

Gardens in pride and prejudice essay

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Austen uses gardens to advance the themes of class, love, parental relationships and family honor. She also reveals Elizabeth's, Darcy's and other people's character through the gardens.

The novel "Pride and Prejudice" does not rely heavily on symbolism because it has more dialogues than descriptions. Nonetheless, certain physical elements still stand out in the narrative. One such case is Darcy's estate, which residents know as Pemberley. This garden is at the heart of the book. First, it is reflective of Darcy's character since he owns it.

When Elizabeth pays Darcy a visit, the picturesque gardens impress her totally. She begins to warm up to this man and his wits and charm impress her even more. In the novel, the author compares this garden to Darcy's perception of himself. Austen (140) describes a nearby stream that appears to swell with its own natural importance. She adds that the stream achieved this without appearing artificial.

The same thing may be said about Darcy's character. He possessed a natural importance that made him appear proud. Nonetheless, this pride still coexisted with a lack of artificiality just like the stream; Darcy is not too rigid or too superficial.

Mr. Collins's character also comes out through the mention of his garden. When Elizabeth and Collins take a stroll in Collins' garden, he uses the opportunity to elevate his accomplishments and virtues. For instance, he talks about his fondness for the garden, and the fact that he enjoys working on it. Collins also talks about every single detail in the garden without giving the ladies a chance to share their views on the same.

He boasts about how he knows the number and the location of each and every tree in the garden. This behavior implies that Collins is quite self-centered (Delany 35). He wants everyone to know about what he did for the garden, but does not care about their opinion. Additionally, Collins is a proud and boastful man; he likes to show off his vast knowledge of the gardens and the tree.

He also wanted to prove to the ladies that he was in charge of the place. Such preferences indicate that Collins was also a controlling person. In fact, Charlotte often asked Collins to go to the garden and show off his ‘talents’. The garden was Charlotte’s escape from Collins’ pompousness. When carried out activities, in the garden, she could enjoy her private time and space.

Indeed, the garden is also symptomatic of class differences and family honor as seen through Charlotte’s eyes. The garden clearly illustrates how foolish Mr. Collins was; however, a lady as intelligent as Charlotte still chose to stick with him. Charlotte had to choose between two extremely difficult decisions; she could decide to stay with her parents, and thus strain their financial resources.

Alternatively, she could choose to marry the ineffectual Mr. Collins and just do what she could do within those circumstances. This reflected how society placed heavy expectations upon unmarried women.

They often sacrificed their own happiness for a chance to improve their social status and maintain their family traditions. Furthermore, wealth

warranted the forgiveness of one's vices; the lavish gardens and picturesque estates especially envisaged this.

In one scenario, in the book, Austen (45) describes how Elizabeth crossed a bridge when she first came into this estate. This had a symbolic effect because it reflected the start of a new romance. When Elizabeth crossed the bridge, she was also crossing the line between love and loneliness. This bridge in the Pemberley garden also reflected the gap that existed between the two individuals as a result of class differences.

Gardens also play a pivotal role of highlighting change in the story (Le Faye 44). Most dialogues occur inside a house. Therefore, when the author mentions the outdoors, she often does this to cue a significant change in the novel. For instance, Elizabeth comes into contact with Mr. Darcy for the first time when she goes to see Mr. Collins and Charlotte; she did this by passing through a garden.

This scenario is what builds up to Darcy's proposal. The second time that she takes a journey through the Pemberley gardens, she realizes that her affections for Darcy are growing stronger. In that instance, the gardens symbolize a transition from indifference to affection for Darcy.

In the third instance when Austen mentions a journey in a garden, she wanted to illustrate the threat that would come upon the Bennet family if they did not find Wickham and Lydia. When Darcy tracks them, he illustrates just how devoted he is to Elizabeth.

The author uses gardens to advance the theme of class struggles. The Bennets have an ordinary house, and because of its small size, the home has no picturesque gardens. This simplicity reflects the social status of the Bennets. Conversely, Bingley, Darcy and Lady Catherine have lavish gardens in their homes. Bingley has Netherfield Park while Lady Catherine has the Rosings estate.

As mentioned earlier, Darcy had Pemberley. These gardens showcased Darcy's, Catherine's and Bingley's enormous wealth. They are also crucial indications of social status. When Elizabeth sees Darcy's garden, she thinks about how delightful it would be to stay there. Even someone as composed and sensible as Elizabeth could not help herself when she saw the beauty and elegance of the landscape.

One can even compare the relative social status of the people who owned those estates through the quality of the gardens in their estates. For instance although the gardens in Rosings were impressive, they did not possess the same level of elegance that existed in Pemberley.

Gardens also signify familial relationships in the story. Austen talks about the relationship between Darcy and his son Colin, in the thirtieth chapter. One morning, Darcy wakes up feeling rejuvenated and energetic. He feels glad to be alive for the first time in an unusually long time. Darcy then proceeds to wake up his son and offers to take him out for a walk in the garden.

This is a unique bonding moment for the two as Darcy relives his own childhood. He promises his son that he will teach him how to ride horses and

to swim. In fact, he had no idea that his son did not know these things, yet his age mates were well aware of the same. Furthermore, Colin got to learn a lot about his family's history. Darcy talked about his sister and mother and their escapades as children.

He talked about the lessons and reprimands they underwent when they misbehaved. For the first time, this son and father had an exciting conversation together. Additionally, the experience was also reflective of Darcy's own lessons. He got to appreciate the value of family experiences and heritage (James 56). It reinforced his views about himself and the things that mattered more to him.

Gardens emphasized the characters of the owners and the people who came to see the estate; to Darcy, the garden reflected his self determination and dedication towards Elizabeth. It signified a change in perception about Darcy to Elizabeth. The gardens brought out Mr. Collin's arrogance and self centeredness; they also emphasized Charlotte' helplessness in choosing a spouse.

Audiences can learn about the importance of family heritage during Darcy's and Colin's morning walk. Furthermore, one can also learn about class differences in this society as seen through the aristocrats' lavish gardens.

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