“Angry people are not always wise,” unless... | Conditional and Homocentric Anger in *Pride and Prejudice*

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I pledge my word of honor that I have abided by the Washington College Honor Code while completing this assignment.

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I. Introduction

Pride and Prejudice is popular for many reasons, not the least of which is its romance plot and the strength of its female main character. Most scholars agree on the proto-feminist quality of this novel, its characters, and even its writer, and yet, Elizabeth Bennet, as the novel's highly discussed main character, seems to me to be examined in a slightly less than feminist method; how is it that, in formulating this project, the first angry woman I can think of is Elizabeth Bennet, and still, I can find little to nothing regarding her anger in existing scholarship? In this project, I'd like to explore Elizabeth's malleable and persistent anger in order to round out this overlooked corner of the discussion surrounding Austen's most well-known novel.

Out of context, negativity is immediately ascribed to anger, but, as with any emotional expression, there is nuance which must be taken into account to understand anger's implications and value. Anger seems to often be presented in a negative light as an emotion which leads to a character unfairly releasing rage onto some innocent object or person that had the misfortune of being in their proximity. Often, anger is represented as a prelude to fights or destruction of some kind, despite its ability to "serve as a powerful motivator for individuals to address injustices and strive for social fairness" (1) as authors Jinjin Zhang, Zhiheng Xiong, Hao Zheng, and Xiangzhen Ma describe in their article titled "The Moral Psychological Justification of Anger: An Exploration of Self-Respect and Recognition." Later, these authors argue that

> The debate on the moral value of anger often focuses on its consequences. Despite the positive or negative outcomes of anger, simply contemplating the benefits of anger does not justify it and considering the drawbacks of anger does not eliminate the feelings. (1)

Anger, not being justified by its potential resulting goodness, nor extinguished by considering its potential negativity, is an emotion that everyone feels and is therefore neutral in its potential; I say neutral to denote this emotion's ability to be constructive as much as it is destructive depending on

the conditions in which it is experienced, which I will discuss later. Despite the negative stigma surrounding this emotion, it is important to recognize that anger has the potential to have positive outcomes, something which I believe *Pride and Prejudice* presents as a central argument. Not only does Elizabeth explicitly experience both negative and positive outcomes of anger, but the text then unpacks the aftermath of both, the way Elizabeth responds to both, and the way that her angry actions and later reactions to anger expressions—of her own as well as others'—positively influence her story, her character, and, more interestingly in my opinion, Mr. Darcy's character.

The aforementioned article discusses the differences between what the authors call "justified" and "unjustified" anger; "Justified anger is defined as an emotional response to the unmet need for fair acknowledgment, while unjustified anger stems from feelings of superiority and the pursuit of higher status" (Zhang et al. 1), both of which Elizabeth is seen exhibiting in some capacity. While these are good descriptors, I feel the need to expand on them to include what I've been thinking about as selfless and selfish anger, as according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) definitions of both words. My definition of selfless anger only adds to the definition of "justified anger" above to name anger that is primarily or solely concerned with the "fair acknowledgement" of others, without regard for the "fair acknowledgement" of oneself. I'd like to define selfish anger as, intentionally or not, inconsiderate of others—of their feelings, thoughts, motivations, etc.—though not necessarily selfish nor as concerned as "unjustified anger" is with one's own gain or status. These definitions will help me describe the differences between types of anger which the text seems to argue as being positive or negative and to what degree of either.

Generally, throughout this project, I use the word anger to describe many nuanced emotions, such as resentment or indignation, which are all experienced similarly. It is important to recognize the differences between each word and its implications; however, in this project, I'd like to focus more on the socioeconomic and personal contexts of these complex emotions—which I

collectively call anger—as they shift and influence the anger expressions of different characters throughout the text. I use the phrase 'socioeconomic and personal contexts' here to refer to the conditions in which anger is presented in the text: the text presents anger as evolving, almost as an entity or a condensation of one's morals, values, and background, which is influenced by experience and new information. The root of the anger, the person expressing it, the person receiving it, the way it is responded to, and the openness to criticism of the one experiencing it are all important to consider in discussing how the text weighs the "moral value" of certain anger expressions. To further categorize these conditions, each of them can be mapped onto the idea of anger as homocentric—presenting as individual instances or expressions that center around the same focal point—which is how anger is presented within this novel. A homocentric anger, while maybe not the standard for all anger expressions, is what I've defined as one that always holds its core in one's morals, values, and background. One's morals and values may evolve, but each character in this novel has their general ideas of right and wrong and good and bad which their respective anger sits in. Characters that exhibit positive or productive anger differ from others in the way they evolve their way of thinking about those beliefs based on experiences that challenge those beliefs. In this way, any individual's anger expressions—which are malleable in terms of direction/object/recipient and triggers as part of an interpersonal system—will be telling of their character and what is important to them as well as signaling to readers what the text believes to be productive anger and the conditions surrounding those anger expressions which positively impact them. For this reason, I introduce these terms—selfless and selfish—in conversation with the terms "justified" and "unjustified" anger to identify types of individual anger which, in certain conditions, are constructive and destructive, as according to the text. I hope to then highlight the combinations of conditions in which anger is expressed that the text seems to argue as being either positive or negative. In doing

this, I endeavor to bring a more nuanced analysis of Elizabeth's anger as evolving and positively contributing to her character and other characters into the preexisting discussion of her agency.

In thinking about combinations of anger types using the terms "justified" and "unjustified" and "selfless" and "selfish," I want to make clear the distinctions I have drawn between each. In doing this, I hope to make clear up my use of these terms in relation to each other throughout this project. In thinking of each type, I have come up with a set of four anger combination types and each of their distinctions, which I intend to use to further define the types and conditions of anger which the text rewards and portrays as positive versus which types and combinations the text punishes or portrays as negative. First, I am thinking of "justified" and "selfless" anger as concerning the recognition of oneself and others while focusing on the concern for others with anger for the recognition of oneself taking a secondary place of importance. "Unjustified" and "selfless" anger then is concerned with one's rank—or superiority, more generally—while still harboring concern for the recognition of someone else. "Justified" and "selfish" anger is concerned with the recognition of others and possibly oneself while still being inconsiderate of another's feelings, thoughts, motivations, etc. Finally, "unjustified" and "selfish" anger is concerned with one's superiority and unconcerned with others' feelings, thoughts, motivations. Each of these instances is represented in the novel and the text's argument surrounding their moral value will be analyzed in these terms as I explore Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's anger as opposed to other characters' anger.

In further analyzing how anger is presented throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, I believe I can uncover the book's underlying exploration of the many ways in which anger can be a positive force. In this regard, I believe this text is effectively responding to this idea of the "moral value" of anger being in its outcome and arguing for the goodness of anger also existing in the ways those initial outcomes are responded to. While it is important to take into account each condition in which the anger was expressed when deciding its moral value, I believe the text argues that, to have anger

benefit oneself or otherwise have positive outcomes, one must be open to criticism of themselves and have the ability and willingness to consider others' actions in the context of their own position in life. Essentially, one must understand the homocentric nature and system of anger. The root of someone's anger could justify its expression or not, making this condition important in this debate, but the conflict of Austen's novel is not entirely solved by Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy recognizing the root of their own and each other's anger. Rather, it is resolved in their responses to these feelings and this recognition. The text, in having Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy react to their own respective prejudices and pride with introspection, gives their anger the potential to be constructive rather than destructive as they learn from their own and each other's feelings. Characters like Mr. Wickham and Lady Catherine, who are too wrapped up in their own selfishness to recognize their wrongs, by comparison, showcase the potentially destructive power of anger when paired with the lack of willingness to listen to criticism or better understand others, among other conditions.

Further, the text rejects the social expectations at the time for women to be docile while men's emotions are often accepted, already being considered masculine; although, men, especially gentlemen like Mr. Darcy, were also expected to exhibit good breeding and be cordial as is evidenced by the women of Meryton forming a negative opinion of Mr. Darcy as soon as he exposes his lack of amiability. Regardless, the rejection of societal expectations on Elizabeth's part allows her to not only express her anger but to also have a happy ending to her story resulting from that anger. Already, Elizabeth's agency has been a topic of conversation and debate between scholars, but my intervention aims to center the role her anger plays in leading her to developing her independence and her justness. This text, through presenting multiple different characters expressing anger in a range of contexts while only rewarding certain ones, seems to be analyzing the ways that anger can result in some kind of destruction as well as, conversely, positive development. Mr. Darcy, in experiencing Elizabeth's anger and his own in response, chooses to make reparations to Elizabeth

through his reactions to recognize his own wrongs towards her. Elizabeth, in acknowledging Mr. Darcy's own feelings and motivations, experiences her anger turning against herself and chooses to apologize for her bias against him. When compared to other characters, these two are able to take into account the other's character, displaying what the text believes to be good, positive anger which is then rewarded by their engagement later in the novel. The text thus argues for the potential for anger—even a woman's anger—to result in positivity rather than destruction.

II. Cutting Mr. Darcy Slack: True Character, Complexity, and Bias (Including My Own!)

The first time I read *Pride and Prejudice*, I hated it. More precisely, I hated Mr. Darcy for criticizing Elizabeth's family, breaking off her sister's relationship, and blatantly expressing his sense of superiority over her given their difference in socioeconomic status despite their both occupying the gentry class in some capacity. Despite this, the subtle differences in their social statuses do matter and have been taken into account (by Mr. Darcy especially). I also strongly rejected Elizabeth's acceptance of his second proposal. Of course, I was much less educated on the social context of the time but, after weighing Mr. Darcy's wrongs against his reparations, still thought he could have done more for Elizabeth, specifically to make up for injuring her. In re-reading the novel and beginning this project, I was still unsure of how I felt about Mr. Darcy; however, the more time I spent contemplating these two, the more I felt I must cut Mr. Darcy a little bit of slack. Mr. Darcy is human and flawed, but he is also intelligent and just. Similarly to Elizabeth, I naturally fell into this bias against him and was "too angry to have any wish of doing him justice" (Austen 198). Although I found that Elizabeth's decisions and changes in her anger seemed to be influenced by her own recognition of Mr. Darcy's justness and the impact of his life on his actions, even though they hurt her and her loved ones, I was able to follow her lead towards introspection, thus dedicating the next several pages of this project to exploring this process.

This process began with the way that Mr. Darcy reacts to Elizabeth's accusations, at first fueling her anger further rather than diminishing it, subsequently revealing their respective flaws. During the initial proposal scene, Mr. Darcy chooses to conceal information about his relationship with Mr. Wickham, "[treating] the mention of [Mr. Wickham's] misfortune with contempt and ridicule" (Austen 187). Elizabeth believes that this lack of explanation results from Mr. Darcy's

inability to defend himself and then accuses him of all the things she was told that he'd done as described by Mr. Wickham. Here, she exhibits an interesting mix of anger at the (fabricated) unfair treatment towards someone Mr. Darcy had grown up with and should have been helping as instructed by his late father's will. Elizabeth shows, at first, a mix of selfish and selfless anger, but never only the one, giving readers an idea of her sense of justice while also presenting her as flawed—human. During this scene, she is angry at the way Mr. Darcy treats her family, and especially at the way he treats Jane. He breaks off her budding relationship, which was not only founded on true feelings towards Mr. Bingley, but also had the opportunity of being fruitful for herself and her family. Mr. Darcy does not take into account the impact this relationship would have had on the Bennets, nor Jane, who was heartbroken as a result of his actions. In this way, Elizabeth's anger was "justified" and "selfless" given that she was angry for her sister's sake (although, to be fair, Elizabeth would have certainly benefitted from this union as well). Her anger, which is expressed in a way that is influenced by her interactions with Mr. Darcy, still rests in her belief that he treats others unfairly, which, up to this point, is evidenced by his actions.

Elizabeth is quick to defend others, continually displaying her empathetic nature. She is angry at the perceived injustice enacted by Mr. Darcy towards Mr. Wickham, according to Mr. Wickham's account of their relationship, showing her concern for others, even when she does not know them very well. However, this also leads to Elizabeth expressing anger that is selfish as she takes Mr. Wickham's side in the issue immediately without giving Mr. Darcy a chance to defend himself before she believes him to be—due to her own preconceived notion of his character, unhelped by Mr. Wickham's accusations—proud and unjust. Further, she takes this stance despite her constantly hearing Mr.

Darcy's own acquaintances, family, and friends defending his justness and general goodness. Luckily, she is intelligent, emotionally and otherwise, and is led by Mr. Darcy's written defense to consider the importance of his loved ones to him as he gives her insight into the intimacy of his relationship with Mr. Bingley as well as in detailing his sister's relationship with Mr. Wickham "which I would wish to forget myself, and which no obligation less than the present should induce me to unfold to any human being" (Austen 196). She therefore gives him grace in his actions and recognizes her own prejudices and pride, avoiding a potentially destructive anger outcome.

Elizabeth is also no stranger to arguing when she's met with those who don't seem to take her seriously; but, as it turns out, Mr. Darcy does, realizing the severity of her anger. Mr. Darcy's letter reveals to readers how both characters undergo a change from their initial assessments of each other as expressed in their argument at Hunsford Parsonage. First, Mr. Darcy admits his error in assuming Jane's feelings—or lack thereof—for Mr. Bingley and acknowledges that Elizabeth knows her sister well and that it is likely that Elizabeth was right on the subject of her sister's affection. He also acknowledges Elizabeth's right to resent him for hurting her sister, but states that "If I have wounded your sister's feelings, it was unknowingly done" (Austen 194) to counter her earlier accusation regarding his "selfish disdain of the feelings of others" (Austen 188), something she ends up exhibiting herself. Unlike in their argument during his first proposal, Mr. Darcy, in his letter, takes a step back to recognize and affirm the roots of Elizabeth's anger while also defending his own actions, likely also realizing that she would understand his subtle criticism of her own unjust accusations of him.

Without a deeper knowledge of Mr. Darcy's true character and after experiencing his discourteousness several times, Elizabeth is initially intent on refusing to acknowledge anything that he

may say after his proposal. Elizabeth, at first, went into reading the letter "With a strong prejudice against everything he might say" (Austen 198) and didn't feel she could credit his belief that Jane was uninterested in his friend. This is because, as she says to Charlotte Lucas earlier on, she believes that "If *I* can perceive [Jane's] regard for [Mr. Bingley], he must be a simpleton indeed not to discover it too" (Austen 23; original emphasis). Initially, she puts the letter away with the intent of not reading it again. Here, Elizabeth's anger gets the better of her and causes her to treat Mr. Darcy unfairly in immediately wanting to discredit his defenses given her predetermined view of his character; this is that "unjust" and selfish anger, which, unchecked, could lead to Elizabeth's anger continuing to be projected outward, damaging her potential to have a positive relationship with Mr. Darcy as she does once she undergoes introspection. In her book titled *Jane Austen The Secret Radical*, author Helena Kelly argues that, on their first being introduced to each other at the Meryton ball,

> It isn't simply that Elizabeth doesn't want to dance with Darcy; she doesn't want to be formally acquainted with him, or at least not like this. She doesn't once address Darcy here; she speaks through Sir William. So far as she's concerned, the message she's sending is clear—she isn't prepared to acknowledge Darcy as her social superior (144-145).

Despite the nuance present in class and status distinctions of the Regency Era, Elizabeth, a gentleman's daughter, seems reluctant to acknowledge the rift between herself and Mr. Darcy, a man who is, for all she knows, proud and entitled. Regardless, from before the beginning of their relationship, Elizabeth thinks—as the rest of the town does—that Mr. Darcy is too proud and rude to be taken seriously, and she doesn't want to have to regard him as superior to herself, thus beginning her unjust characterization of him. To be fair, he does not do much to help these accusations at first, but she also

does not necessarily give him the chance to, either, since she does not reflect on her own actions—taking what Mr. Wickham says at face value—until later.

Given Elizabeth's apparent empathy, the narrator's phrase, "too angry to have any wish of doing him justice" (Austen 198), seems to imply the possibility of a lack of something else. I believe the text is arguing that this is a lack of introspection or, otherwise, she feels too strong of an anger to allow herself to be rational; anger isn't something we can necessarily control—it is an extreme emotion we feel whether or not it is justified. However, when we understand it as a catalyst for reflection, we can use anger as a tool for recognizing what is important to us as well as a tool for recognizing the motivations, morals, and values of others as Elizabeth does when she seems to realize, after reading his letter, that Mr. Darcy's anger stems from his own loyalty to his friends and family, just as her own anger does.

Within "The Moral Psychological Justification of Anger: An Exploration of Self-Respect and Recognition," the authors argue that "The necessity of justice lies in the vulnerability of individuals and their need for mutual recognition and care" (Zhang et al. 8), which I believe could explain the change in Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's anger towards each other after their first proposal. Both of them express vulnerability in sharing their feelings with each other which is difficult enough to do with someone you're close to, let alone someone you don't particularly like, in Elizabeth's case; Elizabeth expresses sadness regarding her sister's loss and the unfair treatment of Mr. Wickham, and Mr. Darcy expresses his love for Elizabeth. Here, they both demand recognition to some degree from the other, something Mr. Darcy does further in his letter. However, both characters are able to reflect on their lack of recognition of the other in their own respective demands for acknowledgement. In this way,

they're led to think on their own character and wrongdoings, understand the viewpoint of the other, and therefore create a relationship founded on mutual recognition and, subsequently, respect. Through having Elizabeth become "too angry" to want to consider the possibility of Mr. Darcy's innocence, the text appears to be arguing that anger, without introspection, has the potential to worsen situations rather than bettering them, but this is not where Elizabeth's anger stays.

Only after reading the letter over again was she able to recognize the sincerity in his words concerning Jane's feelings and his harshness towards Mr. Wickham given what he'd done to himself and Georgiana, as well as his nod towards Elizabeth's own unfair treatment of himself. Elizabeth's sense of justice is strong throughout the story, but so is Mr. Darcy's. She explicitly recognizes this when she thinks back on their relationship and admits that "she had never, in the whole course of their acquaintance—an acquaintance which had latterly brought them much together, and given her a sort of intimacy with his ways—seen anything that betrayed him to be unprincipled or unjust" (Austen 201). Not only did she feel she'd never witnessed any unjustness from him, but she admits that she'd been able to get close enough to him to become more familiar with himself and his acquaintances, all of whom had been telling her that he was highly respected by them and generous to them. Though she'd been hearing this repeatedly, this letter was the confirmation that finally allowed her to regain her sense of justice and dispel her prejudice against him.

Regarding once more Elizabeth's ability to look past personal injury and recognize others' character, it seems important to acknowledge the possibility that, given Elizabeth's deep care for her own sisters and friends, she recognized Mr. Darcy's love for his family and friends. In that case, this recognition seems to act as a key factor contributing to her forgiveness of his actions, even for his

treatment of Jane, since Elizabeth realized her own unfair assumptions of Mr. Darcy's character. Mr. Darcy states in his letter that he "had often seen [Mr. Bingley] in love before" (Austen 192), suggesting how close they really are with each other and implying how much Mr. Darcy must care about him and his happiness to keep an eye on him. Elizabeth is not the only one looking out for her loved ones, something that reverses her viewpoint and her anger when she realizes it.

Elizabeth then goes further to agree with certain points Mr. Darcy makes which she'd previously been upset with, beginning to realize her own faults. In the same conversation with Charlotte Lucas as I have previously mentioned, Elizabeth is told that "[Mr. Bingley] does not know Jane's disposition as you do" (Austen 23), which is also true of Mr. Darcy. Author Polina Shvanyukova, in her article titled "Constructing a socially acceptable female identity: The case of nineteenth-century advice manuals for women," points out that, during this time, "women were expected to appear and behave if they were to be treated not only as respectable members of society, but, most importantly, as covetable and eligible for marriage" (60). Keeping this in mind, it likely would have been easier to be more quiet than not in order to seem desirable to possible suitors, indicating that Jane, though also idealizing marriage which stems from love rather than economic necessity, might have recognized the benefit of being less forthcoming with her feelings or true thoughts lest she accidentally drive Mr. Bingley away or seem improper to suitors. Even Mr. Collins mentions something to this point in his proposal to Elizabeth when he says, "it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept" (Austen 104), providing her with this counterargument and pointing out the "true delicacy of the female character" (Austen 105) stems from the expectation to act modestly in the presence of men. Understanding then Mr.

Darcy's outside perspective on her sister, Elizabeth concedes that "She felt that Jane's feelings, though fervent, were little displayed" (Austen 202). Though she does not agree with the action Mr. Darcy took on this observation, Elizabeth can accept his observation as valid.

Further, the text says that "When she came to that part of the letter in which her family were mentioned in terms of such mortifying, yet merited reproach, her sense of shame was severe" (Austen 202). As someone who is also very observant and often makes assumptions of people's character based off of her own interactions with them, Elizabeth recognizes that Mr. Darcy is observant and that his observations about her family being somewhat improper, though unflattering, are true. Although she recognizes her wrongdoings, her anger does not disappear after reading the letter. She has mixed feelings about the letter, its contents, and its writer and "[is] still full of indignation" (Austen 206) when she thinks about the rude way in which he spoke to her. When she thinks about her own treatment of him, though, "her anger [is]turned against herself" (Austen 206). Here, I'd like to point out that the text displays another interesting condition of the anger presented; this anger is inwardly directed rather than outwardly directed, something the text rewards as Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy seem to be the only characters who, in the end, reflect on their own anger expressions and actions and get their happy ending, too. Elizabeth, as she understands her contradictory and hypocritical words towards Mr. Darcy—someone who has now proven himself (mostly) innocent of the accusations she'd made against him—is then ashamed of the way she acted as well as the ways her family members had acted around others and feels guilty that Jane lost such an advantageous and, more importantly to Elizabeth, potentially happy relationship because of her family's actions.

Mr. Darcy wrote that the "situation of [Elizabeth's] family" was much less objectionable to him than "that total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by [Mrs. Bennet], by your three younger sisters, and occasionally even by your father" (Austen 193), which seemed outright cruel to me on a first reading, but I now know it is the truth. In saying this, he doesn't mean to insult her—not that intent necessarily matters when someone is hurt—and merely points out that, not only does her family technically occupy a lower social position than himself, but that this rift in their social status seems exacerbated by the actions of her immediate family whom Mr. Darcy observes as improper. For example, Mrs. Bennet, who, at one point, shamelessly argues with Mr. Darcy about the people of the country changing so much as to be as constantly interesting as the people of town, something by which Mr. Darcy is rendered speechless given its sexual implications, allowing her to continue arguing her point until Elizabeth interrupts, "blushing" (Austen 43). Regarding conversation, Shvanyukova also mentions that, "Most importantly, women are required to develop the ability to accommodate their interlocutors' needs and interests, that is to say, to take up and react to the thoughts of others, so as to keep the ball rolling" (73), an expectation which, here, Mrs. Bennet blatantly subverts, rather doubling down on her opinions while the rest of the room listens on, shocked. For this behavior, Mr. Darcy points out that, however respectably Elizabeth or Jane presents herself, suitors will always keep in mind their connection to a family who behaves in ways that are likely to be seen by society as less than refined.

While Mr. Darcy courteously acknowledges that the girls cannot help their family's behavior, he also worries for the sake of his friend whose social status might be negatively affected by a woman with such a family and who, by his observation, did not even hold the same level of affection for Mr.

Bingley as he did for her. This statement brings readers back to the famous first lines of the book which say that "a single man in possession of a good fortune… is, [upon entering a neighborhood] considered as the rightful property of some one or other of [the] daughters [of the surrounding families]" (Austen 5), something that Mr. Bingley would certainly have been subject to upon entering Meryton given his £5,000 a year income which the women of the town continually praise (Mrs. Bennet maybe more than the other women). This is something Elizabeth and her sisters would have been aware of, also, especially as women who would have benefited from marrying well given their family's financial struggle with no sons to inherit the estate and a modest income of £2,000 a year. With these things in mind, Mr. Darcy broke up his friend's relationship with a woman who, as far as he was concerned, might have only been pursuing Mr. Bingley for her own benefit in gaining his money while carelessly connecting him with those family members who lack propriety.

As she reads his letter and recognizes the sincerity and roots of Mr. Darcy's concerns for his friend and Jane's tendency to refrain from expressing her feelings much, Elizabeth's anger towards Mr. Darcy decreases while her anger at herself increases and, subsequently, her pride is replaced with humility. As her understanding of Mr. Darcy's own anger and actions grows, her anger towards him, she recognizes, becomes less and less justified. "Justified" anger, being concerned with "fair acknowledgement," means that, in order for Elizabeth to be just, she must acknowledge Mr. Darcy's character, too—his motivations, feelings, loyalties, etc.—which ultimately causes her anger at herself to increase after realizing how unjust she's been herself. Thus, she's led at the end of the book to explicitly acknowledge to him how ashamed she is of her own previous actions. The text, in having Elizabeth be open to Mr. Darcy's criticisms, and in having her anger lead her to introspection for her own

betterment, is clearly arguing for the potentially positive power of anger in its ability to lead us to reflect on our own actions and how we hold ourselves to the same standards we hold others to, allowing us to grow from our mistakes and become more forgiving of others.

III. Mr. Darcy's First Proposal: Elizabeth's Anger as a Catalyst

Elizabeth's anger, even when selfish, is employed by the text to positively change herself and Mr. Darcy through several conditions which evolve over time. Mr. Darcy's proposal sparks the first

moment wherein Elizabeth "lost all compassion in anger" (Austen 185), allowing her emotion to overcome her, despite her usual cordiality. As big a moment as this seems for Elizabeth—becoming something she regrets several times over throughout the rest of the novel—little scholarship seems to be concerned with anger and the significance of its role in Elizabeth's character development. At one point, the text does say that "angry people are not always wise" (Austen 259) when Caroline Bingley insults Elizabeth's appearance in front of Mr. Darcy, who refuses to agree with her. Although this is true and Caroline Bingley only injures herself, the text allows Elizabeth's anger to influence her decision making and actions throughout the book in positive ways that make her "wiser." Elizabeth's anger throughout the novel, and especially in the beginning, ultimately contributes to her knowledge of her own feelings and how to ascertain others' character in order to better understand their motivations for doing things like breaking up relationships between two people who like each other; she grows more understanding of others' situations. In this way, Elizabeth's anger during the initial proposal scene serves as an important catalyst for the simultaneous individual character growth of herself and Mr. Darcy.

As Mr. Darcy begins his first proposal, Elizabeth feels bad for him despite her "deeply-rooted dislike" (Austen 185) for his character because she already knows she will have to reject him and therefore injure him; it is obvious that Elizabeth is naturally empathetic, even towards those who have injured her. However, once Mr. Darcy lists his reasons for initially opposing their union, insulting her and her family in the process, Elizabeth's mood quickly returns to anger. I'd like to point out the dynamism of the anger expressed by Elizabeth here and at other points in the text where her anger

changes while remaining homocentric and rooted in her values. This is what allows anger to be positive and negative simultaneously as a whole and conditionally as singular expressions.

Elizabeth's anger, when she gains the truth of Mr. Darcy's relationship with Mr. Wickham and his acknowledgement of his faults, shifts from being potentially negative to being potentially positive as a result of her recognition of Mr. Darcy's motivations for his past actions. In this proposal scene, Elizabeth first expresses "justified" and "selfish" anger, rejecting Mr. Darcy's presumptions about Jane and his alleged treatment of Mr. Wickham while refusing to give him or his feelings or motivations any acknowledgement (not that Mr. Darcy gave her much reason to do so until his letter). Later, though, readers watch Elizabeth's anger evolve again in significant and positive ways as when her anger at Mr. Darcy turns from being "justified" and "selfish" to being "unjustified" and "selfish" before turning once more to "justified" and "selfless." The constant shifting directions of anger across time seem to be something the text emphasizes and rewards by the end of the novel. Not only does Elizabeth change over the course of the novel, but, interestingly, her anger does, too, shifting from types and conditions which the text seems to label as negative, like "unjustified" and outwardly directed anger, to types and conditions seemingly labeled as positive, like "justified" and inwardly directed anger, for example.

Before his proposal, Elizabeth is already upset with Mr. Darcy for impeding the marriage of her sister Jane and his friend Mr. Bingley, but her anger as a result of his actual proposal is first stoked by him expressing concerns for Elizabeth's socioeconomic inferiority to himself and her poor connections. Given Elizabeth's lower class status, she is expected to marry a husband who will increase her wealth and social status, not only for herself, but for her family, which is what leads the Bennet women (along with the other women at the Meryton ball) to initially think well of Mr. Darcy. In fact,

many of the women believe him to be more handsome than Mr. Bingley at first, likely influenced by his well-known and larger fortune than his friend. For these reasons, it makes sense that Mr. Darcy is surprised at Elizabeth's not accepting his proposal despite the fact that Elizabeth, as she states, has "every reason in the world to think ill of [him]" (Austen 186), that is, when she's being entirely inconsiderate of his motives for doing certain things (not that everything he does is justifiable or good).

Joan Ray wonders of their first meeting in her article titled "Do Elizabeth and Darcy Really Improve 'on Acquaintance'?": "while Darcy is certainly impolite not to dance with young women lacking partners, may he not also be hesitant to dance with young women of a country market town interested in him for his good... fortune?" (36). It is important to, as I have done previously, cut Mr. Darcy this slack and understand his motive for avoiding a dance with Elizabeth and the necessity of his being less than personable given the general consensus on the benefit that would be gained by his marriage to one of the ladies in Meryton. In this way, he feels justified in his actions and therefore makes his proposal thinking nothing of Elizabeth's own interpretation of his antisocial tendencies. Regardless, both, while being honest with each other, harbor their pride and prejudices, blinding themselves to their own wrongs enacted on the other, Mr. Darcy in being inconsiderate of Elizabeth's feelings and Elizabeth in assuming—with good reason, but without knowing the full story—Mr. Darcy's guilt concerning Mr. Wickham. They both are, in some ways, in the wrong in the contexts of their own positions in the world; they assume wrongly of each other and have some justification for doing so. However, this leads Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy to both exhibit "justified" and "selfish" anger. Helena Kelly, in her novel, points out that

> 'Prejudice' then, in the 1790s, isn't simply bias or judging without all the facts tradition, 'inbred sentiments,' unquestioned cultural assumptions. It's the entire edifice of society. The monarchy, the government, the judicial system, organised religion, the class system: all are to be upheld simply because they've been around for a long time. (128)

This idea of prejudice being a product of the time leads readers to understand that Mr. Darcy—before introspection and fair acknowledgement—is guided by those social and class beliefs that are widely accepted by most, including his family and acquaintances, and which he likely grew up accepting as truth. While he is a generally reasonable and just person, he must overcome these internalized assumptions of others and especially of people of certain class distinctions in order to realize Elizabeth's feelings and reactions to his actions. Elizabeth is no stranger to prejudice either and must overcome her preconceived notions of Mr. Darcy which, though maybe not rooted in a sense of superiority, are certainly not improved by her consideration of his wealth or status (at first, anyway).

Readers see how Elizabeth's anger is sparked by Mr. Darcy's assumptions, but furthered then by his lack of regard for Jane's feelings alongside her own. In this case, Mr. Darcy is guilty and seems, in this proposal, unremorseful, believing that what he did was right given his own observation of Jane's feelings, or lack thereof, for his friend. Elizabeth tells him,

> 'Had not my feelings decided against you—had they been indifferent, or had they even been favourable, do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?' (Austen 186)

Elizabeth is justifiably angry, not only because she had already been thoroughly insulted by Mr. Darcy, but because he also took part in ending the beneficial and joyful relationship between Mr. Bingley and her sister, who she obviously cares for deeply, without a confirmation of Jane's feelings to back up his assumptions. Since he does not seem to feel bad for what he did with respect to Jane and Mr. Bingley in his proposal—"I have no wish of denying that I did every thing in my power to separate my friend from your sister, or that I rejoice in my success" (Austen 187)—nor is he truly guilty of harming Mr. Wickham. Mr. Darcy continues to defend himself momentarily without explicitly denying her accusations or providing any information to convince her of his innocence.

Later, the text reveals that "[Mr. Darcy's] character required [the letter] to be written and read" (Austen 191) in order to give Elizabeth a fuller picture of his relationship with Mr. Wickham and gain recognition and justice from her. As Francesca Marinaro says in her article titled "'One word from you will silence me on this subject forever': Jane Austen and the Culture of Consent," in his letter to Elizabeth, "Darcy crafts a logical, evidence-based argument that appeals to her reason, signaling both that he respects her intelligence and trusts her discretion" (175). Whether or not she recognizes this signal—and I believe her empathy for others and general intelligence would allow her to do so—this letter presents to Elizabeth, not excuses, but facts and genuine feelings which Mr. Darcy seems to understand will be more effective in breaking through Elizabeth's prejudice. Mr. Darcy is not attempting to persuade her that he is in the right or that he had done no wrong, rather; he is giving her the facts so she may come to her own conclusion.

Returning to the proposal for a moment, Elizabeth makes her initial perspective clear to Mr. Darcy, powerfully rejecting him in a way that asserts her independence and details her thought process

so that Mr. Darcy may better understand her position. To finish her short monologue at the end of this chapter, she says to him,

> 'From the very beginning… of my acquaintance with you, your manners impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form that ground-work of disapprobation, on which succeeding events have built so immovable a dislike.' (Austen 188)

The word "disapprobation" here, according to the OED, implies a "strong moral disapproval," something that's not quite anger, but gets at the root of her anger and dislike of Mr. Darcy, that is, his lack of manners, his "propensity to hate every body" (Austen 57), and his general pride and disregard for the feelings of others. Only then does Mr. Darcy say "'I perfectly comprehend your feelings and have now only to be ashamed of what my own have been'" (Austen 188-189). In Elizabeth's rejection of Mr. Darcy, a couple of things happen; according to Marinaro, "[Elizabeth] takes his rudeness… as an opportunity to wield the power of refusal in return" (161). Using his own lack of courtesy against him, Elizabeth is able to justify her rejection of him in a way that will appeal to Mr. Darcy's just character. Here, it seems possible that Elizabeth recognizes that pointing out Mr. Darcy's less-than courteous behavior in the beginning of their acquaintance would be more effective in leading him to understand where her anger and her bias against him are coming from in considering his actions from her perspective. Regarding his "rudeness" at the time, Mr. Darcy might not have been labeled rude considering his status and the obvious rift between the upbringings and social standings of himself and Elizabeth, but, as I'll explore further later, Mr. Darcy must learn that one's value comes from their

morals and character, not their upbringing or wealth. For now, Elizabeth is angry and uses it to her advantage, asserting her independence and upholding her standards for relationships.

The other result of this rejection is Mr. Darcy revealing his ability to recognize others' perspectives in telling Elizabeth that he understands her feelings. This scene captures another interesting condition of anger: the receiver of the anger expression's openness to criticism and their ability to listen and enact justice on oneself through acknowledging the expressor's feelings while acknowledging their wrongs. This condition seems emphasized as being essential to the process of understanding and resolving an argument and, as demonstrated by Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, making reparations and building a relationship founded in respect. Mr. Darcy also admits earlier in his proposal that "disguise of every sort is my abhorrence" (Austen 188), in which case, readers, along with Elizabeth, are led to understand that he says what he truly feels, including that he understands her perspective. Although, to be fair, he could have been less indecorous for the sake of sparing the feelings of the woman he says he loves, but his harsh words later allow Elizabeth to see his perspective as she recognizes, through her anger, that he is also human and therefore complex, having his own values and motivations which, like her, stem from his love for those around him.

From this point on, Mr. Darcy is seen repeatedly acknowledging Elizabeth's feelings and point of view, demonstrating his reasonable nature when presented with deserved criticism of his character, even when paired with unfair accusation. When Elizabeth rejects him and then tells him that his actions regarding her sister were "unjust and ungenerous" (Austen 186) and accuses him of hurting Mr. Wickham extensively, Mr. Darcy admits that his "faults, according to [her] calculation, are heavy" (Austen 188). It seems important here to acknowledge Mr. Darcy's specification of "[Elizabeth's]

calculation," revealing his understanding of her perspective while also pointing out that her assumptions of him are based on her own conclusions without even having knowledge of his side of the conflict. However, as Marinaro says, "even if Elizabeth's accusations anger him, he cannot dismiss their justice" (174); this recognition of truth in her words regarding his wrongs requires his introspection and for the letter to be written despite his anger because disguising the truth about Mr. Wickham led Elizabeth and himself to this anger to begin with, at least in part. This letter is then the confirmation of his motives and feelings which Elizabeth needed in order to fully understand his actions. Within it, he explains that he observed Jane as being "without any symptom of peculiar regard" (Austen 192) for Mr. Bingley and so felt justified in separating them; his assumptions were made upon good intentions for a friend.

On top of this lack of "peculiar regard," as I've pointed out, it is unlikely that Mr. Darcy wasn't aware of the "report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year" (Austen 12) and every woman's intent to pair himself, as well as Mr. Bingley, with her daughter for their wealth alone. With this in mind, Mr. Darcy has enough reason to believe that Jane may only be entertaining Mr. Bingley in order to secure his fortune for herself and her family. Of course, he fails to take into account the possible necessity for Jane to be reserved as a woman who wants to present as covetable in order to secure her and her sisters' future through marriage, regardless of how much she may love Mr. Bingley. Nor does he take into account the possibility that Elizabeth's conviction on the topic of her sister's feelings is true until much later. Mr. Darcy knows that he acted with no ill-intent in the way of hurting Jane, rather, in the interest of protecting his friend. In understanding here his need for recognition from Elizabeth, he writes his letter to explain to

her his own perspective so that she may see his innocence or at least his justification for each accusation against him. Additionally, despite his need to protect the privacy of Georgiana and her past, this act of including her involvement with Mr. Wickham in this letter shows Mr. Darcy's own recognition of Elizabeth's intelligence and general justness. In this way, Mr. Darcy is being vulnerable, asking for recognition, while acknowledging Elizabeth's feelings and need for explanation, something he may not have done for someone else who he found less trustworthy—"I feel no doubt of your secrecy" (Austen 196).

While Mr. Darcy's proposal introduces readers to the main sources of anger for both parties, the letter given to Elizabeth the next day begins to reveal that Mr. Darcy is changing as a result of her angry rejection. Addressing his part in the separation of Jane and Mr. Bingley—while he does not regret telling his friend the disadvantages of the match—he concedes that there is "one part of [his] conduct in the whole affair on which [he does] not reflect with satisfaction" (Austen 194), which is hiding from Mr. Bingley the fact that Jane was in London at the same time that they were, and so diminishes the possibility of their meeting during this time. It seems possible he regrets doing this because it involved lying by omission to his friend and, in that way, keeping Mr. Bingley from making his own decisions regarding his relationship with Jane. Mr. Darcy, in recognizing this regret and wrongdoing in unnecessarily hurting Jane and possibly his own friend, is shown as beginning to reflect on how his actions are affecting those around him, starting with Elizabeth as the object of his affection, and later, others who are important to Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy being led to reflection by Elizabeth's anger—even despite its "selfish" quality—is merely hinted at here but becomes explicit later in the novel.

Mr. Darcy, in writing his letter—in proving his innocence, providing facts either twisted or left out by Mr. Wickham, and in addressing Elizabeth's feelings—ultimately gains and gives fair acknowledgement, bettering both individuals and their relationship. He seems to, through this vulnerable admission, spark the subverting of each of the statements he and Elizabeth made earlier in the book during Elizabeth's stay at Netherfield. Mr. Darcy originally states that Elizabeth's "natural defect" is her tendency to "wilfully misunderstand" everyone. He says this after arguing that pride, when accompanied by a "real superiority of mind" (Austen 56)—a superiority in the sense of being reasonable and just rather than denoting rank or upbringing—is regulated and not an issue, and that he hopes he has no fault in understanding. In calling out Elizabeth's refusal to recognize the source of his anger or motivations, the letter is a confrontation for Elizabeth with the faults of her character which had already been made apparent to Mr. Darcy through their superficial acquaintance in this earlier scene. However, he accepts in this letter that there was no way she could have known or suspected the truth of Mr. Wickham's character and actions. In thinking about anger as a signal of her values and possibly an issue with the receiver of the anger expressions' actions, Mr. Darcy gives Elizabeth, her values, and her anger their due recognition, understanding that her feelings and character were lacking fair acknowledgement from him. Then, while Elizabeth had once said that Mr. Darcy's natural defect was "a propensity to hate every body" (Austen 57), she almost nullifies this statement in reading his letter and coming to the conclusion that, while knowing Mr. Darcy, he had been rude or ill-mannered at times, but that he had never been truly or purposefully unjust (Austen 201). Here, it can be seen that their respective pride and prejudices are becoming unraveled through

their own reflections on their past actions, words, and feelings, led by their recognition of the others' motivations to introspection and positive growth.

While this letter is only the start of their simultaneous growth, their improvement seems to be sparked, at least in part, by Elizabeth's expression of anger at Mr. Darcy's injustices, real or fabricated. As a result, he can parse the roots of her anger and meet her accusations with understanding while demanding recognition of his own feelings and motivations. This results in a letter providing Elizabeth with the information she'd been seeking from him, however indirectly, during their argument—an explanation of his actions, recognition of her perspective, and recognition of his own wrongdoings. After reading, as I explored earlier, Elizabeth is ultimately led by her own morals and values, paired with introspective deliberation, to check her own pride and prejudices. Here, Elizabeth's "justified" and "selfish" anger then takes a more prudent turn inwards towards her own words and actions and regard for others, including Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham when she recognizes her biases. This turn also then shifts her anger (directed outwardly) from being "justified" and "selfish" to being "justified" and "selfless." Because this second anger type is focused inwardly, she is led to reconcile the cognitive dissonance between her standing up for those she loves and what she feels is right and the necessity to be fair in her judgement of others by analyzing where she overlooked Mr. Darcy's feelings and motivations. This internal work allows her to be guided by her anger in the direction of self-improvement for the remainder of the novel, cutting Mr. Darcy slack and strengthening her own intelligence and independence.

IV. Lady Catherine de Bourgh: Constructive Anger Prevailing in the Face of Unproductive Anger

Lady Catherine de Bourgh, a title bearing member of the landed gentry who gained money as well as the property of Rosings Park upon her husband's death, and who makes a significant income from Rosings' tenants, is quickly introduced to readers as someone around whom one should tread lightly. Her character, as related by Mr. Collins, far precedes Elizabeth's meeting her, affording Elizabeth a look into Lady Catherine's "self-importance" (Austen 159) before she is confronted with it personally. Mr. Collins tells her that she will "'find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite'" (Austen 104). Mr. Collins' interjection about the necessity of silence and respect for gaining Lady Catherine's acceptance of Elizabeth's confidence and independence already exposes her as someone to whom rank, and the recognition of her rank, is of high importance. This is later confirmed when Mr. Collins notes that "'[Lady Catherine] likes to have the distinction of rank preserved'" (Austen 158), which, considering her socioeconomic status and her title, is understandable. Readers are, by this point, well acquainted with Elizabeth's inclination to speak her opinions freely with anyone while remaining amiable, something which she does when initially meeting Lady Catherine. This ability to remain amiable speaks to Elizabeth's character as well; she is confident in her own value as an individual and quietly stands up for herself and her beliefs enough to express her opinion while remaining polite, seemingly so that she may assert her independence, however covertly, in a way that won't drive others away from the conversation or make them less inclined to listen to what she has to say. In this way, she almost plays a game in conversation

with Lady Catherine, inserting her opinions without being too direct or aggressive so as to not upset her or incite her refusal to listen to her. When Elizabeth meets Lady Catherine again, later in the novel, readers can begin to get a sense of the differences between Elizabeth's anger expressions as she interacts with another character who deliberately brings up each of the flaws of Elizabeth's family without angering her. It seems clear that Elizabeth will remain amiable in the face of insults, as she did when encountering Mr. Darcy for the first time, to an extent.

Elizabeth's free will, nor her morals, are under threat when she first meets Lady Catherine, so she has no reason to get angry; she's confident in her own views and doesn't necessarily feel the need for Lady Catherine to understand, agree, or care, as long as she's not attempting to strip Elizabeth of her agency. Polina Shvanyukova, in her analysis of conduct books of the nineteenth century, points out that, in one way or another, each of these texts seemed to agree that "A woman's duty to please and be the perfect companion [defined] her self, leaving no room for any independent sense of identity of her own" (78-79); a woman was expected to not argue or disagree, rather, to be "complementary and subordinate" (67), especially when interacting with someone of a higher status. Elizabeth, throughout the novel, is seen arguing with other characters, such as when Mr. Collins subverts her every attempt at rejecting him as she refutes his assertion of her insincerity. Throughout this conversation she continually thanks Mr. Collins for his proposal and what compliments he does give her, while standing firmly by her rejection, showing respect to his actions and his consideration for the Bennet's financial situation in an attempt to keep him happy while making sure her stance is clear. Further, after she dances with Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth speaks to Caroline Bingley who tells her that the story Mr. Wickham told her was untrue, to which she responds "angrily" with "[Mr. Wickham's]

guilt and his descent appear by your account to be the same" (Austen 93), accusing Caroline of unfairly defaming Mr. Wickham in a way that offers her opinion and points out Caroline's lack of supporting evidence for Mr. Wickham's guilt in his relationship with Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth is stubborn in her beliefs and assertions when speaking to anyone else, especially those whom she's not particularly fond of. Elizabeth's conversation tactic is displayed no differently when faced with Lady Catherine's conceit; Elizabeth is set on having her opinion and expressing it to keep her independence and morals in the face of pressures to conform to social standards.

When Elizabeth meets Lady Catherine for the first time, they get along with each other fairly well despite Lady Catherine's obvious self-importance. The narrator notes that, upon welcoming Elizabeth to her home, "[Lady Catherine's] air was not conciliating, nor was her manner of receiving them such as to make her visitors forget their inferior rank" (Austen 159). Clearly, this distinction of rank is important to Lady Catherine, and her obvious sense of superiority as a result of her social status begins here as a mere unobtrusive character trait before becoming a much bigger issue for Elizabeth. In this meeting, the two women have a conversation wherein Elizabeth answers all of Lady Catherine's questions regarding herself and her family. She only displays some pushback in her initial refusal to answer Lady Catherine's question about her age—"you give your opinion very decidedly for so young a person" (Austen 162)—introducing Elizabeth, however superficially, to her aversion to being questioned over her willingness to give and uphold her opinions.

As Lady Catherine continues to criticize Elizabeth's family, Elizabeth remains seemingly unfazed and continues to stand up for herself and her family, displaying her refusal to give up her beliefs. Towards the end of their conversation, Lady Catherine criticizes Mrs. Bennet for not

employing a governess for her daughters and allowing all of them to be "out" (Austen 162), to participate in society and courtship, simultaneously, rather than waiting for the older girls to be married first. Despite this, Elizabeth is smiling throughout the conversation, stating her opinions while humoring Lady Catherine by way of responding to her opinions in a way that lightly contests them enough to allow Lady Catherine's opinion and her own to coexist, and generally being agreeable as conduct books would have dictated that she do. For example, when Lady Catherine says that "'Without a governess, you must have been neglected,'" Elizabeth says that "'Compared with some families, I believe we were; but such of us as wished to learn never wanted the means. We were always encouraged to read, and had all the masters that were necessary'" (Austen 161). Regardless of whether she agrees with Lady Catherine's point, Elizabeth verbally accepts Lady Catherine's views, to an extent—likely recognizing here the influence of her status and upbringing on her worldview—before countering with her own opinion; Elizabeth masters the art—or game—of conversation in appealing to the other's need for recognition while giving her own opinion and subtly standing up for herself, regardless of whether Lady Catherine will agree or necessarily care. At this point, Elizabeth is in no way truly connected to Lady Catherine, nor is Lady Catherine being very insulting, let alone attempting to hinder Elizabeth's free will or repress her beliefs in some way. For this reason, it seems that Elizabeth appears unbothered by her questioning and closely follows social expectations of women's interactions with others. What's more important to their relationship, however, is the way that their manner of interacting with each other is reversed by the time they meet in the latter half of the book.

Lady Catherine's obsession with social class and family soon becomes a central force in the attempted repression of Elizabeth's free will and moral beliefs. Lady Catherine's self-importance is

evident throughout the novel, but until their final meeting, Elizabeth has no explicit issue with this part of her character. Conversely, when they meet again later in the novel, Lady Catherine, upon arriving from Rosings, takes a walk with Elizabeth during which she interrogates her about the rumor of her engagement to Mr. Darcy which she quickly refers to as a "scandalous falsehood" (Austen 334) that would be injurious to Mr. Darcy merely to give any credit to. Lady Catherine clearly views his rumored relationship with Elizabeth as improper, something she reiterates throughout this entire conversation. When Elizabeth gives little attention to her opinions and brushes off the intended marriage between Mr. Darcy and his own cousin, Anne de Bourgh, Lady Catherine points out that Elizabeth is of "inferior birth," has no relations of consequence, and that their marriage would be in defiance of "propriety and delicacy" (Austen 336). Here, Lady Catherine is arguing that, though Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are of the same gentry class, Mr. Darcy, with his higher income and his title-bearing aunt, would be lowering his own social status in entering a relationship with her, something which Elizabeth rejects. Elizabeth argues that her father is a gentleman—a man who has inherited his money and property—the same as Mr. Darcy: "He is a gentleman, I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal" (Austen 337).

When asked about her mother, Elizabeth argues that if Mr. Darcy has no problem with one side of her family being of a lower social class—people who work in trade for money; that is to say, people of new money (Copeland 115-130)—then Lady Catherine can have no objection since it's not her marriage in question. This points back to one of the roots of Elizabeth's anger here, which is that she is being treated unfairly and as someone of a lower social status than she actually is, largely due to her relation to a few family members and those family members' occupations or lack of propriety. To

be fair, one's social standing at the time not only depended on their family and income, but also more seemingly superficial things such as "good breeding" and subjective things such as one's moral beliefs or behavior, factors which place Mr. Darcy higher in the social hierarchy, and would have influenced his view of any woman, regardless of her socioeconomic status as part of the gentry class. What upsets Elizabeth seems to be that she is being treated unfairly in spite of her father's gentility, but also in spite of her obvious intelligence and her general cordiality when interacting with others. She seems to measure her social worth with regard to not only her birth, upbringing, parents, class, etc., but also how good of a person she is, something that Mr. Darcy soon comes to recognize as important in his consideration of her as a person and potential partner. In her novel, Helena Kelly points out that

> Darcy, who represents both the politically powerful nobility and the landed gentry, has to embrace change—to embrace Elizabeth and her laughter. He has to be, as he says, 'properly humbled'; he has to recognise that worth lies in morality and behaviour, not in bloodlines. (153)

Although, it's not enough that he recognizes this with regard to others; he must recognize how his own morality and behavior play into the way that others—Elizabeth, specifically—view him as a person. On this subject, Francesca Marinaro mentions in her article on consent culture that "Darcy's letter marks the starting point of his growth as he recognizes that the honorable man earns respect through word and action, not as a birthright of social position" (176). As someone who is continually proven to be just, readers watch Mr. Darcy come to this conclusion on his own, despite some of his family and acquaintances' inability to do the same.

Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy eventually have the ability to put oneself aside in order to understand the true character of another, something that requires one to consider their wrongs which Lady Catherine refuses to do. They both have this essential openness to change, change which Elizabeth is drawn to by her recognition of her own injustice; Mr. Darcy could have been just and reasonable and still not open to change, or possibly even fearful of compromising his social status, but instead he follows love and understands he must be better, and must treat Elizabeth better, which is the driving force that leads him to change. This recognition led by introspection brings him to self-improvement with the goal of making reparations to Elizabeth. Conversely, Lady Catherine is not only not just nor reasonable, but not open to change, and "selfishly" perpetuates her belief in her superiority over Elizabeth. Not only does Elizabeth thus face oppression, but Mr. Darcy's favorable opinion of her is unfairly overlooked as unimportant by someone who she believes shouldn't have a say in their relationship at all. It's clear that Elizabeth doesn't appreciate anyone being treated unfairly, even someone who, in the past, treated her unfairly; this seems to be the root of her subsequent anger, which is "justified" and "selfless." After experiencing heartbreak resulting from Mr. Darcy breaking up the relationship between Mr. Bingley and Jane, Lady Catherine's attempt to break up Mr. Darcy's relationship with Elizabeth hits a sore spot for Elizabeth; she already knows how it feels to have someone "so wholly unconnected to me" (Austen 338), as she says, come between a relationship they're not involved in, and she clearly doesn't appreciate the same situation falling on herself and Mr. Darcy. By this point in the novel, Elizabeth, upon recognizing her own injustice towards Mr. Darcy, shows readers that her morals regarding the treatment of people are generally indiscriminatory. This anger over the repression of Mr. Darcy's free will demonstrates how her anger has the ability to build

on her morals to lead her towards improving herself through the acknowledgement of others' character (motivations, intentions, background, etc.). This is not to say that this is always the outcome, but only that it's possible and that Elizabeth experiences it and, as a result, garners positive growth as a result. This anger, rooted in her morals, allows her to express her disapproval of Lady Catherine's overshadowing of Mr. Darcy's feelings for Elizabeth due to her own bias.

Further, the text seems to reward Elizabeth for displaying her moral beliefs—even through anger—in the face of unfair treatment, arguing for the positive potential of certain types of anger when exhibited under certain conditions. At one point, Lady Catherine brings up the scandalous marriage between Lydia and Mr. Wickham and both of their individual improprieties before wondering aloud whether "the shades of Pemberley [are] to be thus polluted" (Austen 338) by Mr. Darcy's being made a brother-in-law to Mr. Wickham upon marrying Elizabeth. To this, Elizabeth "resentfully" says, "You have insulted me in every possible method" (Austen 338), getting up to return to the house. "Resentment" is defined by the OED as "an indignant sense of injury or insult received or perceived; (a feeling of) ill will, bitterness, or anger against a person or thing." Already, the word anger appears in this definition, attributing the feeling to Elizabeth in this moment, but the word "indignant" also denotes a sense of "injury" and injustice (OED), in this case, concerning herself and her family. These words again gesture to the root of her anger as it existed at the beginning of the book—"justified" and "selfish"—regarding Mr. Darcy's treatment of herself and loved ones. In this instance though, her anger is made to coexist with the knowledge that her family acts improperly at times and the knowledge that she's now related through law to a man who injured Mr. Darcy. Thus, Elizabeth can understand that Mr. Darcy has every right to not renew his proposal to her, but she also

recognizes that this is his decision to make, not Lady Catherine's. Elizabeth's anger in her conversation with Lady Catherine seems more concerned with her attempt to strip not only Elizabeth, but also Mr. Darcy, of their agency to make this decision between themselves, categorizing her anger as "justified" and "selfless."

This anger, in being "selfless," seems employed by the text to demonstrate the connection of Elizabeth's personal anger to her wider moral beliefs which contradict social norms of the time. In arguing with, or at least not complying, with Lady Catherine's demands, Elizabeth is directly opposing conduct manuals of the time which urged ladies to be agreeable to others. In her study of several of these manuals, Shvanyukova mentions that

> These dedicated narratives routinely detail the ways in which idealised and compliant female characters are rewarded for their conformity to the models disseminated in the manuals, while non-conforming characters are punished for their refusal to comply. Unsurprisingly, the reward is presented in the form of a marriage proposal from a worthy gentleman. (75)

There are plenty of marriage proposals in this novel and Charlotte Lucas, notably, does seem to conform to the expectations of women in this era and is still rewarded with marriage to a man who will support her and inherit property in the future. As readers know, Elizabeth doesn't necessarily support this union—"It is unaccountable! in every view it is unaccountable!" (Austen 133)—as it isn't based in mutual love or respect as she expects for her own relationship. Rather, Charlotte is using Mr. Collins for his money, for his home, and for a stable future which makes her happy enough without true love. In her visit with Charlotte, Elizabeth's understanding of this relationship seems refined when she eventually accepts their marriage, recognizing it as being beneficial to Charlotte, whereas it wouldn't

have been beneficial in an emotionally and intellectually satiating way to her. She is emotionally satiated with Mr. Darcy because she can truly love him and feel that he is worthy of her love only after he's proven it to her through his words and actions while Charlotte only needs security.

Then the text, after only briefly discussing Charlotte's relationship, explores in depth the relationship between Elizabeth, who consistently defies societal expectations, and Mr. Darcy, whose morals are inherently framed by class and societal hierarchy given his upbringing. In this way, the text seems to flag Charlotte's relationship as merely acceptable in contrast with the relationship between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy which, despite its diversion from the norm, turns out to be exceptional. The conversation between Lady Catherine and Elizabeth therefore seems to be a culmination of Elizabeth's defiance, agency, and maybe the most significant deviance from expectations, something that, had Mr. Darcy not been so open to change or understanding of Elizabeth's character, might have lost her a second proposal. Despite the external pressure to behave and present a certain way perpetuated by Lady Catherine, Elizabeth still gets "rewarded" and not for conformity. She is shown as defiant and independent, then as understanding and intelligent, and finally she is married in the end after she's given and, more importantly, taken criticism. This then seems to be a reward gifted to Elizabeth by the text for her resolve to express her anger and not be intimidated to act a certain way by others or society; rather, to take that criticism of her double standards for herself and others and change in a positive way as a result of recognizing her shortcomings.

On the other hand, Lady Catherine exhibits "unjustified" and "selfish" anger that stems from her self-importance and which only seems to be directed outwards towards those who threaten her status; this seems to be a sign of her inability to accept criticism or consider her injustice which causes

friction with her response to anger and the way she exhibits it. For example, Lady Catherine says to Elizabeth, "do not deceive yourself into a belief that I will ever recede. I shall not go away till you have given me the assurance I require" (Austen 337), demonstrating her expectation of being complied with. Once Elizabeth denies her intent to accede to her demands, Lady Catherine insults her, "highly incensed" (Austen 338). Here, the text demonstrates the potentially negative and even counterproductive power of anger when wielded outwardly against others by someone who is lacking an understanding of human complexity, the willingness to listen to opposing views, and introspection. This combination of anger types and conditions creates a scenario wherein one party is not being heard and not hearing the other's criticisms which will lead to no introspection and therefore no positive growth. In presenting Lady Catherine and Elizabeth's anger side by side in this scene, readers are able to examine the positive quality of Elizabeth's anger, stemming largely from her sense of justice, lack of recognition, and threat to her ability to act as she pleases, and how it's directed not only outwardly but inwardly. This is the anger which the text, in showing how it contributes to Elizabeth's growth and independence and allows her to avoid being unjust to others while also standing up for herself, argues is ultimately positive and productive.

In considering her anger's role in the decision, I've noticed that scholars have previously argued that Elizabeth's independence is dissolved in her choice to accept Mr. Darcy's second proposal. This action seems to me, rather, to act as an attestation of Elizabeth's power in her independence as a result of her anger expression. In her article titled, "Resolving the Institution of Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Courtship Novels," author Heidi Giles does a close reading of the word "resolve" and the larger "language of resolve" (76) used in *Pride and Prejudice*. Specifically, she looks at the way it is used

within this final scene between Elizabeth and Lady Catherine to argue that “Jane Austen’s portrayal of courtship differs from that of many courtship novels written throughout the eighteenth century” and that “instead of submitting to authority and convention” (76), the women of her books use marriage as an affirmation of their own independence and power. Elizabeth’s anger allows her this affirmation as it guides Mr. Darcy’s character growth in a positive direction while leading herself to introspection. Elizabeth’s respect for Mr. Darcy is not fully realized even after she reads the letter and feels her anger turn inwards because she is still upset over his accusations against her family's impropriety. However, the recognition of the truth in these statements, along with Mr. Darcy's several acts of reparation, seems to dissolve the cognitive dissonance she feels from the need to be a good and just person clashing with the want of fair acknowledgement. This allowed their relationship to develop from their mutual respect for each other. In being "resolved" to do that which makes her happy and, in subsequently marrying Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth "assumes the feminine role deliberately" (Giles 79), marrying him intentionally only after he proves to her that he respects her. In this way, Elizabeth “takes charge of her own marriage” (Giles 76), being independent and outspoken enough to be the catalyst for the character development of a man who loves her so much that he becomes someone she feels is worthy of her.

Someone who acknowledges her feelings, challenges her biases, recognizes his own wrongs, and makes reparations and a conscious effort to be good to her loved ones despite his previous bias against them is someone that she wants to be loved by and that she can truly love, too. Therefore, Elizabeth’s engagement to Mr. Darcy, if not consciously contrived by him from the moment she rejected his original proposal, was deliberately done as Mr. Darcy endeavored to make reparations to Elizabeth for

the way he originally treated her; Mr. Darcy—who is constantly described as just—explicitly acknowledges his mistakes as well as Elizabeth's feelings, takes action towards making up for his injustices, and improves his treatment of Elizabeth and her family, demonstrating his justness and true love for Elizabeth. To be just and give others fair acknowledgement, the text seems to say that one must be open to criticism and must be prepared to change oneself in response to that criticism, given that it is reasonable and true, something which is integral to the type of relationship Elizabeth wants, which is based in respect. Having these abilities, it is very possible that Mr. Darcy then understood that she would not accept a renewed proposal until she knew that his view of herself and her family had evolved in a positive direction and he treated all of them equally. For example, when he meets the Gardiners—who are of new money as they gain income through work in trade rather than inheritance—he appears genuine and humble, something which catches Elizabeth by surprise; "she could hardly suppress a smile, at his being now seeking the acquaintance of some of those very people, against whom his pride had revolted, in his offer to herself" (Austen 244). It's at this point that she admits that all the anger she felt towards him once had dissolved and that, had she still had any, this display of his positively changed character would have erased it anyway.

Despite Elizabeth's dream of marrying someone she is in love with, at the time, she would not have had many other options for financially securing her future besides marrying someone of a larger fortune. In their article, "Wealth and Womanhood; A Feminist Marxist Reading of Property, Inheritance, and Class Mobility in Pride and Prejudice," authors Imdad Ullah Khan, Saira Asghar Khan, and Saad Salman point out that "In the absence of viable alternatives in terms of career choice…women of the time found themselves heavily dependent on the prospects of 'marrying well' to

secure their financial future" (72). This absence of alternatives financially hinders Elizabeth, especially given her socioeconomic status and inheritance laws at the time. Further, Susan Gorsky, in her book *Femininity to Feminism : Women and Literature in the Nineteenth Century,* points out that "to a very large degree, [a woman's] *happiness* depended on [the man in her life's] goodwill. She had almost no opportunity for education, no chance to develop special interests or choose a career other than wife and mother" (2; emphasis added). Elizabeth—someone who would certainly benefit from "marrying well"—is clearly intelligent regarding her position as a woman in the socioeconomic hierarchy and would have been well acquainted with this idea of a woman's happiness and well-being depending on her future husband. However, readers also understand that Elizabeth is, as she says to Lady Catherine, "only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me" (Austen 338), and therefore would have wanted to be careful in choosing her husband to ensure that future and happiness were protected. This might explain, to some degree, why she refused to marry Mr. Collins—"Collins is a fool, and Elizabeth knows that" (Stovel 31). She knew her happiness would be largely dictated by the man she married, and she tells Collins many times, "You could not make me happy" (Austen 105), primarily because they are not equally intelligent and she wants a relationship wherein she and her partner can respect each other emotionally and intellectually.

Additionally, this idea that her happiness would depend on her partner might explain, to some degree, why Elizabeth refused Mr. Darcy at first and why she accepted his second proposal. At the time of his renewed proposal, Mr. Darcy has shown significant character growth in the way that he interacts with Elizabeth and her family and in the way he helps pay off Mr. Wickham's debt to help the Bennets,

showing Elizabeth that he has also reflected on his character. This reflection on his own actions as a result of the anger which was exhibited by Elizabeth during his first proposal led him to become a man Elizabeth could respect and feel was worthy of her hand in marriage. In this way, Elizabeth's anger not only led her to reflect on her own character, family, and actions towards others, her anger expression also forced—that is, if he truly loved and wanted to marry her—Mr. Darcy to grow into a more forgiving and humble person who, not only could Elizabeth respect, but who could respect Elizabeth in her intelligence, independence, and anger.

Throughout her conversation with Lady Catherine, Elizabeth exhibits not only her ability but her drive to trust her own judgement of herself and others to guide her decision making, regardless of how others, especially others such as Lady Catherine, blinded by her own bias, perceive it. This drive is, here, also strengthened as a result of her anger. After becoming angry with Mr. Darcy at his unfair treatment of her sister and Mr. Wickham, Mr. Darcy wrote the letter which made her reflect on her own prejudice, thus turning her anger against herself for allowing herself to be blinded by her own judgment of another's character. By resulting in betterment through introspection, Elizabeth's anger directly allows her to be "justified" in expressing her beliefs and doing as she wishes without also being "selfish" in holding double standards for herself and others in their treatment of those around them.

This positive growth in her character seems to culminate in her conversation with Lady Catherine. First, in response to Lady Catherine's initial refusal to believe in the rumor of her nephew's proposal, Elizabeth "colored with astonishment and disdain" (Austen 334). "Disdain," defined by the OED as "the feeling entertained towards that which one thinks unworthy of notice or beneath one's dignity," already seems to be an indication of her persistent self-worth in this scenario; she doesn't feel

that Lady Catherine is superior to her simply due to her income or relatives. This then becomes a "justified" foundation for her anger. Further, when Lady Catherine asserts that their relationship would be improper when Mr. Darcy and Miss de Bourgh are intended to marry, Elizabeth says that, not only would she not be kept from marrying Mr. Darcy based on the desires of his family, but reminds Lady Catherine that "Mr. Darcy is neither by honour nor inclination confined to his cousin" (Austen 336), and may choose to marry anyone he would like. Here, she asserts both of their freedom to do what they will without being influenced by anyone else given the fact that they're both adults and have free will to do so. Clearly, personal agency, whether her own or someone else's, is very important to Elizabeth and worth fighting for, which justifies her anger and demonstrates her empathy for others. The text's argument seems explicit here: to have anger work to one's benefit and otherwise act as a positive force, one must be open to criticism and change of their own character while being conscious of the nuances of people as creatures of constant growth with their own backgrounds to take into account.

V. Conclusion: The Moral Value of "Anger" Expressions

In searching through several versions of the text, I found that the word "anger" is used thirteen times, the word "angry" is used seventeen times, and the word "angrily" is used once, totaling to thirty one instances in which anger is explicitly stated, whether ascribed to or expressed by a specific character or not. Eleven of these uses are ascribed to or in reference to Elizabeth while only three of them are ascribed to or in reference to Mr. Darcy, and these three uses all occur before the writing of his letter, whereas Elizabeth is angry throughout the novel. In cutting Mr. Darcy some slack, I explored the ways that the text highlights Mr. Darcy's naturally just character—the ways he acknowledges his wrongs and takes responsibility for his actions, among other things—but the way anger is used in relation to his character seems like an obvious endeavor by the text to do this work more efficiently than in my own analysis. Even in his anger, Mr. Darcy is just in telling Elizabeth the truth of not only his affection towards her, but also in telling the truth of his views and feelings surrounding her family, although he could have been a bit more courteous. He is also just in recognizing the need to write his letter so that she may have a fuller picture of his side of things and possibly so that she may see him own up to those criticisms exposed in his proposal and understand his intentions. It's the "selfish" nature of Mr. Darcy's anger expressions that injures Elizabeth in his inconsideration of how those feelings and thoughts about her and her family will be received by her. In having Mr. Darcy express anger explicitly on the page only twice, and both before his endeavor to make up for injuring Elizabeth and Jane, it seems the text is arguing that anger can precede positive outcomes in the long run, even if they cause short-term negative outcomes. The third use of the word anger in relation to Mr. Darcy is from another characters' judgement of how he looks from across the room rather than from an actual

anger expression—“he seemed very angry at being spoke to” (Austen 20). Maybe this is an allusion to making assumptions about someone’s character without knowing them.

Regarding positive outcomes, Elizabeth expresses anger many times in differing contexts and under varying conditions, but she is ultimately met with several positive outcomes at the end of the novel. In looking at these anger expressions, there seems to be only one instance where Elizabeth’s anger is “unjustified” and "selfish," and that occurs directly after reading Mr. Darcy’s explanatory letter. This also happens to be just before her anger is directed inwardly, turning to “justified” and "selfless” productive anger. The “unjustified” nature of her initial anger after reading the letter seems to result in her emotions clouding her fair acknowledgement; after reading Mr. Darcy’s side of his relationship with Mr. Wickham, Elizabeth has all of the information she needs to recognize his innocence and true intentions, but momentarily she continues to feel this anger towards him, possibly because she’d already been harboring it for so long. It seems possible this is also a moment where the text teaches readers that anger can coexist with understanding, but that anger should morph, whether positively or negatively, as a result of understanding. This can be seen in Elizabeth’s need to balance the two so that she may treat Mr. Darcy with justice until he pays Mr. Wickham, admits his omission to Mr. Bingley, and makes an effort to treat the Gardiners well, making up for the way he spoke about her family.

Injustice might generally be excused with a lack of information and the presence of "selfless" thinking; however, Elizabeth’s injustice towards Mr. Darcy—her refusal to recognize her wrongs in the frustration at his own wrongs—cannot be excused once she has the full story between himself and Mr. Wickham and once she realizes the way she spoke to him, despite not knowing the truth. Mr. Darcy’s

injustice stems from his upbringing, but his “selfish" anger may be momentarily excused due to his general justness, lack of familiarity with Jane’s character, and knowledge of his socioeconomic value to the women of Meryton. While both of these anger types may result in negative outcomes, both are felt and expressed by characters who are attuned to the emotions of themselves and others and are open to understanding. Both characters eventually have the ability to put oneself aside in order to understand the character of another. For example, Elizabeth is able to recognize that her ideals for marriage don’t align with those of Charlotte Lucas, so they can still be friends with differing objectives for marriage. Elizabeth is able to recognize the true character of Mr. Collins and thank him for his proposal and the good he thinks he’s doing for her while also rejecting him for the sake of her own happiness. She accepts rather than recognizes Mr. Darcy’s true character when she reads his letter and no longer has reason to be unjust in her treatment and opinion of him.

Mr. Darcy is able to recognize the truth of Elizabeth’s character sooner through her anger expressions which expose her love for her family and empathy towards those who she believes to be innocent. He then is able to recognize that she needs more information to understand his true character and so writes his letter for that purpose. He also is able to acknowledge that, in order for her to love him, he must tell and, more importantly, show her that he can be better to her and her family. This is especially true after the way she reacted to his previous comments and interactions with them, which the narrator tells readers that Elizabeth is still upset about, even after her anger turns inwards at her own injustice—“When she remembered the style of his address, she was still full of indignation” (Austen 206). Elizabeth, on the other hand, recognizes Mr. Darcy’s pride as something that injures her, notwithstanding his justness otherwise. Her resulting anger, while "selfish," is enough to encourage her

to speak in a way she later regrets, but which gives Mr. Darcy a fuller view of her character and morals, guiding him to give her a fuller view of his own which may not have happened had she not expressed her anger. When she reads this letter, it's then that Elizabeth is able to recognize Mr. Darcy's true character and his love for his family and friends while her anger directs itself towards her own injustice. In this way, both of them have this ability to recognize others' true character—motivations, intentions, morals, etc.—and therefore judge each other more fairly than they previously had. Here, the text seems to be exploring how imperfect anger—anger which is in some way "unjustified" or "selfish"—in certain conditions, still has the potential for inciting positive outcomes.

Ascertaining the moral value of many of these uses of the words "anger" and "angry" was difficult as some of them are not expressions, nor even felt by a character, but of all of the times these words are used across the novel, Elizabeth is the only character that explicitly has inwardly directed anger attributed to her. She is also the only character who expresses this type of anger on the page while also experiencing long-term positive outcomes such as self-improvement and a, presumably, happy marriage. While this doesn't account for the use of other anger-adjacent words such as resentment and disdain, "anger" being, I believe, the simplest word for this emotion besides "mad," stands out to me as a way the text flags the conditions of this feeling and its expressions regardless of the specific words used.

Mr. Darcy, through reflecting on his interactions with Elizabeth, obviously comes to the conclusion that he'd done wrong towards her, but whether or not he feels anger towards himself for injuring Elizabeth is a process that happens off the page. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are "selfish" and also just—for the most part—but Elizabeth also exhibits unjust behavior; she is empathetic and an

intelligent person generally, but she must recognize the moments wherein her emotion is getting the best of her judgement in order to be truly just. Mr. Darcy, as stated many times throughout the novel, is just, but he must learn to be more compassionate for others, though he generally has good judgement. Neither of these characters are perfect, but they're both open to change in the name of upholding their morals, even if it means letting go of their grudges or long-held beliefs about the world and other people. The text uses the rocky formation of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's relationship to present the positive potential of anger in its ability, however consciously used, to act as a catalyst for the recognition of others and one's own morals, possibly leading to self-improvement.

It seems that the text purposefully had Mr. Darcy's self-improvement happen off the page and away from Elizabeth in an endeavor to display the ways that anger can have positive outcomes even through different methods. The text can get away with not showing the entire process of Mr. Darcy's self-improvement because it first established his character as just and, therefore, reasonable, and shows his reform through his subsequent actions through to the end of the novel. Mr. Darcy might not even need to experience inward facing anger as Elizabeth does since he is a naturally rational person, and it's possible that the text is arguing that he can therefore bypass this inward anger and skip straight from acknowledging his faults to working towards the necessary solution(s). This is not to say that the text is making the case that Elizabeth's inward anger is unnecessary—because it does seem necessary for her—but that different people in different contexts, for example, socioeconomic, will experience and respond to anger differently and so will benefit from it to varying degrees.

Elizabeth's process towards self-improvement seems a little more complex than Mr. Darcy's because she is still regarding him in an unjust manner after reading his letter, even if only for a short

while, as she "could not approve him" (Austen 206). She must contend first with her own actions which are, at that point, "a constant source of vexation and regret" (Austen 206) and the numerous faults of her family members which Mr. Darcy had referenced. It seems that these are the conditions which cause her to not "feel the slightest inclination ever to see him again" (Austen 206), in addition to her persisting worry over Jane's happiness and relationship, or lack thereof, with Mr. Bingley. These she takes on as faults of herself, which is only somewhat unfair to herself, although certainly a product of the judgement of the time regarding the social hierarchy. Once she accepts these issues as true, she then is able to work towards being as good as she can be. She is pointed by her inwardly directed anger towards dissolving the tension she feels from the need to be just towards others and recognizes her own flaws clashing with the want of recognition of her own hurt and of her values which Mr. Darcy initially disregards. Elizabeth, on seeing Mr. Darcy at her house for the first time since Derbyshire, assumes that Mr. Darcy dislikes and wants nothing to do with her given the way she spoke to him, without knowing he intends to renew his proposal to her later—"More thoughtfulness, and less anxiety to please than when they last met, were plainly expressed. She was disappointed, and angry with herself for being so" (Austen 317). This scene seems to be a chance for the text to again point out the danger in always assuming what others are thinking. It's also possible that this is Elizabeth and the readers' final lesson of the novel, that listening to inwardly directed anger too much may hurt one's own self-esteem or confidence, both of which may be upheld even as one recognizes their own flaws.

As I collected and analyzed each of these anger expressions, I occasionally struggled to categorize some of them as "positive" or "negative" according to their outcomes. Therefore, there were some seemingly neutral anger expressions too. As I've explored, the text argues for the potential

positive power of "justified," "selfless" anger and its different conditions in contrasting these expressions with less positive or constructive types and conditions of anger. The text is also arguing, through Elizabeth's character and happy ending, that women's anger is important to listen to and that anger, if sat with and analyzed, can open an avenue to better understanding ourselves and those around us. Yet, a moment that caught my eye, only a few pages into the novel—one of the three instances in which anger is ascribed to Mr. Bingley—says "he was lively and unreserved, danced every dance, [and] was angry that the ball closed so early" (Austen 12). It's possible the text was invoking a sense of humor, as it so often does, in placing anger in a light that was less consequential in a book where many of its pivotal scenes are steeped in the emotion. However, in considering these instances of anger, directed at no one in particular or not at all, I'm inclined to believe that the text is also saying that anger can just exist without having to do anything for it to be worthwhile and without having to be necessarily good because emotions will be felt regardless. Maybe our anger, or our emotions, more generally, are sometimes simply trivial embellishments of our everyday life. After all, Mr. Bingley is, too, rewarded with a wonderful wife in the end.

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