



## A Fine House Richly Furnished: Pemberley and the Visiting of Country Houses

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**I**N JUNE 1792 JOHN BYNG was touring the north of England, travelling on horseback with his servant, “to view old castles, old manors and old religious houses, before they be quite gone; and that I may compare the ancient structures, and my ideas of their taste, and manners, with the fashions of the present day” (Byng II, 39). This is his journal entry for 26 June:

After breakfast, at the late hour of eleven, I saunter'd on foot to the blacksmith's shop, in that sweet spot at the entrance into Lyme-Park, which is all in waste and ill-keeping.—I stood before the house, when my lady housekeeper came out,—in civility, as I thought, so I said “Is there any family here?” “Yes, to be sure”. “Mr Leghs?” “No”. “Then I can see the house?” “Indeed you can't; I should have enough to do then”. —“Pleasing business, surely for a housekeeper?” “We never shew it but to those we know”. “Then I am happy not to be able to see it”.

Thus we parted in mutual contempt; tho' it seems to be so miserable a house, that she would not be over-fatigued. (Byng III, 119)<sup>1</sup>

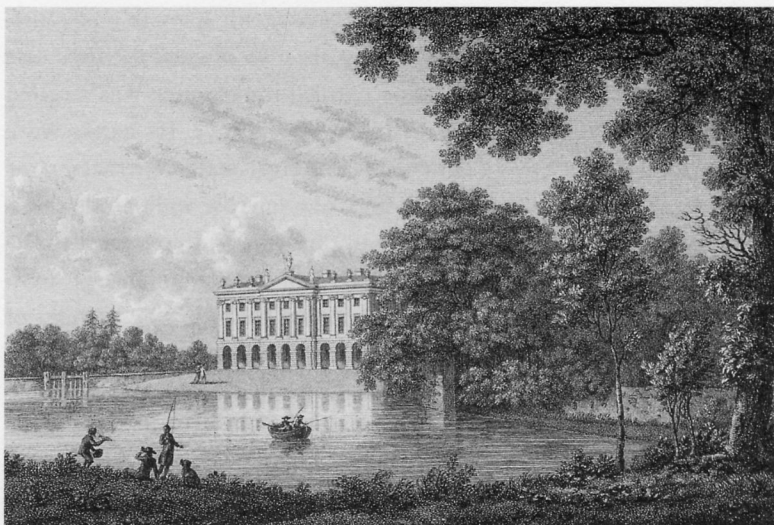
This is perhaps as opposite to Elizabeth Bennet's experience at Pemberley as could be imagined. Byng is refused access, is excluded and

offended; Elizabeth is admitted as a matter of course, charmed, and enlightened. But the passage is useful for our understanding of the visit to Pemberley with which this paper is concerned. Quite apart from the spurious connection that Lyme Park served as the model for Pemberley in the BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice* of 1995, Byng's account presents issues that underlie Elizabeth's experiences: the presumption of access to private houses, the status of the country house as showpiece, the role of the housekeeper, and the play of taste and perception between visitor and owner.

As Mrs. Gardiner explains, the primary intention in visiting Pemberley was to see the grounds, not the house. "If it were merely a fine house richly furnished," said she, "I should not care about it myself; but the grounds are delightful. They have some of the finest woods in the country" (240). The purpose of country house visiting had changed and evolved since the late sixteenth century, from seeing cabinets of curiosities to admiring works of art—old master paintings, sculpture, trophies of the Grand Tour—and the architecture of the houses themselves, and their gardens.

References to visiting gardens can be traced back as far as accounts of visiting houses, as in Thomas Platter's account of Hampton Court at the very end of the sixteenth century, where he was shown the interior and then passed to a gardener who "conducted us into the royal pleasaunce" (qtd. in Tinniswood 340).<sup>2</sup> But the development of eighteenth century landscape aesthetics, the creation of the English landscape garden, and the rise of the Picturesque all combined to attract visitors to the landscaped grounds of the country houses—and, of course, to the natural landscapes beyond the park gates. Elizabeth's tour was planned as extending perhaps as far as the Lakes (154), and though contracted to Derbyshire by Mr. Gardiner's commitments, was still very much consistent with the contemporary picturesque tour. The Gardiners were following a well travelled path of tourists, clutching their Claude glasses, viewing the wilder landscapes of Britain and the more manicured parks of the greater country houses in terms of the idealised classical landscapes of Claude and Poussin and Salvator Rosa.<sup>3</sup>

*Pride and Prejudice* does not have an extended discussion of the Picturesque of the kind found in *Northanger Abbey* or *Sense and Sensibility*, though the first suggestion of their tour provokes in Eliza-



Lyme Park. William Watts, *The Seats of the Nobility and Gentry*. London, 1779.

both a satire on picturesque travellers and their accounts of their tours (154), while, as has been noted, she plays with Gilpin's ideas of picturesque grouping when meeting Bingley's sisters with Darcy in the walks at Netherfield (53). But picturesque aesthetics underlie the description of Pemberley and its beauties. In entering the park at "one of its lowest points"<sup>4</sup> they satisfy the picturesque requirement for a low viewpoint for a prospect, and Elizabeth's description of the view from the dining parlour is a mature picturesque assessment of landscape, as seen through the framing device of the window. Mavis Batey notes how the grouping and regrouping of the elements of the prospect as seen from the different windows of the house is a picturesque response — the framed view, movement, variety (Batey 73). The park is praised for its natural rather than any artificial beauties; Elizabeth "had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste." This is the highest praise of all, where art adorns nature as unobtrusively as possible — as Walpole commented, "the modern gardener exerts his talents to conceal his art" (Walpole *Modern Gardening* 49).

The grounds of Pemberley are praised for their woods; as Ali-

stair Duckworth has noted, trees suggest organic growth and continuity (Duckworth 54 and note). They are also praised for their use of water, where “a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned.” The river walk contracts, after they had ascended the higher ground, to a narrow walk alongside a stream in an unadorned glen with hanging woods. In contrast to the Reptonian approach to the house, this is a simpler landscape with that unstudied roughness praised by Payne Knight. The account of the grounds makes and is intended to make no contribution to the contemporary debates of Repton and Payne Knight and Uvedale Price on the nature of the picturesque and its use and abuse in landscape gardening, but as has often been noted, it describes the estate in terms of status—“a large, handsome, stone building” in a park whose circuit was ten miles round (253)—beauty, continuity, and worth, all qualities that reflect on its owner. The personality of Darcy is expressed by the qualities of Pemberley just as that of Mr. Knightley is expressed by the qualities of Donwell Abbey. Darcy, in a sense, is Pemberley, as Mr. Knightley is Donwell; the estate becomes him.

After they “descended the hill, crossed the bridge, and drove to the door,” the travellers are admitted to the house by the respectable-looking, elderly housekeeper. The mechanics of visiting country houses varied much with their size and pretensions. The best authority for this is John Byng, with whose visit to Lyme Park we began. He was the nephew of Admiral Byng, and after serving in the army worked as a Commissioner of Stamps at Somerset House, from which he had only a month or two each year in which to escape the tedium and artificiality of London society. He travelled round England in the summer months of the 1780s and early 1790s, recording his journeys with a crusty independence of mind in a journal for his and his family’s amusement. More than any other tourist whose journals have survived, he is interested in the accessibility of houses and the means by which they are shown. The Gardiners’ presumption, common at the time for any tourist of adequate social status, was that if the family were away, the housekeeper would be prepared to show the house to visitors, and it was precisely the housekeeper’s failure to do this that so frustrated Byng at Lyme Park. Indeed, hous-



es were shown even if the family were in residence — Arthur Young recounts how Lady Stafford “retired from her apartment” at Wentworth Castle so his party could see it [qtd. in Muir 62]. Clearly a successful city merchant presumed his entitlement to admission as a matter of course. The qualifications for access were the appearance of gentility — or, put another way, looking as if you could afford the tip the housekeeper would expect of you. This could extend as far as law students, as mentioned in Richard Graves’ *Verses to William Shenstone, Esq. at the Leasowes*:

Thus in the vacant season of the year,  
Some Templar gay begins his wild career.  
From seat to seat o’er pompous scenes he flies,  
Views all with equal wonder and surprize;  
Till sick of domes, arcades, and temples grown,  
He hies fatigued, not satisfy’d, to town.

(Shenstone, 374)

Byng’s frustration at being refused access to a house is seen in his *Journal of A Ride* taken in 1785. At Wroxton in Oxfordshire “unluckily for us Ld G[uildford] was just arrived from London, and denied us admittance. Very rude this, and unlike an old courtly lord! Let him either forbid his place entirely; open it allways; or else fix a day of admission: but, for shame, don’t refuse travellers, who may have come 20 miles out of their way for a sight of the place” (Byng I, 231). The experience was repeated for him within the week at Sherborne Castle, which was consequently dismissed as “a very ugly place, in a very ugly country” (Byng I, 237).

In both these cases, access was refused because the family were at home. If the family were away, the housekeeper would feel free to show the house to visitors, as happens in Sarah Fielding’s novel *The Governess* (1749), where the housekeeper, overhearing the girls of Mrs. Teachum’s academy express interest in seeing it, tells them “her Lord and Lady were now both absent. . . . and as she knew them to be Mrs. Teachum’s well-regulated Family, they should be welcome to see the House and Gardens now” (Fielding 221).

At most houses, the traveller would send in his name to the porter or housekeeper to request access — at Hagley in 1800 Mrs. Lybbe Powys,<sup>5</sup> a perceptive visitor of country houses, noted that “we sent in our names for leave to walk round Lord Curzon’s [actually

Lord Lyttelton's] grounds, and he desired we would go into any part of it we chose, without being attended by his gardener" (Lybbe Powys 339). Elizabeth and the Gardiners were of course accompanied by the gardener in the park at Pemberley, as was normal. Larger houses, as Byng mentions at Wroxton, had fixed days of admission. Chatsworth had two public days every week, while Woburn was open only on Mondays; Fonthill Splendens, the mansion erected by William Beckford's father, could be visited between noon and four in the afternoon (Tinniswood 96). At Chiswick House, as at Walpole's Strawberry Hill, tickets were issued on application. Tourists' needs were anticipated; Richard Sullivan records that their guide at Derby announced "'Come, come, gentlemen, if you have a mind to see Lord Scarsdale's [Kedleston], you must go directly; it is now noon, and travellers have no admittance but from ten till two'" (Sullivan 143). At Thomas Johnnes' Hafod in Cardiganshire, the visitor bought a ticket at the nearby inn, and as the limitations of the inn were such that "the delicate can find no comfortable accommodation," Johnnes built a small public cottage for the convenience of his visitors (Cumberland 9).

The conditions of travel changed greatly through the eighteenth century, with turnpike roads, steel coach springs, good road maps, a network of post chaises working to a regular timetable, and a supporting infrastructure of coaching inns. The result of these and other factors, economic, aesthetic, and nationalistic, was a dramatic rise in the volume of domestic tourism. Tourists were engaged by a variety of objectives. For some, it was health, combined with the social attractions of Bath, Tunbridge Wells, and other spas; for others, it was English antiquities, or natural history, or the wonders of the industrial revolution, or literary pilgrimage, or even genealogy. But one constant fascination was the country house and its estate.

Elizabeth Bennet is herself a witness to the popularity of visiting country houses and castles at the end of the eighteenth century. We are told that her party visited the remarkable places on their route to Derbyshire, including Blenheim Palace and Warwick and Kenilworth Castles—all famous attractions—and Elizabeth was able to admit to Mrs. Gardiner that "she was tired of great houses; after going over so many, she really had no pleasure in fine carpets or satin curtains" (240). This level of interest in the country house is



*Kedleston. William Watts, The Seats of the Nobility and Gentry. London, 1779.*

reflected in contemporary journals, guide books and view books. Sullivan's *Observations* usefully illustrates just how central country house visiting was to much late eighteenth century tourism; pages 45 to 90 of the book consist of a virtually seamless account of visits to Wardour Castle, Fonthill, Stourhead, Longleat, Wilton, Longford Castle, Broadlands, Hackwood, and Corsham, after which they "next proceeded to Bath, where we rested ourselves a few days" — as well they might. The larger houses could be crowded: at Holkham in 1772 Lady Beauchamp Proctor recorded that her party had to wait with a second party for at least an hour, while a third party was shown round by the housekeeper (Ketton-Cremer 194), and in 1787 Byng had to join a party of thirty to be shown Blenheim — "What a plague and fatigue!" he exclaimed (Byng I, 329).

These journals vary with the personality and sensitivity of their writers, and some are valuable not for particular insights or originality but for their affirmation of contemporary taste. For example, an unknown traveller of the 1740s whose initials were JW visits the great houses on his route, and scatters a limited range of adjectives at them. Staircases are handsome, libraries neat, small houses pretty, and large houses grand, while Castle Howard "was



*Holkham. William Watts, The Seats of the Nobility and Gentry. London, 1779.*

built by Sir John Vanbrugh & therefore cannot fail of being bad.”<sup>6</sup> Horace Walpole is a central figure here, as creator of the much visited Gothic villa of Strawberry Hill, as author of *A Description of the Villa of Mr Horace Walpole*, 1774, describing the house and its collections, and also as a visitor to the houses of others, as recorded by him in his *Journal of Visits to Country Seats*. At Strawberry Hill the number of visitors caused him to print rules for them, which limited numbers to one party a day, not exceeding four people—no children, and only to be visited between noon and 3pm between 1 May and 1 October. His Appointments Book shows that between 1784 and 1796 he received between 700 and 1,000 “companies” (Ousby 86). He also provides early examples of tourist vandalism: “Mr Southcote [owner of the famed ferme ornée near Weybridge] was forced to shut up his garden, for the savages, who came as connoisseurs, scribbled a thousand brutalities, in the buildings, upon his religion. I myself at Canons saw a beautiful table of Oriental alabaster that had been split in two by a buck in boots jumping up backwards to sit upon it” (Walpole *Correspondence* 2, 274–275).

In the meanwhile, country house guide books proliferated for the greater houses and parks, such as would have enabled Elizabeth



to note the artists and subjects of the “many good paintings” in the picture gallery at Pemberley (250). The earliest guides are to the art collections the houses contained, such as Walpole’s *Aedes Walpoleanae: or, a Description of the Collection of Pictures at Houghton Hall in Norfolk*, 1747. There were folio descriptions of houses published, often at the cost of the owner, but the interesting development, as discussed by John Harris, is in the inexpensive portable guide books that the visitor purchased at the local inn or nearby town and took round the house with him (Harris 60-62). Seeley’s guide to the great showpiece of Stowe gardens was the most frequently reprinted of these, going through seventeen editions between 1744 and 1797, while Mavor’s *A New Description of Blenheim* was also often reprinted, and even translated into French. Its eighth edition of 1811 is prefaced by the following General Information:

BLENHEIM may be seen every afternoon, from three till five o’Clock, except on Sundays and public Days. On Fair days at Woodstock, likewise, it can be seen only by particular permission.

COMPANY who arrive in the morning may take the ride of the Park, or the walk of the Gardens, before dinner, and after that visit the Palace.

The CHINA GALLERY, PARK, and GARDENS, will, on proper application, be shewn at any hour of the day, except during the time of Divine Service on Sundays.

The scale of country house visiting by tourists by the end of the eighteenth century can be appreciated by taking as an example one of the great houses, Wilton, with its celebrated collections of painting and statuary. Between 1751 and 1798 there were 26 editions of four different guides to Wilton. In a much quoted statistic, Mrs. Lybbe Powys noted in August 1776 that the Wilton visitors book showed 2,324 visitors in the last year (Lybbe Powys 165). The organised formalities of tourism are apparent from the account of Edward Daniel Clarke. After remarking that the catalogue of the collections had swelled to a volume (Kennedy’s *A Description of the Antiquities and Curiosities in Wilton House*, 1769, was the most substantial of the Wilton guides, a quarto of 117 pages illustrated with 25 plates of the statuary), and praising the house and contents, he concludes:

From this paltry insignificant outline, I leave the peruser of these pages to form his own opinion, as to the wonders of Wilton. I am neither willing nor able to give him a better, and must beg leave to inform him, that the whole of my remarks were collected from the cursory observations that could be made during a short excursion in a sorry Salisbury gig. To form a just idea of this magnificent museum, a man must visit it himself; to give any adequate description of it, he must be possessed of taste, learning, and ingenuity. He must be master of his own time, and permitted to examine it at his leisure. (Clarke 32-33)

There are added ingredients in this passage; the lack of time to savour the riches displayed, and an element of cultural insecurity in the viewer's ability to appreciate them. It is also an anonymous, and potentially unsatisfactory, experience—being shown objects, being talked to or at by a housekeeper, being directed.

The anonymity of the tourist experience (an anonymity which of course Elizabeth craves) is stressed in Fanny Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814), in chapter 82 of which Juliet, fearful of pursuit, is persuaded by the elderly Sir Jasper to visit Wilton as a means of whiling away time while avoiding attention. The sense of hurry resurfaces in Fanny Burney's own journal of her visit to Wilton in 1791 where (like Juliet) she admires the Van Dykes, but regrets the lack of "time enough to see them more deliberately" (Burney 760 and note).

Sir Jasper is shown Wilton by a guide described as a cicerone—particularly apt given the works of antiquity on display. That guide might in practice occasionally be a maid servant, but whether at Wilton, or Lyme, or Pemberley, it was usually the housekeeper who had the responsibility (and privilege) of showing the house to visitors.<sup>7</sup> Housekeepers of the greater houses occasionally acquired some celebrity—or, in the case of Mrs. Garnett, housekeeper at Kedleston for over 40 years, a form of immortality in being described as "a most distinct articulator" in showing the house to Johnson and Boswell in 1777 (Boswell 161). In contrast is Pückler-Muskau's experience at Blenheim in 1827, at which time the estate was administered for the benefit of the creditors of the Duke. He recounts how [s]ome very dirty shabby servants—a thing almost



*Wilton. William Watts, The Seats of the Nobility and Gentry. London, 1779.*

unheard-of here—ran past us to fetch the Châteline, who, wrapped in a Scotch plaid, with a staff in her hand and the air of an enchantress, advanced with so majestic an air towards us, that one might have taken her for the Duchess herself. The magic wand was for the purpose of pointing more conveniently to the various curiosities. As a preliminary measure, she required that we should inscribe our names in a large book: unhappily, however, there was no ink in the inkstand, so that this important ceremony was necessarily dispensed with.” (Pückler-Muskau III, 256)

The housekeeper becomes something of a cliché both in journals and fiction, though for largely different qualities than those shown at Pemberley. Housekeepers were frequently described as ignorant, often unclean, occasionally drunk, and usually greedy. The rapacity of housekeepers—and, in the larger houses, of the other staff—was a common complaint. At Blenheim during his tour of 1810-1811, Louis Simond was required to pay the porter at the gate, the woman showing the china collection, the woman showing the theatre, the woman showing the pleasure grounds, the gardener showing the park, and the upper servant showing the house—at a total cost of

19s. (qtd. in Ousby 81). There are similar complaints of Woburn, Chatsworth, and other great houses. Horace Walpole wryly remarked that he should have married his own housekeeper, who had grown rich on showing Strawberry Hill, as the only way of recouping some of his expense on the house (Walpole *Correspondence* 33, 411).

Byng is again a revealing guide here, with his interest in how houses were shown to him. He describes visiting the great seats of the Dukeries in terms of “being drag’d about by a foolish housekeeper.” At Raby Castle the housekeeper was fat and unhelpful; at Belvoir she was “of a very drunken, dawdling appearance” and her mistakes were numberless; while at Warwick Castle “an old growling superannuated housekeeper attended us; but her manners!” (Byng II, 20: III, 74: IV, 133–134: and I, 230). The errors and ignorance of the housekeeper at Fonthill Splendens inspired William Beckford’s youthful satire *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters*, 1780. Robert Gemmett explains that Beckford was so provoked by the housekeeper’s mistaken attributions of paintings when showing the house that he devised his imaginary accounts of Aldrovandus Magnus, Og of Basan, Sucrewasser of Vienna, and other imaginary masters, full of picturesque, unlikely and extravagant detail (Beckford 12–14).

Ignorance is not the fault of Darcy’s intelligent and well-informed housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds, who is closer to the old housekeeper who took Byng round Aston Hall, Birmingham—“very talkative (very proper as an housekeeper) both as to the history of the house, and of the family” (Byng III, 221). The gossip of Mrs. Reynolds is, of course, central to the passage, for Elizabeth is informed and enlightened on two levels: in the beauty and elegance and propriety of the house and grounds, and in the stream of anecdotes of Darcy’s virtues from childhood. The servant’s unforced assessment is the first non-partisan judgement of Darcy that Elizabeth has heard, and she is as quick to acknowledge its possibilities as she is to acknowledge the beauties of the estate.

The rooms they are shown are the dining parlour, “a large, well-proportioned room, handsomely fitted-up,” from which they pass into other rooms that are “lofty and handsome,” and look towards the main prospect, including Darcy’s father’s favorite room, in which there are miniatures suspended over the fireplace (246–



247). Upstairs, they pass from a spacious lobby to the room recently decorated as Darcy's sister's sitting room, "lately fitted up with greater elegance and lightness than the apartments below" (250). From there they are taken to the picture gallery, and two or three of the principal bedrooms; it was not unusual to show family rooms — Arthur Young tells us that at Raynham you could ask to see Lady Townsend's dressing room, which was decorated as a print room (qtd. in Ousby 76). After the bedrooms, they pass downstairs and at the hall door are handed over to the gardener. Darcy's library is not shown, and the party are not offered refreshments, as was sometimes the case. At Holkham, for example, Mrs. Lybbe Powys was given breakfast "in the genteelest taste, with all kinds of cakes and fruit, placed undesired in an apartment we were to go through, which, as the family were from home, I thought was very clever in the housekeeper" (Lybbe Powys 11). Even the girls of Mrs. Teachum's academy were offered sweetmeats of the housekeeper's own making in *The Governess* (Fielding 223). Despite this, the sense of a party being escorted through the succession of rooms and spaces at Pemberley is clearly given. It is the most extended account of a conducted tour of a country house in contemporary fiction, and is full of echoes of the journals of the tourists we have quoted.

Elizabeth's experience as a tourist at Pemberley is conceptually different from her experience as an invited guest at Rosings. There, under Lady Catherine's penetrating gaze, she is actively engaged in the exchanges of polite society, assessing personalities, observing behaviour, noting interiors, and failing to conceal her independence of mind. At Pemberley, in the presence of the housekeeper and the gardener, virtually nothing is given of herself, other than the unwilling acknowledgement, forced from her by Mrs. Gardiner, of her knowing Darcy a little. Mr. Gardiner manipulates the housekeeper to expand her praises of her master, but otherwise the housekeeper's role is to display, and the visitors' essentially passive role is to admire.

There is in this a connection to the visit to Sotherton in *Mansfield Park*. As Philippa Tristram has noted, Pemberley and Sotherton are the only two great houses dealt with at any length in the novels, the others, from *Mansfield Park* down, not being of a rank to attract tourists (Tristram 141). At Sotherton, the party come

as guests of Mr. Rushworth, but are given a tour of the house by his mother, "who had been at great pains to learn all that the house-keeper could teach, and was now almost equally well qualified to shew the house" (*MP* 85). They are taken through a series of lofty and old-fashioned rooms with a good number of family portraits, some of the rooms little used, and after the revealing exchanges in the chapel, Mrs. Rushworth's intentions to lead them to the rooms upstairs are thwarted when they find a door enabling them to escape to the garden. Mrs. Rushworth explains and displays, acting, as Malcolm Kelsall has remarked, like a National Trust guide (Kelsall 108). Like Mrs. Reynolds at Pemberley, she reveals more than she knows, as her son's inadequacies are echoed in the torpor in which his inheritance slumbers. The attentive Fanny learns most, but the exhibition of Sotherton's compromised character serves merely as the background to the display provided by the visitors as they reveal themselves under the afternoon sun.

Display is an essential concept here, and is central to the social custom of showing houses. Pückler-Muskau describes country house entertaining on this basis, noting the English need to give an appearance of plenty and profuseness to their country house guests: "True hospitality this can hardly be called; it is rather the display of one's own possessions" (Pückler-Muskau III, 83). John Brewer has explained how Georgian building activity provided new spaces in which owners could show their taste in their libraries, music rooms, picture and sculpture galleries to a polite audience able to appreciate them, while the houses, often occupied for six months a year or less, were increasingly isolated from the farms and outbuildings and villages on which they depended (Brewer 628-630). Display can imply fashion and conspicuous consumption, and Paul Langford has noted that "Display was the most consistent and most disapproved element in the recreations of an age of extravagance" — as in *fêtes-champêtres*, regattas, and country house theatricals (Langford 576). The moral implications of such extravagance were much debated, and, of course, form the undercurrent to the failed theatricals at Mansfield Park.

But display and taste had moral implications in the architecture and furnishing and disposition of houses and their grounds quite as much as in the entertainments that they facilitated. The taste displayed might be ostentatious, but that only served to exer-

cise the taste and discrimination of the visitor, who could contrast and compare the houses he or she had seen. Elizabeth herself notes how the furniture at Pemberley “was neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; with less of splendor, and more real elegance, than the furniture of Rosings.” This passage is all the more interesting for the earlier remark in Caroline Bingley’s unfeeling letter to Jane that Darcy, returned to London from Netherfield, had been making plans for new furniture (133). It emerges that such furniture would be consistent with the good taste that Elizabeth sees displayed at Pemberley, not with the vanity of a General Tilney.

We can now draw these threads together in the ideas of cultural exchange and the values underlying the aesthetic experience of the country house visitor — Edward Daniel Clarke conscious of the “taste, learning, and ingenuity” required to appreciate the glories of Wilton, Beckford mocking the ignorance of housekeepers and the implicit gullibility of visitors, Elizabeth wondering at the natural good taste of Pemberley and revealing to the reader the inadequacies of her education in its picture gallery.

The eighteenth-century conflation of taste and morality was most eloquently voiced by Shaftesbury. In his *Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit*, 1699, for example, he argued for the close connection between the moral and the aesthetic sense, by which we recognize what is harmonious and proportionate, and described the moral sense as “good taste in the art of living,” and capable of improvement by training like other forms of taste. “This too is certain; That the Admiration and Love of Order, Harmony and Proportion, in whatever Kind, is naturally improving to the Temper, advantageous to social Affection, and highly assistant to *Virtue*, which is it-self no other than the Love of Order and Beauty in Society.” As he concludes in his *Advice to an Author*, 1710, “Thus are the Arts and Virtue mutually friends: and thus the science of Virtuoso’s, and that of Virtue itself, become, in a manner, one and the same” (Shaftesbury 191 and 150).

The contemporary idea that taste could inform and reflect virtue is extravagantly voiced in the first published work of William Gilpin. We know that Jane Austen was enamoured of Gilpin on the Picturesque, but we do not know that she was ever aware of his *Dialogue on the gardens at Stowe of 1748*. It consists of a conversation between Callophilus, a lover of beauty, and Polyphthon, while walking

around the landscaped grounds of Stowe (the Stowe of Kent and Bridgeman, not yet of Capability Brown). Callophilus defends the wealth distributed on the gardens and explains: "Perhaps indeed I may carry the Matter farther than the generality of People; but to me I must own there appears a very visible Connection between an *improved* Taste for Pleasure, and a Taste for Virtue." He explains that the number of visitors to the gardens create wealth from the increase to local trade, and concludes;

To this Advantage might be added, the great Degree of Pleasure from hence derived daily to such Numbers of People: A Place like this is a kind of keeping open House, there is a Repast at all times ready for the Entertainment of Strangers. . . . A *Sunday* evening spent here, adds a new Relish to the Day of Rest, and makes the Sabbath appear more chearful to the Labourer after a toilsome Week. For my Part, I assure you I have scarce experienced a greater Pleasure than I have often felt upon meeting a Variety of pleased Faces in these Walks: All Care and Uneasiness seems to be left behind at the Garden-door, and People enter here fully resolved to enjoy themselves, and the several beautiful Objects around them: In one Part a Face presents itself marked with the Passion of gaping Wonder; in another you meet a Countenance bearing the Appearance of a more rational Pleasure; and in a third, a Sett of Features composed into serene Joy; while the Man of Taste is seen examining every Beauty with a curious Eye, and discovering his Approbation in an half-formed Smile. (Gilpin 49-51)

There is an unconscious reflection of this in Byng's description of the park at Woburn in July 1789: "We were so pleased with our evening . . . that we stay'd out till 9 o'clock; for the park, close to the town, was alive with walkers, mushroom pickers, and the quality of the place" (Byng II, 126). Polite society is admitted to the landscaped grounds for their innocent diversion and the improvement of their taste, the educational function with the moral dimension it encompasses in so doing extending the bounds of that society and its values. The country house and estate were then as now a potent image combining aesthetic, moral and economic elements. Elizabeth's experience at Pemberley engages with all these factors.



It is no coincidence that her reflection on the apparently lost possibility of being mistress of Pemberley is repeated twice in four paragraphs, emphasising her realization of its emotional and cultural weight—in contrast to what was merely a smile provoked by her thought at Rosings, after her rejection of Darcy's initial proposal, of how Lady Catherine would have greeted her as a niece (210). She is being only partly facetious when later she tells her sister that she first learnt to love Darcy on “first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley” (373). Alistair Duckworth has suggested that the ordered variety she finds there, as in the changing views from the windows of the house, are expressive of her growing realization that the truth is more various than she had allowed, and that character, like landscape, may be transformed by being seen from different perspectives (Duckworth 124–25). This is duly enforced when Elizabeth meets Darcy in the grounds and finds him so altered, his manner so little dignified, his speech exhibiting such gentleness (252). That this change in perception should occur when touring as a visitor the grounds of a country house can only underline the shift that occurs in Elizabeth's mind. The values invested in the country house and estate encompass social stability and legitimate aspiration. The visit to Pemberley takes the essentially familiar experience of the country house tour, and makes use of its underlying presumptions of aesthetic and moral enlightenment to give depth and perspective to Elizabeth's own enlightenment.

Gilpin, in his *Dialogue* on the gardens at Stowe, distinguished between the varying forms of pleasure exhibited by visitors, from gaping wonder, through serene joy to the half-formed smile of the man of taste—but all in their different ways showing “a Variety of pleased Faces in these Walks.” Elizabeth, vexed and embarrassed by meeting Darcy, but nevertheless flattered, intrigued, and enlightened, might be said for all her confusion to have shown a pleased face in the walks at Pemberley.

#### NOTES

1. Byng's distaste for Lyme Park was not solely the result of this rejection. He had seen it in 1790 and described the house as “in the horrid taste, and manner of Chatsworth, all windows; with surrounding parterres, and a drizzling cascade” (Byng II, 180).

2. I am particularly indebted to Adrian Tinniswood's book, which is the most detailed account available of the history of country house visiting, and also to Peter Sabor for references to country house visiting in contemporary fiction.
3. For picturesque tourism see Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 1989.
4. All quotations from *Pride and Prejudice* are from pages 245-246 unless otherwise stated.
5. Mrs. Lybbe Powys has an Austen connection in that the mother of her son-in-law had been a Miss Leigh of the Leighs of Adlestrop and Stoneleigh.
6. Anonymous travel diary 1742-1750, Osborn MS C. 480, Beinecke Library. It is briefly summarized as item 75 in *Grand Tour Diaries and other travel manuscripts in the James Marshall Osborn and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection*, Yale University Library Gazette, Occasional Supplement 2, New Haven, 1999.
7. For the housekeeper's perception of showing houses, see the very curious Crumble-Hall, a poem by Mary Leapor, a Northamptonshire cook-maid of the 1740s, reprinted in *Eighteenth Century Poetry An Annotated Anthology* ed. David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, Oxford, Blackwell, 1998. The poem conducts the visitor from room to room, and the features and contents noted are seen very much from the domestic servant's perspective.

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