanlike appearance, good features and a very pleasing address. At the drawing-room in Meryton, she meets him again and becomes his ardent admirer. His manner of talking is so agreeable that she feels the 'commonest, dullest, most threadbare topic might be rendered interesting by the skill of the speaker' (p. 76). She had been so much astonished and interested in the strange meeting of Darcy and Wickham that she was rather glad when she had a chance to talk with him about Darcy:

"You may well be surprised, Miss Bennet, at such an assertion, after seeing, as you probably might, the very cold meeting yesterday.—Are you much acquainted with Mr. Darcy?"

"As much as I ever wish to be," cried Elizabeth warmly,—"I have spent four days in the same house with him, and I think him very disagreeable."

"I have no right to give *my* opinion," said Wickham, "as to his being agreeable or otherwise. I am not qualified to form one. I have known him too long and too well to be a fair judge. It is impossible for *me* to be impartial. But I believe your opinion of him would in general astonish—and perhaps you would not express it quite so strongly anywhere else.—Here you are in your own family."

"Upon my word I say no more here than I might say in any house in the neighbourhood, except Netherfield. He is not at all liked in Hertfordshire. Every body is disgusted with his pride. You will not find him more favourably spoken of by any one."

"I cannot pretend to be sorry," said Wickham, after a short interruption, "that he or that any man should not be estimated beyond their deserts; but with *him* I believe it does not often happen. The world is blinded by his fortune and consequence, or frightened by his high and imposing manners, and sees him only as he chuses to be seen."

"I should take him, even on *my* slight acquaintance, to be an ill-tempered man." Wickham only shook his head.

"I wonder," said he, at the next opportunity of speaking, "whether he is likely to be in this country much longer."

"I do not at all know; but I *heard* nothing of his going away when I was at Netherfield. I hope your plans in favour of the—shire will not be affected by his being in the neighbourhood." (pp. 77—8)

Wickham at first was very careful not to present his true feeling. But having found that she felt Darcy very 'disagreeable', he began to disclose his real intention. His words sounded so humble and moderate that she was favorably disposed toward him. When she heard him say 'It is impossible for *me* to be impartial', she rather felt the impartiality of his judgment. He criticized Darcy in a plausible manner, and Elizabeth, having a deep-rooted disgust against Darcy's haughty words and attitude, was easily moved by what he said in spite of her intellectual mind. When complexity and a

pleasing manner are combined, as in the case of Wickham, she is ready to believe everything he says without being cautious. She is very glad that such a gentle and intellectual person as Wickham has the same opinion as she, and sympathizes with his having been treated so cruelly by Darcy.

A woman's feeling, once having a great esteem for some one, is inclined to be absorbed in him rapidly, sometimes at an increasing tempo, without looking around her to see if there might be any other angle from which she could see the thing objectively. There is nothing in Elizabeth's mind but her antipathy toward Darcy and sympathy for Wickham. Her speech has lost the ironical and playful tone which is one of her most typical characteristics. When she talks with Wickham, her tone is quite simple, natural and even emotional:

"...The church *ought* to have been my profession—I was brought up for the church, and I should at this time have been in possession of a most valuable living, had it pleased the gentleman we were speaking of just now."

"Indeed!"

"Yes—the late Mr. Darcy bequeathed me the next presentation of the best living in his gift. He was my godfather, and excessively attached to me. I cannot do justice to his kindness. He meant to provide for me amply, and thought he had done it; but when the living fell, it was given elsewhere."

"Good heavens!" cried Elizabeth; "but how could *that* be?—How could his will be disregarded?—Why did not you seek legal redress?" "There was just such an informality in the terms of the bequest as to give me no hope from law. A man of honour could not have doubted the intention, but Mr. Darcy chose to doubt it—or to treat it as a merely conditional recommendation, and to assert that I had forfeited all claim to it by extravagance, imprudence, in short any thing or nothing. ... I have a warm, unguarded temper, and I may perhaps have sometimes spoken my opinion *of* him, and *to* him, too freely. I can recal nothing worse. But the fact is, that we are very different sort of men, and that he hates me."

"This is quite shocking!—He deserves to be publicly disgraced."

.....

"I had not thought Mr. Darcy so bad as this—though I have never liked him, I had not thought so very ill of him—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!"

.....

"We were born in the same parish, within the same park, the greatest part of our youth was passed together;.....when immediately before my father's death, Mr. Darcy gave him a voluntary promise of providing for me, I am convinced that he felt it to be as much a debt

of gratitude to *him*, as of affection to myself."

"How strange!" cried Elizabeth. "How abominable!—I wonder that the very pride of this Mr. Darcy has not made him just to you!—If from no better motive, that he should not have been too proud to be dishonest,—for dishonesty I must call it."

"It is wonderful,"—replied Wickham, —"for almost all his actions may be traced to pride;—and pride has often been his best friend. It has connected him nearer with virtue than any other feeling. But we are none of us consistent; and in his behaviour to me, there were stronger impulses even than pride."

"Can such abominable pride as his, have ever done him good?" (pp. 79—81)

When she heard Darcy's ill-treatment of him, Elizabeth was greatly shocked and could not help exclaiming, 'indeed!', 'good heavens!', etc. She uses such a strong adjective as 'abominable' repeatedly concerning Darcy's character. If Wickham had used only fair and flowery words, she would, of course, have paid no attention to what he said; she was satisfied as he had given a very 'rational account of it'—to be rational and reasonable had always been her motto.

However, when she learned of his real character from what Darcy said in his letter, she was overwhelmed with shame, since she had been proud of her intellect and judgment. She could not acknowledge the inconsistency of what he had said and done. She was very much ashamed of her prejudice and absurdity (cf. Elizabeth's speech quoted on page 11 in this paper). Her evaluation of Wickham's personality has completely changed. Now she has gotten sick of his pleasing manner which had first delighted her. But when she gets over agitation, she recognizes her fault and no longer indulges in her regrets.

Quite different from the above conversation, she is cool, composed, with some ironical eye toward Wickham when he asks her again about Darcy:

"How long did you say that he was at Rosings?"

"Nearly three weeks."

"And you saw him frequently?"

"Yes, almost every day."

"His manners are very different from his cousin's."

"Yes, very different. But I think Mr. Darcy improves on acquaintance."

"Indeed!" cried Wickham with a look which did not escape her. "And pray may I ask?" but checking himself, he added in a gayer tone, "Is it in address that he improves? Has he deigned to add ought of civility to his ordinary style? for I dare not hope," he continued in a lower and more serious tone, "that he is improved in essentials."

“Oh, no!” said Elizabeth. “In essentials, I believe, he is very much what he ever was.”

While she spoke, Wickham looked as if scarcely knowing whether to rejoice over her words, or to distrust their meaning. There was a something in her countenance which made him listen with an apprehensive and anxious attention, while she added,

“When I said that he improved on an acquaintance, I did not mean that either his mind or manners were in a state of improvement, but that from knowing him better, his disposition was better understood.” (233—4)

This time, Wickham is more emotional and irritated than before with anxiety, as he did not know how to interpret her words at first, and having caught the meaning of her words he was alarmed, agitated and embarrassed. When she heard him justify himself and dwell on grievances, she had enough composure to smile at him—she was no longer deceived by his gentle accent.

IV.

Both Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine are simple and ridiculous persons like Mrs. Bennet and Lydia, but Elizabeth's attitude toward the former is more free and objective than toward the latter. She cannot think of her mother and her youngest sister without some sense of shame and responsibility, while she can take an objective view of Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine, and enjoy laughing at them.

When she met Mr. Collins for the first time, she could not help ridiculing him whenever he spoke. He was the last person she would have liked to talk with, because of his conceited manner, absurd opinion and bombastic phrases. Therefore, she was vexed and embarrassed when he addressed her mother by saying, ‘May I hope, Madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?’ Seeing her mother consent and hasten away, Elizabeth detained her in consternation: ‘Dear Ma’am, do not go.—I beg you will not go.—Mr. Collins must excuse me.—He can have nothing to say to me that any body need not hear. I am going away myself.’ But after another moment, she recovered herself and thought it wise to get the matter over as soon as possible. She listened to his long speech with unusual patience, but at last she interrupted him:

“You are too hasty, Sir,” she cried. “You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without farther loss of time. Accept my thanks for compliment you are paying me. I am

very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am therefore by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the alter ere long."

"Upon my word, Sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal.—You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so.—Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so,...but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." (pp. 106—8)

Since he entertained no doubt of his success from the beginning, it was very difficult for her to refuse his offer. At first she explained the reason with some politeness so as not to offend him, but gradually she became impatient and expressed her refusal emotionally. Even when she said, 'Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart.', he would not believe what she said but answered with an air of awkward gallantry, 'You are uniformly charming!' (cf. p. 109). The comic effect is skilfully represented in the speeches of the two persons whose opinions never coincide with each other but remain eternally on parallel lines.

Like Mr. Collins, Lady Catherine is a purely comic figure, but plays an important part in the plot by provoking Elizabeth into declaring that she would not be afraid of Lady's threat, and by bringing the news to Darcy that she might not refuse him a second time.

Elizabeth did not lose her courage when confronted with Lady Catherine, because her stateliness was only due to money and rank. When she saw others completely awed by the grandeur of the condescending manner of Lady Catherine, she became more composed and was strongly opposed to her authoritative and impertinent tone. Her answer to Lady Catherine, therefore, was dry and brusque :

“Do you play and sing, Miss Bennet?”

“A little.”

“Oh! then—some time or other we shall be happy to hear you. Our instrument is a capital one, probably superior to—You shall try it some day.—Do your sisters play and sing?”

“One of them does.”

“Why did not you all learn?—You ought all to have learned. The Miss Webbs all play, and their father has not so good an income as your's. —Do you draw?”

“No, not at all.”

“What, none of you?”

“Not one.”

“That is very strange. But I suppose you had no opportunity. Your mother should have taken you to town every spring for the benefit of masters.”

“My mother would have had no objection, but my father hates London.”

“Has your governess left you?”

“We never had any governess.”

“No governess! How was that possible? Five daughters brought up at home without a governess!—I never heard of such a thing. Your mother must have been quite a slave to your education.” (p. 164)

Having been offended by her dignified impertinence, she answered Lady Catherine as if she had dared to trifle with her.

The dialogue between Lady Catherine and Elizabeth in Vol. III, Chap. IX displays the free and independent mind of Elizabeth. Having heard a rumour that Elizabeth would soon be united to Darcy, Lady Catherine came to Longbourne to make her promise not to marry him. Elizabeth answered her with astonishment and disdain :

—“And can you likewise declare, that there is no *foundation* for it?”

“I do not pretend to possess equal frankness with your ladyship. *You* may ask questions, which *I* shall not choose to answer.”

“This is not to be borne. Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?”

“Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible.”

“It ought to be so; while he retains the use of his reason. But *your* arts and allurements

may, in a moment of infatuation, have made him forget what he owes to himself and to all his family. You may have drawn him in.”

“If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it.”

“Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? I have not been accustomed to such language as this. I am almost the nearest relation he has in the world, and am entitled to know all his dearest concerns.”

“But you are not entitled to know *mine*; nor will such behaviour as this, ever induce me to be explicit.” (p. 354)

From the beginning Elizabeth had been in no mood to treat her cordially and she took a provocative attitude toward her. She was not afraid of her dignity; on the contrary, she became cool and logical, when she saw her anger and impatience:

“.....Have you not heard me say, that from his earliest hours he was destined for his cousin?”

“Yes, and I had heard it before. But what is that to me? If there is no other objection to my marrying your nephew, I shall certainly not be kept from it, by knowing that his mother and aunt wished him to marry Miss De Bourgh. You both did as much as you could, in planning the marriage. Its completion depended on others. If Mr. Darcy is neither by honour nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is not he to make another choice? And if I am that choice, why may not I accept him?”

“.....I have not been used to submit to any person’s whims. I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment.”

“*That* will make your ladyship’s situation at present more pitiable; but it will have no effect on *me*.” (pp. 355—6)

Elizabeth resisted Lady Catherine because she could not tolerate her arrogance and authority. She instinctively noticed what is false and foolish. She asserted her rights and freedom, saying ‘What is that to me?’ or ‘It will have no effect on *me*.’ She never submitted to the threatenings of Lady Catherine, insisting ‘We are equal.’ She seemed to be rather pleased to find her getting more furious and illogical.

From Lady Catherine’s point of view, Elizabeth is not ‘a reasonable young woman’ (cf. ‘I expected to find a more reasonable young woman.’ p. 356)—but here ‘reasonable’ means her egoism which requires obedience only to herself; everybody should believe what she says is always true. And Elizabeth answers back to her, ‘I am not to be intimidated into anything so wholly unreasonable.’ From Elizabeth’s viewpoint, it is Lady Catherine herself that is quite unreasonable. She never hesitated to tell her that she had no right to concern herself in her affairs. Though she was

indignant at her selfishness, she had some composure to look at her objectively. But when Lady Catherine mentioned her youngest sister's 'infamous' elopment, she lost her presence of mind and resentfully answered:

“You can *now* have nothing farther to say,...You have insulted me, in every possible method. I must beg to return to the house.” (p. 357)

Her speech thereafter loses its usual playfulness and reveals her indignation openheartedly.

As has been seen above, the tone of Elizabeth's speech varies according to whom she is speaking. The difference, of course, can only be detected in subtle nuances, but by careful reading, vibrations of her feeling can be felt. Especially in the dialogue between Elizabeth and Darcy, the development of the heroine through psychological conflict is reflected delicately in her tone.