

## Laughter and Smiles

By Thomas Dutoit, U Lille 3. The following is not to be circulated or used without the permission of Thomas Dutoit.

EB = D

\* Smiling and laughing are two gestures or actions, two kinds of bodily language, throughout much, but not all, of *Pride and Prejudice*. Smiles and laughter are not actual forms of verbal language, for the most part of the book. Smiles and laughter are always the addition of the narrator, since characters never themselves say something like “I am laughing” or “I am smiling.” Smiles and laughs are therefore, like for example crying and tears, always something that belongs to the narration and to description, not to direct dialogue.

\* Smiles and laughing very often belong to a form of knowledge, or at least to a character’s believing that she or he has some greater knowledge than others. It is not however always true that the character who smiles or laughs does so from a position of superiority, and there are times when the laugh or the smile is ultimately on her or him who thinks she or he is superior. Smiles, and laughter are first of all a form of communication.

\* Smiles and laughter are however different, even if both tend to express some form of good humour. Smiles basically belong to a form of behavior that exercises some restraint, whereas laughter does seem to belong to a breach of decorum or of polite society. Laughter has different degrees, but it is a sliding register, going basically from EB to Lydia, and basically expressing social criticism or mockery or more than that in some cases. It is noteworthy that laughter does not seem to be ever expressed by people such as the Darcy’s or Lady C, or Mr Collins. There seem to be some people who cannot reach laughter.

\* There are also parts of the book without laughter and even without smiles. Passages such as from the time of Lydia’s disappearance is known until the solution to the crisis lack any reference to smiles or laughter, as is not surprising (170-79 no laughter). Mr C’s proposal, Mr D’s first proposal, Lady C’s diatribe, are some of the other moments in the text. Laughter is also very absent from the serious conversation between JB and EB re: Bg’s defection (90-91).

1. When Darcy makes his remark, page 18, that every savage can dance, Sir William’s response is given as “Sir William only smiled.” Smiling here is a way for Sir William not to

take offence (Mr D has just made Sir William's remark about dancing as refinement look stupid). If Sir William's response to Darcy's sarcasm is to smile, EB will use a smile to conceal the sarcasm of her remark, when, bottom 18, she says, facetiously, that "Mr Darcy is all politeness." She knows he is not, but when the narrator adds that she says this "smiling", it shows that EB hides her real feeling behind the smile. Her smile is a mask.

2. Similar to Sir William when he "only smiled" is how D responds to EB's comparison of poetry and love. After EB says, top 31 3<sup>rd</sup> par, that poetry can only nourish a love that is already "stout," the response of Mr D is given just as Sir William's was: "D only smiled." On the same page we learn that Lydia was "stout." Throughout the novel, Lydia is the personification of a Mad Laughter, but she is also the representative of wild animality, associated with sexual libido. The narrative cross reference of "stout" Lydia and "stout" love suggests first that EB knows what "stout love" even is. It suggests that EB is experienced. This is why D's response is marked as "D only smiled." Just as Sir William understands the racist joke about savages, dancing and sexuality, so, too, D's silent smile shows an understanding, but not a comment on, what is said. The rest of the room, too, is silent ("and the general pause which ensued"), indicating that everyone is thinking along the lines that D is thinking.

3. When, on page 16 (3<sup>rd</sup> par.), Charlotte Lucas's discourse – which is: get married, then get to know your partner, happiness is all chance – makes EB laugh, EB disagrees with CL. EB's laughter is laughter at the cynicism and pragmatism of CL. Laughter is not complacent; it is not a form of pretending to agree.

4. Laughter belongs to mirth, which in *Ecclesiastes* (House of Mirth, House of Mourning), is the sign of a superficial society. Laughter and mirth are how certain characters express their own feeling of superiority. On page, bottom, 2<sup>nd</sup> to last par., the Miss Bingley's are mirthful at the Bennet and the Gardiners: "To this speech ... his sisters gave their hearty assent, and indulged their mirth for some time at the expense of the dear friend's vulgar relations". The Miss Bingleys are mirthful at other people because the other people are lower, but also because Mr Darcy has put them those people down. Mirth has here a choric function, but of a chorus that is not critical. The word "mirth" tells us that they belong to the House of Mirth: they will not be saved. The Bg sisters do not laugh; they are full of mirth: it is possible that this distinction is essential.

5. Smiling is a way of showing understanding but refraining from talking. The smile is a form of communication that tells the others something like, "I prefer not to respond to that." It is a form of politeness, but it does not signify contentment. In fact, the smile shows discontent, but in a socially undisruptive way. On page 34 (last par), after Bg makes a joke at D's expense,

we read that “Mr. Darcy smiled, but EB thought.” Similarly, when, on page 35, 4<sup>th</sup> par from bottom, after Mr D insults EB by asking her to dance, very indecorously and improperly, a wild reel in private, EB “smiled, but made no answer”. These smiles in sum say something like, “I have understood you, but I do not care to answer you: I am not pretending to ignore you, I will not be dragged onto that territory with you, I will not fall into your trap.” The smile says that without the smiler having to say all that, which would be rude and offensive. The smile is rudeness under erasure.

6. Sometimes laughter itself is an answer, more important than any words that one might answer with. Laughter is a way of ridiculing the other who has done or said something that clearly mistreat the receiver. When D, Miss Bg and Mrs Hurst awkwardly and insincerely ask EB to walk outside with them at Netherfield, 36 bottom, EB “laughingly answered.” Her answering laughingly verges on being rude; in any case, it is a putdown to the others. EB laughs *at* others. Laughter is a form of answer when one has been put down that does not get angry. Laugh at your enemies, rather than getting angry. But laughter then is a form of self-defense. Anger is a form of self-destruction because it makes you look bad precisely when it is the others who should be made to look bad or stupid or ridiculous.

7. To be able to laugh at someone is the sign that you can love them and that you can forgive them. Laughter is forgiveness. If someone can be laughed at, it means that the someone has a weakness that he or she cannot help. You can laugh at someone who has an imperfection because it is something you have to forgive in the person. To laugh at someone suggests you have some possibility of closeness, that the other person is not put so high on a pedestal that he or she is above all others. On 39, D is laughed at by EB, but D is not laughed at by CBg: laughing at someone is a sign of intimacy: “Intimate as you are, you must know how [laughing at D] is done”. The fact that EB can laugh at others is the proof that she can be intimate with others, which is to say vulnerable and aware of the other’s vulnerability. CBg admits that she cannot laugh at D, which is to say she cannot be intimate with the other. From that moment on, D is pulled to EB and not to CBg. It is only when EB learns that D cannot forgive others, that she realizes that he cannot laugh, and because he cannot laugh, he cannot yet love. The strange thing in the book is that laughter seems largely to be only possible among those who have an intensity, and they are those who can love, can make themselves vulnerable. When EB says, 40, that she cannot laugh at D bc has a pitiful fault, it is bc he cannot forgive, and cannot laugh at others’ foibles (40): this passage early in the book indicates how much D will have to change his ways before EB can love him.

8. Laughter can sometimes be entirely internal, which indicates all the more that laughter can be a form of offence or insult or at least of impropriety. When Mr B laughs at Mr C, 47 3<sup>rd</sup> par, the laughter is done silently, for it is concealed under “the most resolute composure of countenance”. (“absurd as he had hoped,” “listened with keenest enjoyment”). This scene is very similar to how D makes fun of EB on 62-63 (bottom, top). Just as on the top of 47, Mr B makes jokes at the expense of Mr C, the man he is talking to, D also makes jokes at the expense of EB, which she does not fully perceive, just as Mr C does not realize he is being played with and thereby made fun of. But when D does it on 62-63 (bottom, top), it shows that D has changed: now he is able to laugh, although not out loud, at the absurdity of what others say. Quote from “Do you talk by rule then, while you are dancing?” to “He made no answer.”

9. Throughout the novel, there are various opposites to laughter. One is something like indignation. When W recounts his story, 55-57, EB feels indignation. Other opposites include panic and almost terror, as for example EB’s reaction to the news of Lydia and Wickham’s disappearance. Rage is another, as in the example of Lady C late in the book. Stiff artificiality is another, the example being in Volume II, those passages at Rosings where Mr Collins and Lady C officiate. Laughter, and even smiling, are not constant through the book, although scenes that are not meant to be funny for the characters, are for the reader (say, with Lady C and EB at the end or Mr C and the world at Rosings, or Mr C and EB in his proposal).

10. The smile is narrative shorthand for a character’s feeling of satisfaction, in particular at the misfortune of others, misfortunes that the one who smiles thinks are deserved by the unfortunate. On page 57 3<sup>rd</sup> par from bottom, when EB sees Miss Anne de Bourgh, and understands how much of a dull deadbeat she is, the narrator informs us that EB smiles silently: “This information made EB smile, as she thought of poor Miss Bg”. EB has been here told about Miss de Bourgh as potential match for D. The smile is a way of laughing internally at one she does not like, Miss Bg, yet the narration only needs to put the smile there for us deduce the rest.

11. Laughter can be, and very often is, a lack of patience and critical thinking. When JB and EB discuss D, EB is quick to malign him and to laugh at him, but JB resists EB’s laughter. On the bottom, very bottom of 58, JB says to EB: you may laugh at me, but I can’t think Mr D bad. 58, “Laugh as much as you chuse.” EB is certain that she herself is right, and her laughter is a form of expression of her supposed superiority over JB. In fact, here, laughter expresses lack of patience and critical investigation, whereas JB’s fighting laughter off is a sign of her intellectual honesty. In fact, JB is only hearing hearsay, and JB being laughed at by EB, makes EB be the real one who deserves to be laughed at, as we will learn later in the book. Laughter

therefore may often parade as superiority, but it itself is prone to be laughed at, to being the object of itself.

12. Smiling can be the mark of taking pleasure in the impetuosity and impertinence of the other. After EB has more or less made fun of D, or at least tried to make fun of him, during and after their dancing at the Netherfield ball, D is unruffled, and even seems to take pleasure in her lively talk. Even though she tells them that his conversation is poor and that they have nothing to talk about, on 64 very top, he pursues talking to her, obviously because he is enjoying it. When he asks, “‘What think you of books?’ said he, smiling”, the smiling marks that he has some means of resisting her and egging her on. He is not going to give up easily, and he is taking pleasure in her talk, even if she is being impertinent and impetuous with him. That is to say, he likes someone who is like that, so the more she does it, the more he will continue. And indeed, this is the proof that although he thinks JB not good enough for Bg, and her family really not good enough for him, he will still in II.ix show that he is interested in her, wants to marry her and her alone, taking her away from all her family (that is the background of the all the exchange about how far Charlotte Collins is now from her family).

13. Laughter can be a liability, an indulgence that one ought to be careful about since to indulge it is to make oneself vulnerable. Laughter is a mode of making oneself undefended, momentarily unguarded, and during those moments of letting one’s guard down or of letting one’s own feeling of superiority get carried away, things happen that otherwise could be prevented. For example, on 72 mid page, EB is “so near laughing” that she can’t say anything to stop Mr C from proposing. It is literally because she is close to laughing that she is unable to speak, and therefore unable to stop him. Laughter is a moment of feeling invulnerable, but in fact it is a moment of making yourself vulnerable, which is why it is close to love.

14. The smile is a form of complicity, but also restraint. When Mr B tells EB that if she marries Mr C, she’ll never see her father again, but if she does not marry him, she’ll never see her mother again (“An unhappy alternative” 76 4<sup>th</sup> from bottom), “EB could not but smile at such a conclusion.” The only response possible for EB is to smile: the smile is a form of response that is also a non-response. If you smile, you do not speak, and therefore are freed from deciding, all the while that the smile also expresses a meaning. The smile shows complicity between speaker and listener, and here the smile shows the affinity of father and daughter. This will not always be the case, as later it will be on the very point of laughter upon which EB detaches herself from the rule of her father.

15. It is necessary to smile to love, or in any event, the smile is the first necessary condition for the development of love. There are many characters incapable of smiling – Lady

C, Miss Anne de Bourgh, Mr C, perhaps also Charlotte Lucas, and in a sense Lydia is too far gone to be able only to smile since Lydia is only in the most abandoned laughter – but the smile, as opposed to laughter, is what distinguishes JB. JB, on 82 very top, is described this way: “How can you talk so,’ said Jane faintly smiling”. A key moment here, what we have is JB who smiles, in acknowledgement of EB’s truth: ie, JB agrees, in the smile, that it is better to offend friends of friends than the friends themselves. It is better to seek my happiness than that of strangers. It is better to love Bg and offend his sisters than to please his sisters and not love Bg. The smile is the sign, for the reader, sent by the narrator, that JB is capable of the love to which the book aspires, and will do what is necessary when the time comes. This smile telescopes to EB writing much later, in her letter to Mrs Gardiner, that 250, “[JB] only smiles, I laugh.”

16. Laughter is a self-healing mechanism. Laughter is a means to overcome wounds, and she or he who is quickest to laugh, is quickest to overcome trauma, mortification. Very bottom 94-very top 95, Mrs G says, when slighted, it is best to “laugh yourself out of it”. EB has this quality, but JB, who can at most smile, will feel pain longer than EB.

17. There are different kinds of smiles. One is the “conscious smile”. In her conversation with Mrs G, EB shows signs of being able to take advice. 97 3<sup>rd</sup> par, EB, “with a conscious smile” = EB smiles about having reminded her mother to invite W. The conscious smile here means she takes advice, without resenting it. The conscious smile is an acknowledgment of doing something she should not do.

18. There are times when laughter is impossible, even if the reader is laughing, and even if certain characters would love to laugh. 109, the conversation or dialogue of Lady C and EB is funny, but not there is no laughter. There is, of course, smiling, or more exactly a smiling that is held behind a mask that conceals smiling: 5<sup>th</sup> par 110, “EB could hardly help smiling”, and bottom 110 (2<sup>nd</sup> par to last): “replied EB smiling”. Smiling is her knowing she’s playing with Lady C. The smile, when it is shown, is a form of rebelliousness, and the text informs us immediately that Lady C has understood that not only is EB talking up and back, but is even smiling, ie, internally laughing, at her Lady C: or at least is what EB supposes (last line 110, first line 111).

19. Laughter and smiling, when mingling together, is something rather rare in the book. The closeness of the relationship between JB and EB is in large measure contained in how the former smiles, the latter laughs, and how these two are complementary. This complementarity is also to be found in the other main couple (by contrast, Bg and JB both only smile; neither Mr C nor Mrs C smile; both Mr and Mrs G smile – we can imagine they also both laugh; Lydia

laughs but what does W do? Does he not also smile? Are they not the couple like EB-D?), that is to say, is found in D and EB. For example, top 116 1<sup>st</sup> par and 2<sup>nd</sup> par: laughter and smiling between D and EB. EB is able to laugh at herself. D is able to smile at her, but not scornfully, rather affectionately. It is important to note here that this is before Colonel F tells EB in II.x that D stopped the Bg-JB marriage.

20. The smile is a tricky form of communication, precisely because it is non-verbal. It is a kind of phrase, there is a sender, there is a receiver, but the message is lacking in it. The lack of message makes it highly interpretable. A key moment in the book occurs when EB and D are talking, II.ix, D having come to Hunsford to see EB alone. Very bottom 118, very top of 119. The situation is one of great misunderstanding. D is there to see if EB would mind being married and cut off from her family. But they are talking about the Collins. **Read, “It is proof of your own attachment” to “in a colder voice”.** The smile, the sort of smile, is misread. EB thinks he’s referring to JB and Bg, but he’s referring to himself and EB. EB’s answer encourages him, he gets hot, he moves closer, his flesh/ *chair*, and she is overtaken, surprised. The smile is a phrase whose content is not marked.

21. Laughter requires intimacy, and it is thanks to Colonel F’s laughter that Charlotte Lucas knows that D is not usually so stupid, so silent, so tight-lipped. 1<sup>st</sup> par 120, Col F laughs at the stupidity of D. If we cross-reference to other moments in the text, where EB tells Mrs G about Bg being uncivil, *and therefore* in love, because to be in love is to be unaware of one’s social duty in conversations with others, the lover being the one who can’t take his eyes off the loved one, well then we see that what Col F does, by laughing at his stupidity, is provide the proof to Mrs C that D is in love with EB, that D is not always stupid, just when he is enthralled by this woman.

22. The smile is also the locus of a strange form of telepathy or of intimacy between characters that can be acknowledged, but not indulged. When Col F tells how D prevented a marriage, 123 4<sup>th</sup> par, he parries a question from EB, “And what arts ... to separate them?”. EB’s question is striking and penetrating. She goes to the rancid and rotten core of the matter, which must take Col F by surprise. Col F response is to put up the mask of the smile. But EB was right on the mark, and the mask comes down, 131 2/3rds down, when D admits to having used “arts”. EB is able to penetrate masks, to penetrate the protective shields of decorum which are the masks, the smiles of polite society, and this announces her fiercely audacious assault on D that wounds him to the core (he fixes the JB-Bg marriage, before making his own second proposal). Col F makes a jest about how D’s triumph lessened by what EB says. But the jest reveals what is just.

23. The smile is the mark of fear, and momentary hypocrisy. When EB slams D with “you deprived my sister of happiness” (3<sup>rd</sup> par, 126), D’s response is a smile: 6<sup>th</sup> par 126, “He even looked . . . incredulity”. D’s smile is a form of fear, that is so surprised that it’s first reaction is a kind of denial, which she refuses to accept: “Can you deny . . . done it?”. The smile here belongs to the high society D belongs to, and if it is a form elsewhere in the book of maintaining politeness, here it verges on hypocrisy and falsehood, which is why EB rips it off his face. This is a kind of “emaskulation.”

24. Smiles and laughter are absent, not surprisingly, from II.xi and xii and xiii. The proposal, the letter and the letter-reading scenes. The smiles return in II.xiv. The smile only returns in the book when, 138 2<sup>nd</sup> par of xiv, EB smiles about Lady C. EB is not without a smile thinking that Lady C would’ve been her aunt, and her smiling about Lady C is because she, Lady C, thinks D in love with Anne de Bourgh. The smile’s return signals a new period in the book: the part of the book devoted to D’s proposal is over, and the smile is the sign of a return of comic relief.

25. Laughter is apparently univocally good in the book. Although Lydia’s laughter may be, as I will want to argue, the ultimate transgression that is the source of all that is good in the book, because the non-ethical origin of ethics, there’s another laughter that is cast as bad. When EB re-reads D’s letter, 140 2<sup>nd</sup> par exact middle, she is distressed about how bad her father is for not having raised the younger daughters responsibly. The form his irresponsibility takes is laughter, his being limited to only laughter, incapable of acting other than by ridiculing laughter: “Her father contented with laughing at them, would never . . . youngest daughters.” Of course, EB thinks this after D’s letter. Still, it marks a turning point in the book, as Mr B is openly criticized, and laughter is seen to be the negative cause of Lydia’s excessive laughter.

26. Laughter really starts in II.xvi with the elevation of Lydia to a big role. That laughter of Lydia explicitly enters the text now in order to fill up its lack henceforth in EB, who now has the jokes be on her. Structurally, pp 143-46, mark a reversal as EB becomes serious/ grave, and Lydia supplants EB in the role of the laugher. A new book starts in this chapter. Lydia is sheer laughter, Lydia is the rational animal, the linguistic animal, the speaking animal reduced to Laughter. Lydia is the personification, the incarnation of laughter liberated from all social convention, from all meaning, all formality. For Lydia, speech is replaced by laughter. This is why, 144 middle (“Jane and and Elizabeth . . . Lydia laughed and said”). Lydia laughs at formality. Lydia rips all masks off society, anyone can hear anything, there is no decorum at all. But Lydia is also the breakdown of speech into laughter, as “Lydia laughed and said” shows, but also, 144 bottom last line, “now let us . . . talk and laugh all the way home.” Whereas above

laughter turned into speech, here talk breaks down into hilarious laughter, laughter without a cause and laughter without any meaning. We see it again on 151, in particular where EB, 151 2<sup>nd</sup> par, evokes the “death-warrant of all possibility of common sense for [Lydia]”. Lydia’s laughter is the death of all possibility of meaning, it is an anarchical and utterly mad laughter. Although her laughter is associated with life and vitality, this laughter taken to its extreme as pure laughing speech kills language, kills meaning. It is this inherent threat of death coming from sheer madness, from sheer laughter, that makes Lydia say, 145 **starting with “Dear me! We had such a good piece of fun”** (10 lines down) to **“I should have died”**. Such laughter is also the death of sexual difference, as Lydia orchestrates transvestism among the officers, in what is tantamount to the gender difference upon which a Jane Austen novel seems largely to be based for it to have any meaning: hard to find meaning in a Jane Austen world for things like same-sex sex, same-sex marriage, men who are women and women who are men.

27. Laughter is a destructive force that can, if unbound and constant, only lead to one’s destruction and downfall. EB on 148 all 1<sup>st</sup> par, recognizes that her style, her wit, led her astray, led her to offend D, and others. Laughter in this part of the novel is no longer a sure-fire positive tool or reaction. Unlike the laughter that allows EB to overcome mortification quickly, laughter now backfires on EB and JB. EB, who had believed in laughter, now changes her tune, and argues that W’s evil should be left for a later revelation. “Sometime hence it will be all found out, and then we may laugh at their stupidity in not knowing it before”. However, this laughter turns on EB/ JB. They think that they will laugh at others, but the opposite occurs, because the whole town will laugh at the Bennet family.

28. Laughter can be silent, and can take the form of a laughter internal to the reader, hidden behind a smile in a character. But this time, the smile is a smile that the person who smiles herself does not understand. I may smile, but in fact I am being smiled at. This is the depth of irony in Austen. The crucial passage between W and EB, bottom 153 and top 164, “Nearly three weeks” to “E could not repress a smile.” In all this passage, the joke is on EB, and not on W, and this is a place where the narrator is definitely having a laugh at EB’s expense, although that may not be completely obvious. W understands that EB is now with D, and so W will go after Lydia.

29. The smile in the second half of the book has changed in nature. When at Pemberley, Mrs G will smile, but EB cannot produce a smile: complicity and communication is broken. 160 2<sup>nd</sup> par, “Mrs G smiled, but EB couldn’t return it.” EB now knows about W, but Mrs G doesn’t. The smile, which had been the profound affiliation EB had with those most intimate to her, now is a mark of exclusion, as EB is being symbolically transferred to another family, to another

world. Mr and Mrs G also smile when Mrs Reynolds the housekeeper imagines that no one can be a match for Mr D. 161 4<sup>th</sup> par, the sentence says all, and the whole dynamic transfer of the book occurs here. EB is no longer able to share their verb, to share their language, their words. She is divided by a puncture, the period, alone in her one sentence. It is precisely this that makes her, paradoxically, be the one to match Mr D, her now incapacity to smile which is going to go with a Mr D who will smile at her on the next page. 162 5<sup>th</sup> par EB sees the painting representing D, “At last it arrested her ... such a smile ... when he looked at her.” The picture comes alive (see bottom of next par “fixed his eyes upon herself”). She is arrested, he fixes her, he fixes her with his eyes and with his smile. EB, who had been laughter, now learns from D the smile, is literally impressed by D’s smile. This chapter, the seeming triumph of the book, the artistic triumph, the triumph of art, before the triumph of life at the end of the book, this chapter therefore has 164 3<sup>rd</sup> par the groundskeeper speak “With a triumphant smile” (3<sup>rd</sup> sentence of 3<sup>rd</sup> par). It is that smile that triumphs 165 1<sup>st</sup> par mid page as D asks EB to introduce her friends and EB “could hardly suppress a smile”. EB in this chapter has changed significantly, and the change in part operates on the smile (her inability, D’s smile, a triumphant smile, her smile) and on a laughter that she also cannot share in anymore. When the housekeeper gives D a flaming character 168 1<sup>st</sup> line, Mrs G states “I could hardly help laughing aloud”. Laughter here is when you think you know better, but actually do not. Laughter here is actually a sign of ignorance, after having for so long in the novel been the sign of a feeling of superiority. Mrs G laughs because she thinks she knows, but the laugh is on her. This is another turn of Austen’s irony.

30. EB’s tears flood the text when she learns about Lydia and tells D. EB’s tears are her incapacity for laughter. 180 6<sup>th</sup> par would need to read at least from “But self, though ...” to “was soon lost to every thing else” Lydia is laughter because Lydia is sheer engrossment in self, in libido. Lydia is radical self-affirmation. Lydia only does what Lydia wants, and this annihilates EB, who had been the spokesperson in the novel for self-affirmation and doing what one wants. EB is reduced to tears, to nothing, by Lydia’s “infamy.” Tears are non-laughter. A strange logic obtains here. EB’s tears produce wildness 181 last par: “wild to be home”. The WI-LD word is the word that allies Wickham and Lydia. EB is “wild” but not Lydia-like.

31. Tears and smiles alternate in the book to denote high suspense and drama. 186 is where the outcome of Lydia is uncertain, and there is an intermittence here of smiles and tears.

32. As said, Lydia *is* Laughter, its personification. During the Lydia crisis, there is no other laughter in the text other than Lydia’s. Smiles are possible, because they manifest control, the need for. But laughter is impossible bc the social fabric wd unravel were it to be given vent: the Bennet’s appear to be financially ruined. Lydia sees her marriage as the Consecration of the

Joke, the Joke as Social Contract. Lydia's laughter, in her letter, 189, "What a good joke it will be. I can hardly write for laughing". Lydia, "wild, noisy, and fearless" 204 represents the anarchy of a mob that would destroy all social rules, given over to uncontrolled laughter.

33. Laughter is the most important quality to be acquired in the book. Without laughter, we know that there is no love (Lydia), and without the possibility of laughing and being laughed at, there is no intimacy. Thus, D needs to be taught to laugh, the role of woman is to teach the man how to do it, 243 top par, "he had yet to learn to be laughed at." To heighten the sense or degree to which laughter is sexualized or the possibility of sexual arousal, laughter is blushing, laughter is the flow of blood, laughter is the filling up with colour, 239 3<sup>rd</sup> par from bottom, "coloured and laughed": EB, now laughter is colouring, laughing accompanies blushing. She is laughing at self, but at her self's boldness. It is both proud laughter and abashed laughter.

34. Without a narrator, there would be no smiling or laughter, unless the characters pointed them out, which they never do. For instance, 242 5<sup>th</sup> par from top, EB "could not help smiling" at how easily D directed Bg. In pure dialogue there is no laughter nor smiling bc the narrator is absent, for instance 240-41. Laughter and smile is always only added by a narrator.

35. Laughter is where multiple layers of irony reside. The reader's laughter is unavoidable, when Mrs B complains about the boor Mr D coming, 244 2<sup>nd</sup> line from bottom. Reader's laughter can't be marked, though. Yet right after, 245 1<sup>st</sup> par, EB "could hardly help laughing at so convenient a proposal". So laughter is marker of dramatic irony. Quadruple irony bc mother proposes that D propose. This is the Oakham Mount passage, Wickam is surmounted, by Oakham, that ham Darcy. (A "ham" is a person who makes joke.)

36. When EB laughs at her father (bottom 237), yet cannot smile with him (very top of 237, "E tried to join in her father's pleasantry, but could only *force one most reluctant smile*. Never had his wit been directed in a manner so little agreeable to her.") Laughter *at* father => switch away from Mr B to D, laughter is modality of switch. This separation ends with 247 3<sup>rd</sup> par, father "laughing at her some time".

37. Laughter is how EB separates herself from her father. In order for there to be the separation of father and daughter here 236-37 (culminating in last par of 237), Mr B must be discredited, EB must dissemble to father, must hide the truth behind a laughter that is her form of speech. Although Lydia incarnates a speech that has been reduced to laughter (to non-sense), EB has recourse to the same technique. Laughter is the mode of the symbolic severance of daughter from father.

38. The smile is a sign, non-verbal communication, 246 top page. D only smiles to EB after he has received the consent of Mr B. No words are necessary, but also because Mr B also wants to hear EB also agree in her own words to it. This shows EB's autonomy as woman – it's not done till she agrees.

39. Laughter is the means for EB to propel JB to happiness. 220 4<sup>th</sup> par from top, EB “laughingly” urges Jane on.

40. At 213 (top line), EB “replied with a smile” when W comes up on her after she reads Mary Gardiner's letter explaining all. The smile is a form of control, self-control. This smile is also, “a good-humoured smile” 214 (3<sup>rd</sup> par from end of chapter), when EB says, we are brother and sister, let's not quarrel about the past, let's be of one mind, in agreement. The smile is good humour, it is overcoming the bad part (she praises D for “getting the better part of himself”).

41. As late in the novel as 214 (4<sup>th</sup> par from bottom of page), the smile can be sheer superficiality and mask, and the mask can be the best way to deal with situations which have nothing redeeming in them: “Mr. W [...] smiled, looked handsome, and said many pretty things”. (This follows Mrs B, “smiles decked the face of Mrs B” 204 2<sup>nd</sup> par of III.ix). But this view then is added to by Mr B's: “He simpers, and smirks, and makes love to us all”. I.e., is sheer falsehood and vanity. If Lydia is the Incarnation of Laughter, W is the emanation of the smile in the book, a wry smile, as in the BBC production. W is revealed to be falsehood, and on the same 214, Lydia disappears from the text: what becomes of laughter? No laughter, save Lydia, from 160-214. With Lydia's disappearance from the text, an other laughter returns, a restored laughter. The restoration of society takes form of the return of a kind of sane laughter.

42. Laughter only returns into the text very late, in Elizabeth saying 220, “laughingly” to Jane that Bg is not indifferent, is in fact partial. Laughter is not taking seriously what the other says, and it is affectionate here. The return of laughter after the Lydia episode testifies to a restoration of laughter, after its travesty or burlesque by Lydia.

43. The smile and laugh return, 221 (end of 1<sup>st</sup> par), it's the sanctification of the book, of smiling and laughing: “but Jane happened to look around, and happened to smile: it was decided. He placed himself by her. ... Bg had received his sanction to be happy, had she not seen his eyes likewise turned towards Mr. Darcy, with an expression of half-laughing alarm”. Bizarre. Jane smiles, so Bg sits by her. But Bg not sure if he's free to do so, looks at D for reassurance. Bg is laughing, bc happy, but alarmed, bc not sure if he is allowed to do this. The novel is breaking into smiles and ambient laughter and satisfied mood.

44. The smile starts to break out in the book, paralleled by reading experience as reader also starts now to smile. 223 (3<sup>rd</sup> par): EB smiles bc she thinks JB being too cautious. The Smile

is the impossibility of believing the other's denials. These smiles prepare way for a real happiness, 225-226, happiness breaks out, and the reader smiles just as does EB, "EB, who was left by herself, now smiled at the rapidity ... was settled and given so many months of suspense and vexation". This is meta-fiction, bc EB here = reader, and many months = many chapters. Marvelling at mastery of the author here.

Next time: II.xi D's proposal, and II.xx going to see the rocks.