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"Nature in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (novel and film)"

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INTRODUCTION

It might seem paradoxical to suggest addressing the topic of nature in a Jane Austen novel. After all, Charlotte Brontë's unflattering pronouncement on Austen's limits when it comes to natural descriptions still reverberates in our ears. When a friend of hers, George Henry Lewes, the famous essayist and 'husband' of Mary Anne Evans, a.k.a. George Eliot, advised her to start writing less melodramatically than she had done in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë wrote back, finding fault with Austen's style of writing, and indirectly defending her own. The letter, which she wrote to Lewes on January 12th, 1848, goes as follows [QUOTATION 1]:

> Why do you like Miss Austen so very much? I am puzzled on that point. What induced you to say that you would rather have written *Pride and Prejudice* or *Tom Jones*, than any of the Waverley novels?
> I had not seen *Pride and Prejudice* till I had read that sentence of yours, and then I got the book. And what did I find? An accurate daguerreotyped [photographed] portrait of a commonplace face; a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck [stream]. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses. These observations will probably irritate you, but I shall run the risk[1].

1 See http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janeart.html#charlottebronte for this quotation.

For Brontë, Austen's work is mostly characterized by unjustifiable, self-imposed limits (she mentions fences, borders, and the lack of open country), and by a narration whose "careful" and "neat" effects prove the writer's painstaking approach, but which also damagingly deprives the novel of any "bright" perspective on life and characters by not allowing them to interact with broader, open-air environments.

In the next century, in a collection of critical essays on various literary figures entitled *Women and Writing*, Virginia Woolf voiced a similar, though kinder, take on Austen's literary production. For her, Austen's limits are indeed apparent in the few "romantic moments" one finds in her novels, a phrase Woolf uses to encompass both moments of passion and natural descriptions. Austen shows signs of emotional evasion, so to speak, in those passages, but Woolf argues that one should accept Austen on her own terms because the little she is able to give in this field is enough to carry the reader's conviction [QUOTATION 2]:

> There were impressions that lay outside her province; emotions that by no stretch or artifice could be properly coated and covered by her own resources. […] She could not throw herself whole-heartedly into a romantic moment. She had all sorts of devices for evading scenes of passion. Nature and its beauties she approached in a sidelong way of her own. She describes a beautiful night without once mentioning the moon. Nevertheless, as we read the few formal phrases about 'the brilliancy of an unclouded night and the contrast of the deep shade of the woods', the night is at once as 'solemn, and soothing, and lovely' as she tells us, quite simply, that it was.' (118)

One can therefore wonder how the current prevalent view on Jane Austen was born in the first place. How did we get to a situation where the name Jane Austen immediately evokes vague ideas of beauty and romance? How can the collective unconscious be so predisposed to see Austen as a Romantic figure that we are hardly surprised to see moments of visually breathtaking beauty in the latest screen adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, Joe Wright's 2005 opus, as when for instance Elizabeth is made to stand at the tip of a Derbyshire, England, rock formation, known as Stannage Edge, to piano and violin music in the background — such a Romantic scene, by today's standards, that we almost expect Leonardo di Caprio to materialize out of the blue and to hear Céline Dion give a voice to the feelings that flutter in the heart of "Liz on top of the world[2]"?

It is this strange metamorphosis that I propose to study in this paper. I will start by taking stock of the examples of descriptions of natural scenery that can be found in the novel, with a view not only to laying stress on the paucity of natural descriptions in *Pride and Prejudice*, but also in order to try and understand the reasons for such an absence, and to assess the potency of the few instances which are actually found.

I will then move to the analysis of the only extensive natural description in the novel: Pemberley. Indeed, the description of Darcy's mansion strikes the reader's imagination powerfully and lastingly with its unaccustomed luxury of natural details, just as it titillates and fascinates the critic's mind, unveiling as it does Austen's aesthetic influences.

Finally I will turn to what in Austen's work or elsewhere has allowed the general public, and Joe Wright in particular, to "Brontify" Jane Austen. As we will see, this romanticizing of Austen is not only the logical aftermath of Austen's intermediary position in literary and aesthetic schools of thought, but also a sign of the times and a by-product of cinematic needs.

PART ONE: The paucity of natural references in *Pride and Prejudice*

▪ Limited occurrences of nature-related terms

It is interesting to notice that, objectively speaking, *Pride and Prejudice* contains limited amounts of vocabulary related to nature in the shape of trees, flowers, plants, animals, fruits, gardens, weather conditions

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[2] This is the actual title of the seventh track on the UCJ (Universal Classics) compact disc. *Pride and Prejudice: Music from the Motion Picture*. Music by Dario Marianelli. Performed by Jean-Yves Thibaudet with The English Chamber Orchestra, 2005.

and landscapes. Word searches conducted in the full-text file of the novel provided by the well-known Website called Gutenberg.org – whose results can be seen in Document A – do not retrieve many occurrences for each nature-related term.

Indeed, *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel in which the sun and moon are *never* mentioned (if one puts aside the nine occurrences of the word "Sunday"), and where the weather is hardly ever discussed, giving the lie to the notion that Britain is the country where passionate debates on atmospheric conditions are rife. In fact, apart from the various balls hosted at Meryton or Netherfield, hardly anything is set at night in the novel – certainly not Lady Catherine de Bourgh's unexpected visit at Longbourn, as in the film –, so that the narrative has no need of a moon.

A utilitarian view of natural objects and phenomena is therefore suggested: rain is mentioned, and is indeed a key dramatic agent, in Chapter VII when Mrs. Bennet plots to send her eldest daughter to Netherfield Park in hopes that the rage of the elements will detain her there for the night, thus fostering a romantic attachment between Jane and Mr. Bingley. But apart from a reference to "a succession of rain" which keeps the Longbourn lasses indoor, thus preventing their walking to Meryton, sunshine floods the rest of the novel for aught we know. Likewise, all the animals in the novel are solely mentioned in relation to the use to which they can be put: horses and ponies for transportation; trout for fishing; birds, ducks, and partridges for shooting and eating. No dogs are mentioned, but foxhounds, and cats or other domestic animals are nonexistent.

It is also striking to see how different a use is made of the wind in *Pride and Prejudice* on page 106, compared with a very similar episode in the third letter from a previous work, called *A Collection of Letters*, written before the end of 1792. In the novel two lines only help establish the obnoxious and selfish character of Lady de Bourgh, described as "abominably rude to keep Charlotte out of doors in all this wind" (106) whereas the younger Austen of *A Collection of Letters* had evidently relished in a paroxysm of humor and satire when allowing her character, Maria Williams, to write to her correspondent:

> […] Accordingly I went [when summoned by Lady Greville in her coach] and was obliged to stand there at her Ladyships pleasure though the Wind was extremely high and very cold.
> "Why I think Miss Maria you are not quite so smart [well-dressed] as you were last night—But I did not come to examine your dress, but to tell you that you may dine with us the day after tomorrow—Not tomorrow, remember, do not come tomorrow, for we expect Lord and Lady Clermont and Sir Thomas Stanley's family—There will be no occasion for your being very fine for I shant send the Carriage—If it rains you may take an umbrella—" I could hardly help laughing at hearing her give me leave to keep myself dry—"And pray remember to be in time, for I shant wait—I hate my Victuals over-done—But you need not come *before* the time—How does your Mother do? She is at dinner is not she?" "Yes Ma'am we were in the middle of dinner when your Ladyship came." "I am afraid you find it very cold Maria." said Ellen. "Yes, it is an horrible East wind —said her Mother—I assure you I can hardly bear the window down—But you are used to be blown about by the wind Miss Maria and that is what has made your Complexion so rudely and coarse. You young Ladies who cannot often ride in a Carriage never mind what weather you trudge in, or how the wind shews your legs. I would not have my Girls stand out of doors as you do in such a day as this. But some sort of people have no feelings either of cold or Delicacy—Well, remember that we shall expect you on Thursday at 5 o'clock—You must tell your Maid to come for you at night—There will be no Moon—and you will have an horrid walk home—My compts [compliments] to Your Mother—I am afraid your dinner will be cold—Drive on—" And away she went, leaving me in a great passion with her as she always does. (285-6)

The flair for comedy visible here, which is made possible by a whole array of references to windy days, heavy rain, and moonlit nights, is absent from the corresponding episode in the novel, the reader being asked to fill in the natural blanks, or simply forget that the description of settings is also part of a narrator's work. Along the same lines, it is by chance only — when the economy of the narrative demands it — that we learn anything

about the gardens or grounds that lie outside the protagonists' homes. For instance, only passing references to, or short scenes set in, a shrubbery, a hermitage, a paddock, a wilderness, and a copse allow the reader to create a piecemeal idea of what the grounds at Longbourn might look like.

Such a scant and purposeful use of the referential function in a three-volume novel could be partly explained by Austen's young age at the time of writing. After all she was still under age when she started *Pride and Prejudice*, and she may not have seen, or may have decided to defer using, the rich symbolism that such descriptions allow. Yet I believe there is also a case for the notion that the third of the novel that got "lop't and crop't" when the novel was finally published in 1813 may precisely have included narrative parts in which natural descriptions were given. A feeling of incompleteness does strike one when comparing Elizabeth's promise to inspect and memorize every lay of the land that will present itself to her on the trip she will take with the Gardiners (at the end of Chapter IV in the second volume), and the rest of the novel, apart from the Pemberley description, obviously. Here is what Elizabeth initially projected:

> "Oh, my dear, dear aunt," she rapturously cried, "what delight! what felicity! You give me fresh life and vigour. Adieu to disappointment and spleen. What are young men to rocks and mountains? Oh! what hours of transport we shall spend! And when we *do* return, it shall not be like other travellers, without being able to give one accurate idea of anything. We *will* know where we have gone—we *will* recollect what we have seen. Lakes, mountains, and rivers shall not be jumbled together in our imaginations; nor when we attempt to describe any particular scene, will we begin quarreling about its relative situation. Let *our* first effusions be less insupportable than those of the generality of travellers." (103)

Her not keeping her promise has led some critics, like Maggie Lane, to suggest that the original novel, entitled *First Impressions*, may have included both a satire of the contemporary fashion for northern tours and "a burlesque on a favourite book, *The Lakes Tour* of William Gilpin." (137) After all, Elizabeth's letter to her aunt at the end of the novel *does* thank her for *not* going to the Lakes. "How could I be so silly as to wish it!" she adds. (250)

▪ Scarcity of metaphors & similes

Be this as it may, one can but notice — maybe even regret — the relative absence of metaphors and similes in *Pride and Prejudice*, a fact which, I would argue, stems in part from the prevalence of dialogue over narrative, and in part from the scarcity of terms belonging to the semantic field of nature. Indeed, nature provides English, or any language for that matter, with many of its metaphoric expressions or phrases: a person can be described as innocent as a lamb, or foxy. A wolf in sheep's clothing is a hypocrite. A thin, brittle surface can be termed eggshell fine, and so on. But this is not so in this novel.

For instance it is quite revealing to notice how the word "nature" itself is used in the novel. Thirty-five of the thirty-six occurrences found in the novel refer to the intellectual meaning of the word, that is to say the "main characteristic," or "essence," of a thing or person. One therefore finds ample references to specific good- or ill-natured characters, or to human nature in general, as if *Pride and Prejudice* were another 18th-century essay on Man. In contrast, only once does one find "nature" in the sense of "Mother Nature," at the start of the third volume when the narrator comments that Elizabeth "had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste." (159)

However, when natural metaphors *are* found, they usually hit the mark and provide the novel with some of its most charming comic traits. Two instances I found of such metaphors are linked with Mr. Collins. Interestingly enough, those nature-related figures of speech occur in his letters only, and are used to show how unbearably pompous the man is. In the letter which introduces him to the Bennet family he begs them not to "reject the offered olive branch" (43) — he means his coming to Longbourn —, a metaphor which Mary finds "well expressed," if "not wholly new." (44) Later on, on receiving another letter from the humble inhabitant of Hunsford Mr. Bennet breaks the news to Lizzy that, Mrs. Collins being pregnant, her husband is expecting "a

young olive branch." (237) To finish in yet another letter written to rejoice over the disgrace brought on the Bennet family by Lydia's elopement with George Wickham, Collins advises them to "leave her to reap the fruits of her own heinous offence." (193)

So in Rev. Collins's case, the few natural metaphors are used to underline the fun poked at such a ridiculous character. As the text implies, a strong liking for gardening — or landscape gardening, as is the case in *Mansfield Park* — is no guarantee of a praise-worthy mind and support on the narrator's part. This point is particularly developed at the start of Elizabeth's visit at the parsonage. As we learn Collins is an avid gardener, an activity his wife Charlotte whole-heartedly encourages, if only because the time he spends outside he cannot devote to bothering her inside. But the text makes it clear that Collins's love for nature is not in good taste. The passage reads as follows:

> 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. (104)

In other words Collins loves nature for the wrong reasons in the sense that he is too apt to boast of the number of trees and the proportions of the land he possesses or perceives ("every walk and cross walk," "how many trees"), and also because there is no aestheticism in the way his analytical eye fragments and appraises natural settings. The "minuteness" with which he looks at his garden and at the distant clumps of trees prevents him from seeing, and more importantly feeling, the effect, both picturesque and imprecise, of the whole picture. His is not an imaginative or romantic, but a quantitative eye, computing as it does natural sights as if they were mere figures to be added up. Understandably Charlotte and Elizabeth cut the visit short, quoting their inadequate shoes as a pretext to avoid being chaperoned by him round "his two meadows." (105)

Interestingly, this same idea that the flora can be used to underline a character's ridicule came to Tom Hollander, the actor who plays Collins in Joe Wright's film. As Wright explains in the audio commentary on the DVD it is Hollander's suggestion that a slightly lost Collins should be seen toting a flower during the ball at Netherfield, and that, later on, he should offer Elizabeth not an olive branch but a field floweret before launching into a bungled and selfish proposal of marriage. In this last scene the discrepancy between Collins's natural pomposity and his put-on simplicity ensure his being perceived by the spectator as a grotesque figure, while suggesting that he who poses as a romantic suitor playing "She loves me, she loved me not" with a flower is in fact a predator in disguise. It is indeed Wright's belief that Collins "is all about sex," which explains why the director included shots where his Mr. Bennet is seen in the background keeping a close eye on Collins.

▪ A limited number of descriptions of natural settings

Finally apart from those few terms and metaphors, one does not get much in the way of natural description. Jane's ride to Netherfield and Collins's gardening have already been mentioned, which means that to get a complete list of the noteworthy natural references in the novel, however slight the corresponding description might be, one only needs to add five items: Lizzie's walk to Netherfield (23); her favourite walk at Rosings (113, 120); thirdly the scene where Darcy hands Elizabeth the letter in which he makes a clean breast of his feelings and thoughts after she turned down his first proposal of marriage, also in the park at Rosings (128-9); the enumeration of places Lizzy and the Gardiners are to visit on their way to Derbyshire (157); and finally the whole of the Pemberley episode (158-68).

Now those few references do serve a purpose in the economy of the novel. Elizabeth's fondness for walking in natural sites — indeed the Bennet girls' fondness for such an activity, for they do walk from Longbourn to Lucas Lodge or Meryton any chance they get in pursuit of gossip and officers — is meant to set her apart from the gentry set at Netherfield, from Darcy's aristocratic aunt, or from any person engaging in outdoor pursuits for the sake of the latest fashion.

This is made obvious in the description of her trek to Netherfield Hall (23). Indeed, the energy she spends "crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity, and finding herself at last within view of the house, with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face glowing with the warmth of exercise" (23) is obviously unheard of at Netherfield. This explains why Caroline Bingley comments that "she really looked almost wild." (24) As we know the idea of wildness and physical exertion soon came to be associated with the Romantic movement and with some of its representative figures, like Wordsworth's trek to France or Byron's famed swimming across the Hellespont (Dardanelles).

But precisely this description of Elizabeth's exertion highlights her vitality more than it does her ability to look at nature. Not being interested in sketching or drawing, she never pauses to look around. The stress therefore is on the weariness and dirt caused by her walk — not on any aesthetic emotions born of the surrounding landscape —, and also on the contrast with the refreshing "turn about the room" (38) that Caroline later takes to show how elegant her figure is, and how well she walks. Furthermore it is only during the Rosings episode that Elizabeth's attraction for natural settings is described at some length. The narrator alludes to the "often great enjoyment" she had outdoors, her "favourite walk" and its "nice sheltered path" furnishing her with hours of solitary strolls which "no one seemed to value but herself, and where she felt beyond the reach of Lady Catherine's curiosity." (113)

Consequently such a stylistic scarcity of nature-related terms and metaphors, combined with the paucity of natural descriptions in the novel, comes as a surprise to whomever reads biographical accounts of the writer. For instance Henry Austen's presentation of his sister in his "Biographical Notice of the Author," signed Dec. 13, 1817, which precedes both *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, emphasizes her passion for nature and her avid reading of the books of William Gilpin, the famous apostle of the Picturesque movement in Britain (of whom more will be said in the next part):

> She was a warm and judicious admirer of landscape, both in nature and on canvas. At a very early age she was enamoured of Gilpin on the Picturesque; and she seldom changed her opinions either on books or men. [259]

Also one of the only two surviving portraits we have of her — besides the two black and white silhouettes, that is — is a watercolor painted by her sister Cassandra in 1804, when Jane was in her late twenties. We cannot tell the sitter's age on the watercolor for the simple reason that this is a back view of her [PICTURE A]. What we do see, though, is a slender female clad in pale blue bonnet and dress, seated upright on a bank, her left hand delicately placed on her knee. While a rather leafy branch sticks out of the top-right corner, we see this elegant form gazing straight ahead of her, as if lost in the contemplation of the spectacle of nature.

To finish, if *Pride and Prejudice* never mentions any landscape gardener we know that the 18th-century debate on landscape gardening was a passion of Jane Austen's which plays an important role in her other novels. "Improvements" brought to estates and gardens are central to a few revealing dialogues in both *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park*, for example, while pre-Romantic and Romantic figures such as Cowper, Scott, Byron, Thomson, Gray, if never quoted in *Pride and Prejudice*, are cultural references used elsewhere in her work.

This novel therefore stands out in Austen's literary output — so much so that the only exceptions to the rule suddenly loom large and strike the reader's imagination in a way that they may not have, had the novel included many such instances.

PART TWO: Noteworthy exceptions: aesthetic influences and "Pemberley"

By "exceptions," I mean the several references to Gilpin's work that we find interspersed in the novel, and the aesthetic influences which one recognizes in the description of Pemberley.

▪ William Gilpin and the Picturesque

Indeed though the Reverend William Gilpin (1724 – 1804) is not once mentioned in the novel, tacit references to his books and aesthetics can be found here and there, proving as Henry Austen pointed out that his sister was well versed in the writings of the man who, as high priest of the picturesque and of irregularity, encouraged the public taste for savage scenery, and did much to popularize both a new sensibility and a new way of drawing from nature. For instance, in an essay published in 1792 and titled *On Picturesque Beauty*, Gilpin wrote that contrary to the received idea according to which beauty is necessarily linked with symmetry, smoothness, or "neatness," his wish is to promote a more rugged and irregular kind of beauty, which he calls *picturesque* on account of its being already found in some *paintings* (by Claude Le Lorrain, Nicolas Poussin, and Salvator Rosa, for instance), and because of its great usefulness in sketching or drawing *pictures*.

Speaking of a smooth and symmetrical type of architecture, called Palladian, which flourished in the neo-classic age his metaphors suddenly take a vehement turn [QUOTATION 3]:

> The proportion of it's [sic] parts—the propriety of it's ornaments—and the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it Picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet [= *marteau*] instead of the chissel [sic, = *burin*]: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. (7)

Or also, speaking of the manicured lawns which, running up to the foot of the houses, were already a common sight in the British countryside, having been generalized by a famous landscape gardener by the name of Lancelot "Capability" Brown (1715 – 83) [ALSO QUOTATION 3], Gilpin writes:

> Turn the lawn into a piece of broken ground: plant rugged oaks instead of flowering shrubs: break the edges of the walk: give it the rudeness of a road: mark it with wheel-tracks; and scatter around a few stones, and brushwood. (8)

The general public came to know of Gilpin's aesthetic code and observations when, at the request of his friends, he started publishing the notebooks and illustrations he compounded during his travels around Great Britain. For example, a book called *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, &c. Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; Made in the Summer of the Year 1770* came out in 1782, or twelve years after Gilpin took that trip. Another book, about the Lake District, was published in 1786, followed by yet others on the Scottish Highlands, the West Country, and the Isle of Wight in 1789, the New Forest in 1791, the coasts of Hampshire, Sussex and Kent in 1804, and finally Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and North Wales in 1809.

That Jane Austen knew about at least one of these books is indubitable, as a careful reading of *Pride and Prejudice* indicates. The footnote on page 36 of the Norton Critical edition rightfully links an insolent remark of Elisabeth's to the author of *Observations on several parts of England, particularly the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland*, published in 1786. When Lizzy says to Darcy, Miss Bingley, and Mrs. Hurst: "You are charmingly group'd, and appear to uncommon advantage. The Picturesque would be spoilt by admitting a fourth. Good-bye," she pokes fun at them by comparing them to a trio of cows. Her reference, of which her companions may not even be aware, is to Gilpin's theory according to which it is easier to sketch an odd numbers of cows, or mountains, or any other object (254) — a theory which, by the way, Joe Wright shares, preferring as he declares in his audio commentary to shoot groups of five females, not six (Mrs. Bennet

and her five daughters), which means that he sometimes chooses not to include all of the Bennet girls in some of his shots[3]. Gilpin includes the two following sketches in his book (plates No. xxvii and xxviii) [PICTURES B & C]:

and his commentary on those sketches is as follows [QUOTATION 4]:

> These two prints are meant to explain the doctrine of grouping *larger cattle*. *Two* will hardly combine. […] But with *three*, you are almost sure of a good group, except indeed they all stand in the same attitude, and at equal distances. They generally however combine the most beautifully, when two are *united*, and the third a little *removed*.
> *Four* introduce a new difficulty in grouping. *Separate* they would have a bad effect. Two, and two together would be equally bad. The only way, in which they will group well, is to *unite three*, as represented in the second of these prints, and to *remove the fourth*. (vol. II, p. xl-xli, commentary to plates xxvii et xxviii)

Likewise in the last chapter of volume II Austen seems to borrow again directly from Gilpin. The itinerary that she has Lizzy and the Gardiners follow is actually a summary of the route Gilpin himself took in 1772. "Oxford, Blenheim, Warwick, Kenelworth, Birmingham, etc." (157) are items in the much longer list of towns and villages mentioned by Gilpin[4]. To boot, on the same page, Elizabeth associates Derbyshire with the famous minerals, or "petrified spars," for which the county is renowned — a detail which Austen may have picked up from Gilpin's description of the "curious, variegated" fluorite, which he says is called *Derbyshire drop* in London and *Blue John* on the spot, and can be "formed into small ornamental obelisks, urns and vases." (ii, 213-4)[5]

▪ An aesthetic conflict in the description of Pemberley

But the influence of Gilpin's Picturesque on Austen is most clearly felt in the description of Pemberley at the very start of the third volume. More exactly it is interesting to notice how two diverging aesthetic codes conflict with each other. [See Document B]

On the one hand, the most part of the Pemberley description insists on Picturesque details such as the vastness and variety of the grounds. The choice of Derbyshire itself is revealing in the sense that it is a county famous for the abruptness of its natural scene. Gilpin was one of the first tourists to describe the Romantic charm of such places as the Manifold valley or Dovedale, and indeed Dovedale is mentioned in the novel as one of the places

3 In the audio commentary Wright draws the viewer's attention to the presence of a five-candle holder during the dinner scene at Rosings.

4 Gilpin's trip takes him through "Hounslow, Oxford, Blenheim, Woodstock, Warwick, Kenelworth, Coventry, Birmingham, Bolton, Leasowses, Hagley, Shucksborough, Stone, Newcastle, Manchester, Lancaster, Lonsdale, Cartmel-Bay, Levens, Kendal, Ambleside, Windermere, Bowness, Keswick, Rydal-lake, Wyburn-lake, Borrodale, Castellet, the fall of Lodoar. Rosthwait, Satterthwait, Watenlath, Newlands, Gascadale, the lake of Butermer, and Gatesgarth-dale." (I retain Gilpin's spelling of those place names).

5 At the beginning of Chapter 15 of Northanger Abbey, the two youngest Miss Thorpes are said to have "laid out some shillings in purses and spars."

visited by the Gardiner party. At Pemberley remarkable spots and viewpoints are underlined from the beginning (159). The reader is told that the eye is "instantly caught" by the view and that the road winds "with some abruptness," repeated surprise effects being the norm in Picturesque aesthetics. Later on the different views from the house exacerbate the impression of abruptness and surprise created the first few minutes spent on the grounds:

> Elizabeth, after slightly surveying it, went to a window to enjoy its prospect. The hill, crowned with wood, 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. (159, bold characters mine)

Once in the woods the same array of variety and spectacular views awaits the strollers as they wend their way along the circuit walk. The path leaves the river bank and ascends the higher grounds where carefully studied openings in the trees "g[i]ve the eye power to wander" over yet other vistas in which only natural elements are visible, and no human intervention, in the shape of monuments for example, can be felt. Now this lack of architecture and those unexpected openings in the trees are typical of the preferences of the Picturesque style, as Mavis Batey explains in her remarkable book on *Jane Austen and the English Landscape*, in which she devotes a whole chapter to Darcy's grounds [QUOTATION 5]:

> The early landscaped gardens such as Stowe, Studley Royal and Stourhead had walks with designed vistas, but these were orientated on man-made internal scenery and buildings, especially temples, whereas picturesque circuit walks looked beyond the garden into natural scenery and the prospect was broken down into a series of framed peephole scenes, where the viewing points corresponded to the 'stations' Gilpin recommended to picturesque tourists. The varied arrangement of the walks and the foreground planting along them was crucial to the success of 'hide and discover' views for which William Mason gave detailed instruction in his poem *The English Garden.* (73-4)

Therefore the idea is that a sort of illusion must be maintained: nature must look as if it were untouched by the hand of man, and illimitable, as in those Gilpin sketches where tiny, off-center figures with their backs to the viewer push back the limits of the framed canvas by pointing to faraway objects that none but themselves can see.

Also, in a passage strangely reminiscent of the visit of Sotherton, Mr. Rushworth's estate in *Mansfield Park*, the reader notices that the further away from the house the walkers stray, the wilder and hostile Nature becomes. At one end of the estate Lizzy, the Gardiners and the gardener cross a bridge into "one of the narrowest parts" of the grounds (164) where they are surprised by the different character of the scene before them. What they see is one of those glens, or deep narrow valleys, which Gilpin describes as so picturesque in his study of *Forest Scenery* [1791] and which, he asserts, must be left in their rough state without clearings for seats if one wants to avoid making the view "awkward" and "disgusting."[6] The sight of this glen even strikes fear in the heart of one of them:

> […] it was a spot less adorned than any they had yet visited; and the valley, here contracted into a glen, allowed room only for the stream, and a narrow walk amidst the rough coppice-wood which bordered it. Elizabeth longed to explore its windings; but when they had crossed the bridge, and perceived their distance from the house, Mrs. Gardiner, who was not a great walker, could go no farther, and thought only of returning to the carriage as quickly as possible. Her niece was, therefore, obliged to submit […]. (164)

Accordingly the party immediately retrace their steps, as if too much picturesqueness could threaten their lives or lead to a voyage of self-discovery that they are afraid to take. More variety and surprises are in store for them on the way back, in the shape of trout, and "some curious water-plant" (166) which they proceed to inspect, not to mention Darcy himself whose "abrupt" appearance astonishes and confuses Elizabeth. (163)

On the other hand a different strain in the narrative stresses contradictory and more conventional aesthetic values, as if the part of Lizzy which is attracted to the wilder scenery of the contracted glen were checked by the more genteel notion that symmetry and order are best. Indeed, during the walk in the woods, one notices that the adjectives she uses to describe the varying scenes around her ("delightful" and "charming," 165) sound but hackneyed and unoriginal. I imagine it is just such an apparent lack of emotion which must have irritated Charlotte Brontë when she read the novel, and which must have led her to deem Jane Austen such a cold fish.

As Document B shows symmetry reigns supreme in the first part of the description of Darcy's home (159). A mirror image is even created. The narrator states that the Gardiners' carriage stops at "the top of a considerable eminence where the wood ceased." In other words the party stand for a few moments before a backdrop of trees, called "Pemberley Woods," while on the other side of a stream "Pemberley House" sits, "backed by a ridge of high woody hills."

Moreover one of the few details which transpire from the flitting scenes set in or around the house is that it is surrounded by lawns: the party are first seen to "[walk] across the lawn towards the river" (162) on their way to the woods, and it is naturally to this same spot that they return at the end of their visit (167). In Chapter III of the third volume, when Elizabeth returns to the house and discovers the north wing of the mansion, the windows command a view of "beautiful oaks and Spanish chestnuts […] scattered over the intermediate lawn." (173) As Quotation 3 showed us earlier on, smooth lawns and little clumps of trees run counter to Picturesque aesthetics, so that the part of the Pemberley grounds that lies directly before the house is not designed in accordance with Gilpin's taste, but with Capability Brown's. Maggie Lane, in her book entitled *Jane Austen's England*, even goes so far as to call this part of Pemberley [QUOTATION 6] "her most perfect Brownian creation. […] There is a bridge – a typical Brown touch – and between the water and the house, simply lawn." (23)

Also, in the notes to his French translation of *Pride and Prejudice* for La Pléiade Jean-Paul Pichardie shows that the house has all the marks of an Andrea Palladio design — which, as Quotation 3 also reminded us, Gilpin found contrary to the Picturesque taste. Pichardie comments that [QUOTATION 6]: "Au caractère spectaculaire des effets architecturaux et décoratifs, on préfère désormais les proportions, la pureté des ordres et des styles, le bon goût de la décoration." (1073)

To summarize and simplify one could say that two conflicting strains are perceptible in this description. One the one hand Austen's innate liking for natural environments is given free play when she lets her creations wander around the grounds, at least until the moment she reins in her characters, and again exercises control over them —and maybe over herself— by making rationality and the fear of the unknown check their momentary instinctive urge to go wild. This is the walk-in-the-woods part of the narrative.

On the other hand Austen subtly uses her descriptive powers to indirectly characterize the owner of Pemberley as a man of good taste and morals, two eighteenth-century requisites in the psychological makeup of a hero. Indeed in literature, as we know, places are often metaphors for the people who inhabit them, so that any quality attached to the house, grounds, even servants in this case, can be attributed to the owner himself. One line from Richardson's *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, an epistolary novel which greatly influenced Jane Austen, says it all [QUOTATION 7]: "The gardens and lawn seem from the windows of this spacious house to be as boundless as the mind of the owner, and as free and open as his countenance." (Vol. 7, Letter 5) In a very similar way Austen seems to indicate that it is high time Elizabeth got a *second* impression of Darcy, one in which the heroine will approve of his good taste, of his apt choice of servants, and of every one of the discriminating decisions he has made in regard to the upkeep of his estate. It therefore matters that Elizabeth finds in Mrs. Reynolds a housekeeper that is "less fine, and more civil" than she had anticipated. It is also

important that the river banks be "neither formal, nor falsely adorned" (159) because it shows that Darcy's is a middle-of-the-road approach, neither too neo-classic nor too Romantic, neither stick-in-the-mud nor ostentatious.

▪ The best of both worlds

Consequently, we have no choice but to agree with Pierre Goubert when he calls Austen "a daughter of the 18th century,"[7] that is to say a writer strongly rooted in the literary and moral culture of the Augustan age. But more precisely she is a daughter striving to strike a problematic pre-Romantic balance between this intellectual heritage and her natural sympathy for newer aesthetic currents. Interestingly the same thing has been said about Gilpin — for instance by Alexander Ross in his book on the influence of the Picturesque movement on nineteenth-century British fiction, when he describes in Gilpin the same tension and divided allegiance as that perceptible in Jane Austen "between the classical tendencies of the eighteenth century and the romanticism of the nineteenth" (7).

It is no wonder then that Austen never launches into rave romantic descriptions of natural scenery or human passions. The Picturesque movement was never noted for any such excess. It was meant by Gilpin as a way for the middle class to derive simple pleasure from the observation of British nature. Such observation need not be too close either. The Picturesque eye is content to derive somewhat vague, but highly personal, impressions from nature. For example, Gilpin argues in *Beauty* that little distinction is necessary when sketching trees: "The oak, the ash, and the elm, which bear a distant resemblance to each other, may all be characterized alike. In a sketch, it is enough to mark *a tree*." (78) What does matter to him is whether the tree is "full-leaved" or if its "straggling ramifications" are visible. However paradoxical this might seem at first, then, the very fact that few specific varieties of plants and trees are mentioned in *Pride and Prejudice*, as Document A shows, makes Austen's narrative Picturesque: it is only Romantic writers who could tend to turn natural descriptions into bestiaries and lists of flower names and tree species.

This explains why some art critics have occasionally been suspicious of, and tough on, the Picturesque movement. They have detected a certain absence of depth in it, as if it consisted in seeing without feeling. In some cases they have even found fault with a certain heartlessness in its tendency, for example, to prefer sketching the old and poor on the grounds that tattered clothes or ravaged faces and hands make a better picture. Such suspicion was voiced by John Ruskin when he tried to draw a picture of the average person who derives pleasure from the paintings of a Picturesque artist like Clarkson Stanfield:

> kind-hearted, innocent of evil, but not broad in thought; somewhat selfish, and incapable of acute sympathy with others; gifted at the same time with strong artistic instincts and capacities for the enjoyment of varied form, and light, and shade, in pursuit of which enjoyment his life is passed, as the lives of other men are for the most part, in the pursuit of what *they* also like,—be it honor, or money, or indolent pleasure.[8]

Now this portrait may not be a precise delineation of Jane Austen's person or character. Some parts of it might sound unfair, like the alleged lack of "acute sympathy with others." Yet I would certainly argue that the general look of it does bear a likeness to the impression left by the few episodes set in natural environments in the novel.

PART THREE: the romanticizing / Brontification of Jane Austen

The question then logically arises how things got to the current perception of *Pride and Prejudice*, or indeed any Jane Austen novel for that matter, as a Romantic work with passion to spare. For instance, composer Dario

7 Quoted by Batey, p. 7

8 John Ruskin: Works of John Ruskin, vi, 21. Cited by Ross, p. 34.

Marianelli's characterization of Elizabeth Bennet helps us understand his mental representation of her after seeing the first screening of Joe Wright's film. In the CD booklet he writes [QUOTATION 8]:

> Music was needed for the scenes in which Liz and Georgiana play the piano. Lizzie's piano piece became one of the main themes of the score, and the piano became very much her voice, or perhaps the voice of her feisty and independent soul, strong-minded and passionate, but also gentle and caring." (3)

To be honest the heroine deserves these epithets at one point or another, but this is certainly not the whole picture. For example the book makes the moral point that judging by first impressions, as Lizzy does, leads to nothing but suffering and humiliation while *Mansfield Park* shows patient stoicism to be the key to happiness. Also for all of Lizzy's strong-mindedness and independence of soul, to use Marianelli's words, her eventual love for Darcy is actually a compromise in the sense that she has to vanquish her natural inclination for Wickham's greater beauty, as the text makes perfectly clear, just as the Marianne of *Sense and Sensibility* finally falls for Colonel Brandon when the dashing Willoughby deserts her. One more example could be the last chapter but one of *Pride and Prejudice* (Vol. III, Ch. XVIII), when the two protagonists are given the chance to finally bare their hearts to each other. Indeed, it is striking to see how devoid of romance or passion those pages are by today's standards, revolving as they do around topics like reason, propriety, and the stupidity of others.

▪ "Jane Austen" as a construct

Highlighting only such characteristics as romance in Austen's novel is therefore typical of the fact that, for movie-goers and the reading public alike, "Jane Austen" has become a construct, made up of a series of ideas and impressions somehow pieced together.

A few details about her life have made their way into common knowledge, helping create a Romantic impression. The lack of events in her life conjures up sad, confined images in our minds. Another representation of her is that of an ironic recluse of sorts, carefully wording her sentences on a little bit of ivory, far from the tumult and trappings of city life. Her remaining unmarried we tend to interpret as evidence that either her suitors were unsuitable or that her feelings for them were never strong enough for the need to marry to be really felt. Bits of paragraphs from some of her few surviving letters — like the one she sent to her niece Fanny Knight in November 1814 — also prove that she preferred what people called "romantic marriages" to marriages of convenience:

> I […] entreat you not to commit yourself further, & not to think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection; and if his deficiencies of Manner &c &c strike you more than all his good qualities, if you continue to think strongly of them, give him up at once. (277)

This sentimental interpretation of biographical facts, combined with occasional remarks and allusions in her novels showing that Austen really enjoyed reading pre-Romantic poets like Cowper, Thomson, and Gray, are part of the collective construct which, I would argue, has allowed successive generations to make Austen more Romantic than she actually was. However boring, apathetic, and irritatingly moralizing a heroine like Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* might seem to some, it is always the vivifying image of characters like Elizabeth Bennet, trudging in the mud to Netherfield Park or falling for the charms of Pemberley, which captures the reader's imagination and is seen as the true Austen signature.

Interestingly this sentimental attachment and psychological approach to Austen's novels is not shared by the general public only. It was also the conviction of such an avid reader as Virginia Woolf that something happened to Austen at the end of her life, and that a "new element" appeared in her descriptions of autumn *Persuasion*. Woolf writes [QUOTATION 9]:

> The boundaries were marked; moons, mountains, and castles lay on the other side. But was she not sometimes tempted to trespass for a minute? Was she not beginning, in her own gay and brilliant manner, to contemplate a little voyage of discovery? […] She is beginning to discover that the world is larger, more mysterious, and more romantic than she had supposed. We feel it to be true of herself when she says of Anne: 'She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning.' She dwells frequently upon the beauty and the melancholy of nature, upon the autumn where [= whereas] she had been wont to dwell upon the spring. […] But it is not only in a new sensibility to nature that we detect the change. Her attitude to life itself is altered. She is seeing it, for the greater part of the book, through the eyes of a woman who, unhappy herself, has a special sympathy for the happiness and unhappiness of others, which, until the very end, she is forced to comment upon in silence. Therefore the observation is less of facts and more of feelings than is usual. (118-9)

▪ Wright's Romantic rereading of the novel

With Woolf's passionate backing, even though he may well have been utterly unaware of it, Joe Wright is fully justified in rereading *Pride and Prejudice* in as romantic or Brontified a way as he chooses. Interestingly the audio commentary he recorded for the DVD edition shows that he felt uncomfortable with the ending of his film. Speaking of the last scene where Lizzy is seen walking outside at dawn while Darcy, who has come to propose to her for a second time, slowly emerges from the mist, Wright apologetically comments:

> I battled with myself over this scene 'cause I think it's probably going over the top, and a bit over-Romantic, and a bit slushy […] And again this shot, I hold it for such a long time that, I don't know, we're probably gone too far with it, but…

But he soon corrects himself and makes the point that films, like novels, are about "wish-fulfillment" — a convincing point in the sense that it certainly is possible to read Jane Austen's novels as literary microcosms in which virtue, patience and stoicism are rewarded.

Not surprisingly it is through natural elements and landscapes that this voluntary excess of Romanticism is conveyed in the film. I am not thinking only here of the image of Elizabeth at the tip of Stannage Edge, though this is indeed one of film's most spectacular shots. Other scenes come to mind, some of which required the use of CGI, or computer-generated imagery, like a striking shot of a full moon near the beginning of the film, or a night view of the hills of Derbyshire, which was actually shot by day then treated to look like night, with the Gardiners' carriage hurrying back South after the news of Lydia's elopement.

It is interesting to notice that Wright also chose to use nature in various symbolic ways. For example, he shot both of Darcy's proposal scenes outside, unlike the corresponding events in the novel, while Mr. Collins's proposal is filmed inside, which equates love and natural environments. Wright adds heavy rain to the episode of the ill-fated Rosings proposal to let the reader foresee what its outcome will be — a literary cliché which Austen does not, maybe *will not*, resort to. Also as we learn from the audio commentary, it was the director's idea to use two birds symbolically. The melodious song of the blackbird he associates with Lizzy — "so often, throughout the film, when something's happening to Lizzy, you can hear a blackbird," he explains — while the squawk of a parrot in its cage precedes a shot showing the unpleasant Lady Catherine de Bourgh, to make it sound like the animal and her ladyship speak in a similar way.

▪ Literary vs. cinematic needs

Finally it is also thanks to natural elements that many characters in the film acquire a physicality, sometimes a carnality, with which the novel does not necessarily concern itself. It is all very well for Austen to delight the reader with the war of ideas which her fictional creatures wage, through witty dialogue and occasional narrative, but characters in a film simply cannot sit around and chat. If a writer can be content to be a truly talented painter of soul and character, a director needs bodies and movement. At Longbourn House this need for movement is

provided by an impressive array of animals, including geese and a pig, which seem to stray in and out the house at leisure, as if the Bennets lived on some sort of a farm. More revealingly many characters interact at some level with the natural world: the bookish Mr. Bennet is transformed into a flower lover whom we often see taking care of potted orchid-like flowers or spinning a dragonfly on a stick; Darcy's violent emotions after his proposal has been rejected are conveyed by his erratic nocturnal ride through the Rosings woods; Elizabeth's nascent longing for intimacy with Darcy is illustrated not only by the attention she devotes to the gallery of sculpted nudes at Pemberley but also by the split apple she prepares to eat in the picnic scene with the Gardiners — proving once again, if need be, how easily one can use natural objects as symbols, at least if one chooses or is inclined to.

CONCLUSION

This study of *Pride and Prejudice* has therefore shown that nature plays less of a role in Jane Austen's novel than it does in Joe Wright's adaptation, mainly because the novelist inherited from the 18th century a liking for accurate descriptions of the faults and foibles of human nature, while she tended to reserve references to the natural world around her for discussions on, or illustrations of, the aesthetic debates of her time.

Like Charlotte Brontë a few readers may have been put off by this intellectualized vision of Nature but by and large this has not prevented more recent readers from enjoying the novel, partly because time has covered it with a Romantic patina that Austen did not intend, and partly because they are not aware of, or choose to ignore, Austen's stronger preoccupations and concentrate instead on her knack for comedy and satire, and her subtle powers of observation.

This is something which George Lewes, whose correspondence with Brontë I quoted at the start of this presentation, seems to have anticipated. Indeed, in an essay on Jane Austen published in 1859, that is to say four years after Charlotte Brontë died, Lewes compares the strengths and limitations of these two women novelists. He agrees with Brontë that Austen's scope is limited but the remarkable Brontë, he explains, was too passionate and devoid of humor to find pleasure in the other woman's work or to understand her true greatness. As Lewes puts it his essay [QUOTATION 10]:

> Miss Austen has nothing fervid in her works. She is not capable of producing a profound agitation in the mind. In many respects this is a limitation of her powers, a deduction from her claims. But while other writers have had more power over the emotions, more vivid imaginations, deeper sensibilities, deeper insight, and more of what is properly called invention, no novelist has approached her in what we may style the "economy of art," by which is meant the easy adaptation of means to ends, with no aid from extraneous or superfluous elements.

The "economy of art" which Lewes sees as Austen's characteristic may indeed be the sign of her greatness, and the reason for her ongoing popularity. In literature less can be more, and Austen's readers have proven that they are more than happy to fill in the gaps.

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A- Occurrence of nature-related terms in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Author: Xavier Lachazette, Université du Maine, Le Mans

Page references are to Donald Gray's Norton edition (2001)
E-text used for this word search: www.gutenberg.org

Nature (36 times)

- *In the sense of '**Mother Nature**:'* **only once**, in the description of Pemberley [159]
- *Other senses:* '***His nature***,' '***her nature***,' '***the nature of —***,' '***of that nature***:' **17** times; '***Ill-***' or '***good-natured***:' **13** times; '***Human nature***:' **3** times; '***By nature***:' **twice**

Flora

- **MAN-MADE SPACES:** '***Park***:' **22 times**, of which: **14** at Rosings [46, 103, 104, 107 x2, 113 x2, 120, 121, 128 x2, 129 x2, 164]; **5** at Pemberley [55, 158, 164, 211, 250]; **1** at Longbourn [229]; **1** "Netherfield Park" [3]; **1** "Haye Park" [201]; '***Garden***' (-er): **14 times**; of which: **12** at Hunsford Parsonage [46, 49, 103, 104 x3, 105, 106 x 2, 112, 114, 142], and **2** for Pemberley's gardener [162, 163]; '***Lawn***:'**5 times**; of which: **2** at Pemberley [167, 173]; **3** at Longbourn [195, 228, 229]; '***Shrubbery***:' **4 times**; of which: **1** at Netherfield [36], & **3** at Longbourn [59, 195, 229]; '***Paddock***:' **3 times** at Longbourn [185, 195, 216]; '***Wilderness***:' **once** at Longbourn [229]; '***Hermitage***:' **once** at Longbourn [230 = copse]; '***Plantation***' (wood of planted trees): **once** at Rosings [129]
- **MORE PRISTINE SPACES:** '***Wood***' (-s, -y): **14 times**; of which: **1** at Longbourn [195], & **13** at Pemberley [158 = ii, 19; 10 times in iii, 1; 173; 254]; '***Copse***:' **4 times** at Longbourn [195, 208, 230 x2]; '***Field***:' **4 times** [23 x2, 104, 119] + "Hatfield" (178) & "Netherfield"]; '***Grove***:' **3 times** at Rosings [113, 129 x2]; '***Meadow***:' **once** [105], but no ***Forest*** for instance
- **SPECIFIC VARIETIES:** '***Oak***:' **once** at Pemberley [173] + "Oakham Mount" [245]; '***Spanish chestnuts***:' **once** at Pemberley [173]; '***Laurel hedge***:' **once** at Hunsford [104]; no ***beeches, birches, plane-trees, ash-trees, walnut-trees, limes*** for instance**;** '***Olive branch***:' **metaphorically** for Collins's 'peace offer:' **3 times** [43, 44, 237]
- **UNNAMED VARIETIES:** '***Verdure***:' **once** [129]; '***Water-Plant***:' at Pemberley [166]

Weather conditions & Time of day

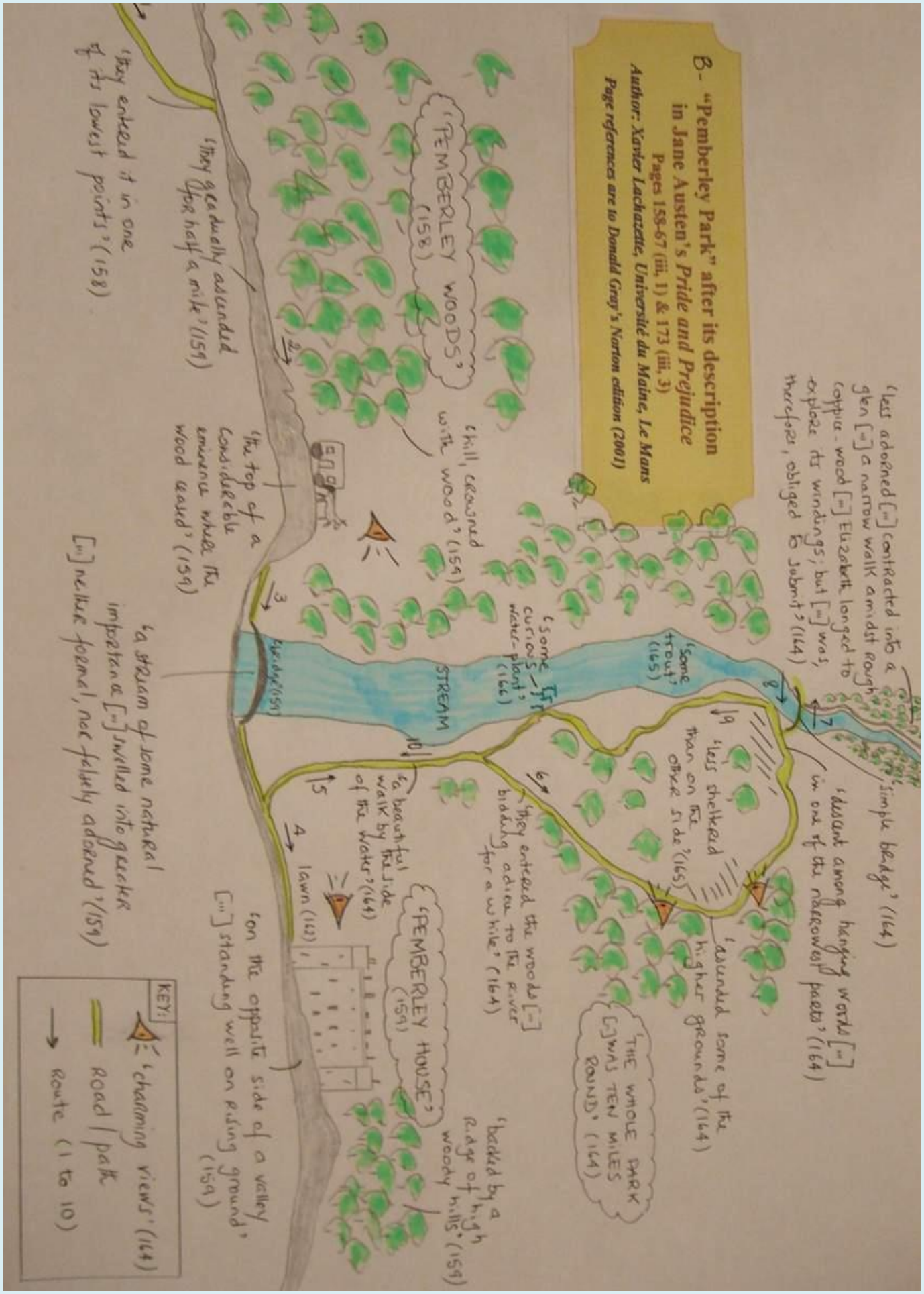
- '***Weather***:' **6 times** [23, 61, 107, 111, 113, 139]
- '***Rain***': **5 times** [21, 22 x3, 60]
- '***Wind***:' **once** [106]
- No ***sun*** or ***moon*** (except *Sunday* [9 times])

Fruit

- '***Fruit***:' **3 times**; of which: **2** for refreshment taken at Pemberley [174, 176]; **1 metaphorically** in Collins's letter [193]
- '***Grapes, nectarines, and peaches***:' once each [compose the refreshment mentioned above, 174]
- '***Wine***:' **3 times**; mentioned but never actually drunk [14, 52 = port, 179]

Animals: for food, fishing, hunting, or transportation purposes only

- '***Horse(s)***:' **14 times**; '***ponies***:' **3 times** [46, 211, 250]
- '***Venison***:' **once** [222]
- '***Fish***:' **6 times** [42 = none for dinner; 165 x4, & 173 = Mr. Gardiner's fondness for fishing]; '***Trout***:' **once** in Pemberley stream [165]
- '***Birds***:' **twice** for hunting [206 & 219]; '***Partridges***:' **once** [222]; '***Ducks***:' **once** [food, 215]; '***Covies***' = coveys, flocks of birds for hunting: **once** [219]; no ***wrens, sparrows, nightingales, thrushes***, for instance
- '***Foxhounds***:' **once** [14] but no ***cats*** or domestic ***dogs***


B- "Pemberley Park" after its description in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice
Pages 158-67 (iii, 1) & 173 (iii, 3)
Author: Xavier Lachazette, Université du Maine, Le Mans
Page references are to Donald Gray's Norton edition (2001)
'less adorned [...] contracted into a glen [...] a narrow walk amidst rough coppice-wood [...] Elizabeth longed to explore its windings; but [...] was, therefore, obliged to submit' (164)
'simple bridge' (164)
'descent among hanging woods [...] in one of the narrowest parts' (164)
'ascended some of the higher grounds' (164)
'THE WHOLE PARK [...] WAS TEN MILES ROUND' (164)
'less sheltered than on the other side' (165)
'They entered the wood [...] binding adieu to the river for a while' (164)
'some trout' (165)
'some curious water-plant' (166)
STREAM
'PEMBERLEY WOODS' (158)
'hill, crowned with wood' (159)
'They gradually ascended for half a mile' (159)
'the top of a considerable eminence where the wood ceased' (159)
'a stream of some natural importance [...] swelled into greater [...] neither formal, nor falsely adorned' (159)
'They entered it in one of its lowest points' (158)
'a beautiful walk by the side of the water' (164)
'PEMBERLEY HOUSE' (159)
'backed by a range of high woody hills' (159)
'on the opposite side of a valley [...] standing well on rising ground' (159)
lawn (162)
KEY:
'charming views' (164)
Road / path
Route (1 to 10)

C- Notes on Joe Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005)

Author: Xavier Lachazette, Université du Maine, Le Mans

1. A movie/novel comparison: scenes shot, or not, in natural settings

Key: The 3 signs (+, =, and -) in the right column indicate that, in the movie, the presence of the natural elements detailed in the center column is either added to the novel (+) or also found there (=). A minus (-) signifies that natural elements mentioned in the novel are not to be found in the movie, and are thus "subtracted" from it.

0	Scene Select & Title screens	Piano music & strings; image of Lizzy standing at the edge of a cliff [Stannage Edge, Derbyshire], her dress floating behind her in the wind.	+
1	Opening scene (Lizzy reads & enters Longbourn)	• Blackout with blackbirds singing. • Sun rises slowly over the countryside. • Lizzy walks home, reading the last § of a novel (*Pride and Prejudice*, in fact); crosses a bridge with ducks in the foreground & cows crossing secondary bridge in the background; into a poultry yard; into the house; out again (man feeding geese); into the house ("Mr. Bennet, Mr. Bennet" scene); out again.	• + • + • +
2	Lizzy walks to Netherfield	One-sequence plan (à la Jane Campion): huge, beautiful oak on the left of the screen, Lizzy crosses slowly to the right. CGI treatment (gloomy sky painted in afterwards). Potholes and mud apparently, since Lizzy's step falters at some point near the middle of the screen. She looks "medieval" to the movie's Miss Bingley ["almost wild" in the novel, 24].	=
3	Darcy & Wickham meet	The "very cold manner of [the] greeting" [53] between Darcy and Wickham set in a field alongside a stream, not in a Meryton street as in the novel [49-50].	+
4	The Bennets leave Netherfield	House on the left. The Bennets in their carriage leave the ball in the wee hours, Mrs. Bennet prophesying that her Jane will be married before three months are over.	=
5	Aftermath of Collins's proposal	• In lieu of an introduction, Collins offers Lizzy a field floweret. • Lizzy rushes to a lake as soon as she's turned down Collins's proposal to make him happy. • Mrs. Bennet rushes to that same spot, scaring geese on crossing a bridge; [then back into the house where] she fetches Mr. Bennet who's in the midst of caring for some potted flowers; then back to the river where Mr. Bennet finally tells Lizzy that he will not see his daughter again if she *does* agree to marry Collins. • Charlotte's unexpected news while Lizzy is on a rustic swing (she cannot afford to be "romantic" [85]; season change symbolized by the sights Lizzy sees in the farmyard while sitting on her revolving swing: a small sailboat, cows with farmers, other farmers hay-gathering, heavy rains (twice).	• + • + • + • +; = (rains)
6	Lizzy at Rosings & Darcy's proposal	• Colonel Fitzwilliam's news in church [*not* Collins's sermon on the virtues of "intercourse"!] have Lizzy run in the rain across a bridge, & take shelter inside a neo-classic, circular temple with a colonnade, where she rejects Darcy's unexpected proposal. • Darcy gives Lizzy a letter directly at the Parsonage, not in the park at Rosings. • The violence of Darcy's thoughts in the minutes that follow are symbolized by the speed at which he rides his horse through the woods.	• + • - • +
7	Pemberley	• The Gardiners & Lizzy wait for their coach to be repaired. They while away the time with a picnic of sorts (Lizzy eats a Granny Smith apple, nicely cut in two), sitting at the foot of a huge tree. • Arrival at Pemberley; impressive first sight of the house. • One limited view from the house (not the several views mentioned in the novel). • Darcy catches Lizzy on the front gravel esplanade. She has lost the Gardiners, and returns to the inn on foot, down a sloping field with the ruins of a house on the right.	• + • = • - • +
8	Lovers' declarations at Longbourn	• The two wooers arrive on foot at Longbourn. • They go in, then come out again. Bingley awkwardly rehearses his proposal by the lake (the same spot where Lizzy sought refuge after Collins's proposal). • Last scene in the British version: Lizzy & Darcy "unexpectedly" meet at dawn. She has	• + • + • ++

		crossed a bridge, and suddenly sees him walking across the misty field. • Last scene in the American version: the newly-weds (it is to be supposed) exchange sweet little nothings. It seems that Darcy has already learned to poke fun at himself, and lost much of his former formality…	• +++

2. Main locations used in Joe Wright's film

Locations in Jane Austen's novel	*Locations used in Joe Wright's movie*
"Longbourn-house," Hertfordshire, the Bennets' family home	Groombridge Place, Kent, near Turnbridge Wells and the Sussex border
"Netherfield Park," Hertfordshire	Basildon Park, Berkshire, near Reading
"Rosings Park," Kent	Burghley (pronounced "burly"), Lincolnshire, near Stamford
Collins's sermon near "Hunsford Parsonage", Kent	The chapel at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire
Elizabeth crosses a bridge in the rain & Darcy's first proposal to her near Collins's rectory in Kent	Stourhead, Wiltshire: Palladian bridge & Temple of Apollo
a Derbyshire cliff at the edge of which Elizabeth stands dramatically to "romantic" music in the background	Stannage Edge, Derbyshire
Elizabeth & the Gardiners' improvised picnic at the foot of a tree	Part of Sherwood Forest, Derbyshire
"Pemberley," Derbyshire	1) Chatsworth, Derbyshire for the house itself and the grounds 2) Wilton House, Wiltshire for some of the interiors of "Pemberley," as for instance the moments when Lizzy wanders about the mansion and hears/sees Georgiana playing the piano, or when Darcy rushes outside to catch her

3. *Pride and Prejudice,* the soundtrack

Composed by Dario Marianelli
Performed by Jean-Yves Thibaudet
Soundtrack available in UCJ.

- Titre Pride and Prejudice : B.O. (2005) (Disque compact)
- Titre français Orgueil et préjugés (Disque compact) B.O. (2005)
- Auteurs Marianelli, Dario (Compositeur)
- Auteurs secondaires Thibaudet, Jean-Yves, piano , Wright, Joe (Réalisateur)
- Edition Universal ; P2005
- Description 1 disque compact, 1 feuillet

- Contient : Dawn ; Stars and butterflies ; The living sculptures of Pemberley ; Meryton townhall ; The militia marches in ; Georgiana ; Arrival at Netherfield ; A postcard to Henry Purcell ; Liz on top of the world ; Leaving Netherfield ; Another dance ; The secret life of daydreams ; Darcy's letter ; Can't slow down ; Your hands are cold ; Mrs. Darcy ; Credits

Source : Médiathèque Louis Aragon, Le Mans, online catalogue.

D - Quotations and Bibliography
Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Author: Xavier Lachazette, Université du Maine, Le Mans

Page references are to Donald Gray's Norton edition (2001)

A) Quotations

INTRODUCTION

1. Charlotte Brontë's letter to George Henry Lewes [January 12th, 1848] on Jane Austen: "Why do you like Miss Austen so very much? I am puzzled on that point. What induced you to say that you would rather have written *Pride and Prejudice* or *Tom Jones*, than any of the Waverley novels? / I had not seen *Pride and Prejudice* till I had read that sentence of yours, and then I got the book. And what did I find? An accurate daguerreotyped [photographed] portrait of a commonplace face; a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck [stream]. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses. These observations will probably irritate you, but I shall run the risk." (See www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janeart.html#charlottebronte)

2. Virginia Woolf on Jane Austen's limitations and power: "There were impressions that lay outside her province; emotions that by no stretch or artifice could be properly coated and covered by her own resources. […] She could not throw herself whole-heartedly into a romantic moment. She had all sorts of devices for evading scenes of passion. Nature and its beauties she approached in a sidelong way of her own. She describes a beautiful night without once mentioning the moon. Nevertheless, as we read the few formal phrases about 'the brilliancy of an unclouded night and the contrast of the deep shade of the woods', the night is at once as 'solemn, and soothing, and lovely' as she tells us, quite simply, that it was." (118)

PART TWO

3. William Gilpin (1724-1804) on Palladian architecture: "The proportion of it's [sic] parts—the propriety of it's ornaments—and the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet [= *marteau*] instead of the chissel [sic, = *burin*]: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps." (*Beauty*, p. 7)

The same on lawns: "Turn the lawn into a piece of broken ground: plant rugged oaks instead of flowering shrubs: break the edges of the walk: give it the rudeness of a road: mark it with wheel-tracks; and scatter around a few stones, and brushwood." (*Beauty*, p. 8)

4. William Gilpin on the grouping of cows: "These two prints are meant to explain the doctrine of grouping *larger cattle*. *Two* will hardly combine. […] But with *three*, you are almost sure of a good group, except indeed they all stand in the same attitude, and at equal distances. They generally however combine the most beautifully, when two are *united*, and the third a little *removed*. / *Four* introduce a new difficulty in grouping. *Separate* they would have a bad effect. Two, and two together would be equally bad. The only way, in which they will group well, is to *unite three*, as represented in the second of these prints, and to *remove the fourth*." (*Observations*, vol. II, p. xl-xli, commentary to sketches xxvii and xxviii)

5. Mavis Batey on Pemberley: "The early landscaped gardens such as Stowe, Studley Royal and Stourhead had walks with designed vistas, but these were orientated on man-made internal scenery and buildings, especially temples, whereas picturesque circuit walks looked beyond the garden into natural scenery and the

prospect was broken down into a series of framed peephole scenes, where the viewing points corresponded to the 'stations' Gilpin recommended to picturesque tourists. The varied arrangement of the walks and the foreground planting along them was crucial to the success of 'hide and discover' views for which William Mason gave detailed instruction in his poem *The English Garden*." (73-4)

6. Maggie Lane on Pemberley: "Pemberley is her most perfect Brownian creation. […] There is a bridge – a typical Brown touch – and between the water and the house, simply lawn." (23); **Jean-Paul Pichardie on Andrea Palladio**: "Au caractère spectaculaire des effets architecturaux et décoratifs, on préfère désormais les proportions, la pureté des ordres et des styles, le bon goût de la décoration." (1073)

7. **From Samuel Richardson's *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*** [1753-4]: "The gardens and lawn seem from the windows of this spacious house to be as boundless as the mind of the owner, and as free and open as his countenance." (Vol. 7, Letter 5)

PART THREE

8. Composer Dario Marianelli on Elizabeth Bennet: "Music was needed for the scenes in which Liz and Georgiana play the piano. Lizzie's piano piece became one of the main themes of the score, and the piano became very much her voice, or perhaps the voice of her feisty and independent soul, strong-minded and passionate, but also gentle and caring." (*Pride and Prejudice: Music from the Motion Picture*, CD booklet, p.3)

9. Virginia Woolf on Austen's "new sensibility to nature:" "The boundaries were marked; moons, mountains, and castles lay on the other side. But was she not sometimes tempted to trespass for a minute? Was she not beginning, in her own gay and brilliant manner, to contemplate a little voyage of discovery? […] She is beginning to discover that the world is larger, more mysterious, and more romantic than she had supposed. We feel it to be true of herself when she says of Anne: 'She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning.' She dwells frequently upon the beauty and the melancholy of nature, upon the autumn where [= whereas] she had been wont to dwell upon the spring. […] But it is not only in a new sensibility to nature that we detect the change. Her attitude to life itself is altered. She is seeing it, for the greater part of the book, through the eyes of a woman who, unhappy herself, has a special sympathy for the happiness and unhappiness of others, which, until the very end, she is forced to comment upon in silence. Therefore the observation is less of facts and more of feelings than is usual." (118-9)

10. George Henry Lewes on Austen and Brontë: "Miss Austen has nothing fervid in her works. She is not capable of producing a profound agitation in the mind. In many respects this is a limitation of her powers, a deduction from her claims. But while other writers have had more power over the emotions, more vivid imaginations, deeper sensibilities, deeper insight, and more of what is properly called invention, no novelist has approached her in what we may style the "economy of art," by which is meant the easy adaptation of means to ends, with no aid from extraneous or superfluous elements."

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