

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF JANE AUSTEN'S REJECTION
OF HER UNPUBLISHED WORK

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PREFACE

I first entered Jane Austen's world when I read Pride and Prejudice. When I had finished reading this popular novel, I wondered what it was that had held my interest throughout; there was no serious adventure, no fantasy, and no uncommon events; in fact, nothing much had happened. I wondered if the author had done this in her other novels. As I read each of the other published Jane Austen novels, I soon realized that her stories were transporting me into another set of problems no less real than my own, but problems that I enjoyed reading about because they made no personal demands on me. The subjects were not elegant or grand, but they were finished with a precision that delighted me.

After reading all of her published work, I wondered how the artist of these literary works could possibly have written anything she could not be proud of. It was this that prompted me to read, reread, talk, and finally write about the harsh critical standards she set for her literary work. The publication of her rejected work gave me an opportunity, rare among novelists, to see the standards she always insisted upon achieving before she was willing to present her novels to her readers.

The critical appraisal that I have made of Jane Austen's rejections has been interesting to say the least. When I realized how very diligently she criticized, rewrote, corrected, and rejected her work, I learned to appreciate even more the contribution she has made to the literary world. I hope that my readers will appreciate it too.

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CHAPTER I

JANE AUSTEN'S PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

Jane Austen stands almost alone in her long, patient, and delighted hours of labor in perfecting her books. "Her novels were thought out, first written, redrafted, and finally revised..."¹ She loved her work so much that she refused to publish it before it had reached the standard of perfection on which she always insisted. The first written and first printed of her novels, Sense and Sensibility, was done when she was twenty years old, but she rewrote the book two years later, changing the form and the title. Originally entitled Elinor and Marianne, it was given its present title in 1797. But it was thirteen years later that Jane Austen resumed the work and presented it for publication.² Elinor and Marianne had been written in letter form, the letters written between the sisters who in the final draft were never parted. Apparently, the author entirely reorganized the novel.

Pride and Prejudice, written in 1796, was originally named First Impressions. Jane Austen revised it under its first title and offered it for publication, but the publisher refused it.³ It then lay untouched for thirteen years during which time the final revision of Sense

¹R. Brimley Johnson, "Introduction," Sanditon and other Miscellanea (New York, 1934), p. xii.

²Johnson, Jane Austen (New York, 1930), p. 47.

³Ibid., p. 48.

and Sensibility had been done.⁴ Jane Austen then went back to the story of the Bennett girls and spent a year or more revising it. The novel was finally published in 1813, but even then, the author was not fully satisfied with her book. She wrote to her sister, Cassandra:

The work is rather light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense about something unconnected with the story...Anything that would form a contrast, and bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness and epigrammatism of the general style.⁵

Jane Austen's rigid self-criticism may best be seen in this quotation. She wrote this about a book that is often ranked among the ten best ever written by any novelist.⁶

Northanger Abbey, written in 1798, was first given the name Susan. After several years, it was rewritten and sold to the publisher, who kept it thirteen years refusing to publish it. The author bought the book back for the original price, changed the title and the heroine's name to Catherine, and began revising the story. She was still revising and still not satisfied with the book when she died.⁷

Lady Susan, written in 1805, was complete, and is considered a final draft because the manuscript is almost free from corrections.⁸ But it is

⁴Laura L. Hinckley, Ladies of Literature (New York, 1930), p. 47.

⁵Jane Austen's Letters, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1932), II, 300.

⁶Herbert Gorman, The World's Great Novels (New York, 1945).

⁷Hinckley, p. 87.

⁸Johnson, p. xii.

a work that Jane Austen had never felt worth publication. The Watsons, on the other hand, was never completed. Though the fragment had been thought out and composed in plot and phrasing, Miss Austen never finished it.⁹ After the appearance of Mansfield Park she took up the subject and characters of The Watsons, but once more she laid them aside never to pick them up again. It is interesting to note, however, that even this unfinished work received not a little attention from its author. She had carefully rewritten, revised and redrafted the few chapters that she had finished. But even after this careful revision, she was never convinced that the story was worth finishing.

Persuasion was finished in 1816, but Jane Austen was not satisfied with it. "She felt the story did not end satisfactorily, that it wanted bringing together and clinching so to speak."¹⁰ Mr. Austen-Leigh, her nephew, pointed out that these things worried her, the more so, probably because of her weak state of health. One night she retired in very low spirits, but the next morning she was cheerful and bright with her usual sense of power and imagination revived. She had cancelled a chapter of Persuasion and wrote two others in its place.¹¹ Perhaps it is from this cancelled chapter that we can learn most about Jane Austen's standard of perfection; it was once a part of the final draft which had satisfied her and was intended for publication.

Less information is available on the rewriting and correcting of Mansfield Park and Emma. It is not to be assumed, however, that these

⁹Ibid., p. x.

¹⁰Geraldine Mitton, Jane Austen and Her Times (New York, 1905), p. 314.

¹¹Ibid., p. 315.

novels did not receive critical attention from the writer. Some critics say that The Watsons was an early draft of Emma. It is believed that private circumstances compelled a drastic change in the plot; not satisfied with the new plot, she began a new tale which was to become what we know as Emma.¹² Among those who argue this point is Laura Hinkley who sees nothing in common between Emma and The Watsons. She feels that Jane Austen, while writing Mansfield Park, found herself usurping the plot of The Watsons, thus dropping the early draft.¹³

The careful industry devoted to revision of her work proves Jane Austen to have consciously striven after perfection. The quality of her work was no sudden miracle; it came from long, patient, and delighted labor. What did she gain from this careful thought and self-criticism? What qualities are there in the finished work that set them apart from those that were never considered ready for publication? Why was a chapter cancelled from Persuasion? What quality or qualities did it lack that the other chapters did not? From a standpoint of Jane Austen's critical standards, would Sanditon ever have been approved by its author for publication? Could Plan of a Novel ever have reached Jane Austen's standard of perfection? In other words, what do these unfinished, unpublished or rejected works lack when compared with the quality of the published works?

It is hoped that these questions will be answered in the following chapters. A critical analysis will first be made to determine the quality of the six published novels. The following terms of analysis will be

¹²Johnson, pp. x-xi.

¹³Hinckley, p. 93.

used in determining the outstanding quality Jane Austen possessed as a novelist:

Intensity of vision. This term refers to the writer's saturation in her work; that is, how completely she knew the materials she dealt with. It is important in plot, characterization, setting. Complete saturation or intensity of vision in an author, results in a work with no defects or inaccuracies in any aspect of the subject of the novel.

Intellectual power. This term refers to the author's abilities in treatment and interpretation of the subject matter. This is probably more important than intensity of vision, but it cannot function without the latter.

Passion for the universal. This refers to the author's power to see in any particular situation significance in terms of universalities.

Also, some emphasis will be placed on style since Jane Austen is well known for her lucid style.¹⁴ After this critical analysis has been made, the results will be used to determine the answers to the questions concerning the unfinished work. By comparing the quality of her unpublished work with these standards, perhaps Jane Austen's readers will be able to appreciate even more the long hours of labor that went into her work before she was willing to present it to them.

¹⁴R.W. Chapman, Jane Austen, Facts and Problems (Oxford, 1950), p. 209.

CHAPTER II

ART IN THE PUBLISHED NOVELS

In Chapter I, the question was raised regarding what Jane Austen gained from her severe self-criticism. What did she require of her novels before she presented them to the publisher? She must first have insisted upon achieving complete saturation or intensity of vision in her work. Because of her complete saturation in her materials, practically no inaccuracies may be found either in plot, character, or setting.

To achieve intensity of vision in plot, every incident must inevitably grow out of preceding ones. In Pride and Prejudice, the first line reads: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."¹ This statement applies particularly to Mrs. Bennett, who is a firm believer in the "universally acknowledged truth," especially since she has five daughters. It was the business of her life to see that her daughters married well. Of course, Jane Austen, saturated as she was in her work, could not have Mrs. Bennett so involved in seeing her daughters married without good reason. The author explained that the Bennett estate was entailed, and at the death of Mr. Bennett, all of the Bennett estate would belong to a cousin, Mr. Collins. Neither Mrs. Bennett or the

¹Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice, p. 231. (All footnotes referring to Jane Austen's published novels are taken from The Complete Novels of Jane Austen (New York, N.D.).

girls would have any means of existence. In our time, the entail would be less important, but in Jane Austen's day, unless a girl were a genius, her only vocation was marriage.²

The second sentence in the novel describes Mrs. Bennett's thoughts concerning her oldest daughter, Jane, and Mr. Bingley, the "single man in possession of a good fortune." Jane Austen wrote: "However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of someone or other of their daughters."³ Jane Austen's intensity of vision would hardly have been noticeable if she had allowed Mr. Bingley to be struck by Jane simply because Mrs. Bennett wished it. Bingley's interest in Jane was brought about because she was the "most beautiful creature I ever beheld!"⁴ Jane was also described as one who could "take the good of everybody's character and make it still better, and say nothing of the bad,"⁵ a characteristic that only a novelist who was deeply saturated in her work could have known the importance of, for it was Jane's good humour that brought about the friendly relationship between Bingley's sisters and herself. As a result, the girls invited Jane to their home. This seems a perfectly normal invitation on the part of the Bingley girls in the manner that Jane Austen handled it, and yet, it could easily have seemed contrived in the hands of many novelists, considering the important events it was to bring about. The Bingley girls

²Mitton, p. 142.

³Pride and Prejudice, p. 231.

⁴Ibid., p. 236.

⁵Ibid., p. 238.

had no way of knowing that Mrs. Bennett would be so naive as to insist upon Jane's traveling to their home on horseback in hopes that the rain would force her to spend the night in the same house with Bingley. Fortunately for Mrs. Bennett, it did rain; the girl got wet, became ill, and had to stay several days. Again, here is evidence of Jane Austen's complete saturation in the work in that this incident brought about an opportunity for Elizabeth Bennett to become acquainted with Darcy, an incident of utmost importance to the plot, and yet, the manner in which it occurred seems so natural that the reader is not conscious of its importance. This is what the author of Pride and Prejudice strove to achieve; she was so saturated in her work that she carefully wrote and rewrote until every single incident contributed to the main idea of the story, while at the same time, each incident grew out of and was illuminated by the preceding one. Elizabeth's encounter with Darcy contributed to many important incidents. Darcy's pride and Elizabeth's prejudice against his pride caused conflict between them. Elizabeth hated him because, at the Netherfield Ball, he "was discovered to be proud; to be above his company, and above being pleased."⁶ Too, Elizabeth had overheard this remark he made to Bingley: "Your sisters are engaged and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with."⁷ It was natural then, as Jane Austen made everything seem, for Elizabeth not to like Darcy. The only reason she put herself in his company was because of her concern for her sister, Jane. Darcy, on the other hand, had always been used to having women speak, look, and think for his approbation alone. Elizabeth roused and interested him because she treated

⁶Ibid., p. 235.

⁷Ibid.

him differently. But Darcy, conscious of her inferiority, of its being a degradation, of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, fought against his feelings toward Elizabeth. She attracted him more than he liked, so he hoped to solve his problem by leaving Netherfield; seeing also that Bingley was greatly attracted to Jane, he persuaded his friend to leave too. This action Jane Austen thought out because she knew that there must be conflict in the action; otherwise, it could hardly hold the reader's attention. Her intensity of vision in the action is evident upon examining the manner in which she brings the conflict about. She was careful to make the reader feel the inferiority of Elizabeth's connections to those of Darcy. It was only natural that Darcy was displeased with himself for liking a girl whose condition in life was so decidedly beneath his own. This was especially true in Jane Austen's day.

Before Bingley and Darcy left Netherfield, Mr. Bennett had received a letter from Mr. Collins, the man who, at the death of Mr. Bennett, might "turn you all out of this house as soon as he pleases."⁸ Mr. Collins professed concern for the "hardship to my fair cousins" due to the entail of the estate, and, having decided that he was ready to do some girl the honor of proposing, he thought it best to ask one of the Bennett girls. Mrs. Bennett had hopes that Jane would marry Mr. Bingley so she suggested that Mr. Collins propose to Elizabeth. Very important to the entire plot was Mr. Collins' proposal to Elizabeth. But Jane Austen had thought out many incidents that would inevitably grow out of Elizabeth's refusal. Mr.

⁸Ibid., p. 267.

Collins, feeling that she had everything to gain and nothing to lose, was insulted. Having come to Longbourn for the purpose of finding a wife and having been insulted by the Bennets, he turned to Elizabeth's best friend and neighbor, Charlotte Lucas. Charlotte, realizing that this would probably be her last chance to marry, accepted him even though she had no affection for him. Out of this incident came the chance for Elizabeth to visit Charlotte, now Mrs. Collins, who lived near Darcy's aunt. Jane Austen would not have been satisfied with having Elizabeth visiting Charlotte and Darcy visiting his aunt at the same time without reasons and events contributing to the incident. For some novelists, the fact that relatives and friends often visit each other would have been reason enough, and perhaps it was for Jane Austen in a first draft, but before publication, she saw that nothing seemed contrived or artificial about the action in her stories.

Jane Austen gave several reasons for Elizabeth's visit to Charlotte. It might seem strange that Charlotte and her husband would want her as their guest, especially since Elizabeth had once refused to marry Mr. Collins, but Jane Austen's intensity of vision enabled her to handle it effectively. In the first place, Charlotte had married Mr. Collins only because she wanted security and a family of her own; she managed to tolerate him, but she anticipated loneliness; she hoped that her best friend, Elizabeth, would help her endure it by visiting her often. Mr. Collins wished for Elizabeth's company for the purpose of showing her what she had lost in refusing him. Also, he wanted the pleasure of displaying the grandeur of his patroness (Lady Catherine) to his visitors. As for Elizabeth, "absence had increased her desire of seeing Charlotte again

and weakened her disgust of Mr. Collins."⁹ The change was welcome to Elizabeth, the more so because her favorite sister, Jane, was visiting an aunt nearby. Anxious as she was to go and certain that the Collinsees really depended on her visit, Elizabeth would not have made a special trip by herself. Such a plan would have lacked intensity of vision because the Bennett family did not have carriages, horses, or money to spare for such a trip. But Charlotte's father and sister (Elizabeth's neighbors and friends) were going and insisted that Elizabeth go with them. Certainly, this shows the care with which Jane Austen tightened her plots.

Darcy's visit, like Elizabeth's, was far from appearing contrived. Lady Catherine had expected him for some weeks before Charlotte's visitors arrived. In the first place, it was customary for a young man of the upper class to entertain himself with such visits because he had nothing else to do. Lady Catherine urged him to visit her because she hoped he would marry her daughter, thus keeping the titles and positions in the family. Had Darcy known that Elizabeth was visiting at the parsonage, he would probably have postponed his own visit; naturally Lady Catherine did not mention it because Elizabeth was unimportant to her. She would have been horrified at the thought of Darcy's having affection for the girl. But as the reader is already aware, Darcy cared for Elizabeth more than he dared admit even to himself. When he saw her again, he found it impossible to control his feelings. He said: "In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must

⁹Ibid., p. 322.

allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."¹⁰ Elizabeth refused his proposal of marriage. For this incident to appear natural -- that is, for a girl with poor relations to reject such a man's affection without the appearance of invention,-- the author would have to be well saturated in the work. Saturation like Jane Austen's enabled her to show reasons and to create incidents far in advance of this important one that brought about Elizabeth's refusal. It had already been mentioned that Elizabeth was prejudiced against Darcy because of his excessive pride. As a result, she was ready to believe practically anything uncomplimentary to him. When she met Wickham, a soldier in the corps who was stationed in Longbourne and a friend of Lydia's favorite soldier, he told her that the late Mr. Darcy bequeathed him the next presentation of the best living, but that young Darcy had given it to someone else.¹¹ Such maltreatment of one's father's friend added to Elizabeth's dislike for Darcy. As if this were not enough, Darcy had been responsible for Bingley's leaving her sister Jane.

Not only did this incident grow out of several preceding ones, but it was very important in bringing about the following ones. Jane Austen's intensity of vision enabled her to see that this refusal would cause Darcy's pride to be injured; when he became angry, Elizabeth lost all compassion in anger and informed him of the reasons she disliked him. Darcy denied the charges made against him, and when Elizabeth gave the matter her full unbiased attention, she realized that she had been hasty in judging him. She thought of her first conversation with Wickham and

¹⁰Ibid., p. 345.

¹¹Ibid., p. 278.

she was now struck with the impropriety of such communications to a stranger and wondered why it had escaped her before. She realized the indelicacy of his putting himself forward as he had done, and she thought of the inconsistency of his professions with his conduct. She remembered also that until the Bingleys and Darcy had left the country, he had told his story to no one but herself; but that after their removal it had been everywhere discussed. It was not until then that he had no reserves in sinking Mr. Darcy's character, "though he had assured her that respect for the father would always prevent his exposing the son."¹² Having thought this out, Elizabeth began to think too, that Darcy could hardly be expected to rejoice in the inferiority of her connections. She thought of the defects of her family and how hopeless they were of remedy. Her father, who was contented with laughing at them, "would never exert himself to restrain the wild giddiness of his youngest daughters; and her mother, with manners so far from right herself, was entirely insensible of the evil."¹³ But Elizabeth and Jane had often tried to check the imprudence of Catherine and Lydia. Catherine however, who was weak spirited, very irritable, and completely under Lydia's guidance, was always affronted by their advice; and Lydia, self willed and careless, scarcely heard what they said. As long as there was an officer in Meryton, they flirted with him. Some writers might have suddenly had Elizabeth's family change for the better so that she and Darcy's positions in life would have been different. But Jane Austen would not have been proud of such poor means of plot development. Only those incidents that inevitably grew out of

¹²Ibid., p. 355.

¹³Ibid., p. 359.

some other incident satisfied her. Elizabeth's family had caused her unhappiness before, but instead of improving, they were to bring more. The author had been preparing her readers for this when she often alluded to the unladylike actions on the part of Mr. Bennett, Lydia, and Catherine.

Soon after Elizabeth's return home from Charlotte's house, the last of the regiment was leaving Meryton, an incident which was to cause much disturbance in the Bennett household. Lydia received an invitation from Mrs. Forster, wife of the colonel of the regiment, to accompany her to Brighton. This incident also gave Jane Austen an opportunity to show how sensitive Elizabeth's feelings were toward the impropriety of her family's behavior in such matters, as well as offering proof that Darcy had reason to feel the inferiority of these connections. Elizabeth had felt the impropriety of her father's behavior as a husband, but not until now had she realized the disadvantages which must attend the children of so unsuitable a marriage; now was she fully aware of the evils arising from her father's poor judgment in preserving his daughter's respectability. She told him all the improprieties of Lydia's general behavior, and the probability of her being in a dangerous position in Brighton where the temptations must be even greater than she had known before. She spoke of the disadvantage to the entire family which must arise from the public notice of Lydia's behavior and what must be the inevitable outcome. But Elizabeth's plea was in vain, and Lydia went to Brighton where she was to bring shame to the family.

Before this event took place, Elizabeth had once again been in company with Darcy. She had met him, much to her surprise, while traveling with her aunt and uncle. The meeting between the two, Jane Austen treated carefully so that she was certain the incident did not seem contrived or invented. Elizabeth's trip with her aunt and uncle had been

planned for several months; her trip to the Lakes was the object of her happiest thoughts; it was welcome consolation for all the miserable hours which she spent with her mother and Kitty. It was not as if Elizabeth had just returned from one trip and immediately started on another; Jane Austen, with her intensity of vision, would not have allowed it; the trips were several months apart. When the time drew near, Aunt Gardiner wrote to Elizabeth that Mr. Gardiner would be prevented by business from leaving until a few weeks later, and that he would have to be in town again within a month, so they would not have time to take the long trip to the Lakes. Having looked forward to the trip so long, they did not wish to stay home, so they made plans to see the country in and around Derbyshire. Jane Austen could have had them plan the short trip in the beginning, thus leaving out the change of plans; many authors might have been satisfied with such a plan. But Jane Austen's complete saturation in her work, brought about by her strict standard of perfection and harsh self-criticism, made her integrate the event with the plot, thus making it seem natural and inevitable. Probably, Miss Austen realized that in real life, people are seldom able to carry out their plans without some changes. If the trip had originally been planned to Derbyshire, it might have seemed a contrivance on the author's part to bring Elizabeth and Darcy together. As Jane Austen planned it, the trip came about because Mr. Gardiner was unable to make the longer one to the Lakes. Here, the question might arise as to why the Gardiners decided on Derbyshire. To Mrs. Gardiner, Derbyshire "had a peculiarly strong attraction. The town where she had formerly passed some years of her life, and where they were now to spend a few days, was probably as great an object of her curiosity as all the celebrated beauties"¹⁴ at the Lakes.

¹⁴Ibid., p.374.

Anyway, there seemed little chance of Elizabeth's meeting Darcy, and though she thought of him, she felt that she could surely "enter his county with impunity, and rob it of a few petrified spars without his perceiving me."¹⁵ But Mrs. Gardiner, after having seen all the principal wonders of the country, expressed a desire to see Pemberley (Darcy's home) again, and Mr. Gardiner declared his willingness. Jane Austen had been careful to mention the great affection Aunt Gardiner had for Elizabeth so that it seemed natural for her (aunt) to direct their course in a way that would please Elizabeth as well as themselves. It must be remembered that Elizabeth's aunt and uncle still thought that she valued her acquaintance with Wickham, who had spent his youth at Pemberly. Too, they were ignorant of the unpleasant affairs between Darcy and Elizabeth. They knew only that she disliked him just as they did, but that was hardly a reason for not desiring a view of his fine house and gardens. It was not until Elizabeth learned from a chambermaid that the proprietor was not at home that she agreed to go.¹⁶

Naturally, this incident Jane Austen used to bring about still more important ones. Elizabeth was already painfully aware of the injustice she had done Darcy, and there in his own home, she was made suffer even more when she heard the commendation bestowed on him by Mrs. Reynolds, the housekeeper. She called him "the best landlord, and the best master..that ever lived; not like the wild young men nowadays, who think of nothing but themselves. There is not one of his tenants or servants but what will give him a good name."¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid., p. 375.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 376.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 379.

Darcy returned home while Elizabeth was there, and true to the description his housekeeper had given, he treated Elizabeth and her relatives with perfect civility. Both were embarrassed; Elizabeth, because of the impropriety of her being found there, and Darcy, because he was speechless due to the circumstances of their last meeting. Still they were conscious of the lack of civility each had shown the other on their last meeting, and the desire to make amends prompted them to speak and act with gentleness. Darcy walked over the grounds with Elizabeth and the Gardiners, and having received encouragement from Elizabeth's attention, he called on her the next day.

This incident Jane Austen carefully thought out for the purpose of bringing Darcy and Elizabeth together again, but it also served the purpose of bringing Bingley back into the story. Visiting in Darcy's home, it seemed natural that he too should call on Elizabeth when his friend did. This was important, as were all the Jane Austen incidents, in that it enabled Elizabeth to see for herself that Bingley had no affection for Darcy's sister, the girl everyone expected him to marry because of the family connections it would bring both parties. Elizabeth was invited to return the visit, and just when things were looking bright for her and Darcy, Elizabeth's sister Lydia, ran away with Wickham. Granted that this incident did not grow out of the one concerning Elizabeth and Darcy; however, many preceding incidents did contribute to this one involving Lydia as has already been mentioned. It was important at this particular time of the plot because it affected the actions of Elizabeth and Darcy. It meant that Elizabeth must return home because she was anxious to be with her sister Jane and to share with her the cares that must fall wholly upon her. Anyway, Elizabeth felt that Lydia had ruined her chances of ever

meeting Darcy on terms of cordiality so there was no need to stay in Derbyshire. It was now the entire family's design to see that Wickham married Lydia. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Gardiner both went to Brighton for that purpose.

Only through complete saturation in her work could Jane Austen have so effectively connected an incident like this to the entire plot. Not only was the incident with Lydia greatly connected with what had gone on before but it was to bring about still more important incidents concerning the Bennetts, Bingleys, and Darcy. The latter felt a necessity of helping Wickham once again, though he certainly did not deserve it. Darcy hoped also to be of help to Elizabeth; he found that he loved her in spite of her family connections. He paid Wickham's bills and gave him an allowance, with the understanding that he would marry Lydia. This incident Jane Austen also used to show the true character of Darcy, one that the reader realizes Elizabeth will be proud of. Mr. Gardiner agreed to pretend that he had given Wickham the money. In an effort to convince Mr. Bennett of its truth, Jane Austen had Mr. Gardiner ask Lydia's father to contribute his share of one hundred pounds per annum, a sum he could easily afford.

After the marriage had taken place, and Wickham and Lydia had settled down to a married life, the report came from Aunt Phillips that Bingley was returning to his home in Meryton. After all, it was Darcy who had persuaded Bingley to leave Meryton; now, Darcy felt differently toward the girls themselves, so he suggested that Bingley return. Jane Austen had been sure to indicate throughout the story that Bingley and Jane had never lost their affection for each other.

Of course, Darcy returned with Bingley. Several events took place to bring this one about. Jane Austen's high standards would not have been achieved if she had simply implied that it was natural for Darcy to return with his friend as he had done once before. After all, Darcy had left that neighborhood because he was beginning to care more for Elizabeth than he desired. Too, Elizabeth had refused his offer of marriage; he, a man who might marry any one of a number of girls with the right connections and relations. Perhaps a hurried, less conscientious novelist would have been satisfied simply to bring Darcy back to Derbyshire without any special incident leading up to it. But Jane Austen gave this work long hours of careful thought, lasting sometimes over a period of a year. Apparently, she never lost sight of her characters and their actions in order to make sure that all events were closely integrated. It was Lady Catherine's actions that prompted Darcy to return to Netherfield with Bingley. She was first to hear a rumor about her nephew and Elizabeth's affection for each other. The thought of it made her furious. Having always been in a position to demand her wishes, she proceeded to command Elizabeth to refuse Darcy's offer even if he had or should give it. Unsuccessful with Elizabeth as far as receiving her promise of a refusal, she pleaded with Darcy. Instead of putting an end to the affair, she gave Darcy the hope and encouragement he needed when she informed him of Elizabeth's reaction to marrying him. It was this that made him come to Netherfield to judge for himself whether he could ever make Elizabeth love him.¹⁸ Jane Austen would not have been pleased with this action had she not shown Darcy's love for Elizabeth in many ways already.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 461.

Unfortunately, we cannot know what changes were made when Jane Austen rewrote and revised this work; but common sense tells us that it must have been her deep saturation in the materials that brought about a plot with events as closely integrated as the one in Pride and Prejudice.

This quality is not limited to the plot in Pride and Prejudice; any one of the six novels might have been used as examples of Jane Austen's intense consciousness of every bit of action and of the importance of one incident inevitably growing out of another. For instance, in Emma, the heroine was utterly surprised when Mr. Elton suddenly made love to her. But again, Jane Austen's intensity of vision of the action is evident when the reader sees how she created effectively, circumstances leading up to this important incident. Emma believed that Mr. Elton was interested in Harriet Smith. Her reasons for believing this fallacy were twofold: first, she believed it because she desired the match, and second, she had elected herself Cupid for the purpose of promoting it; she thought a little too well of herself to believe she could be or do anything wrong. But Jane Austen's thorough saturation in this work, as in all the others, enabled her to see that such a match was highly improbable, especially since all of Mr. Elton's actions were inevitably leading up to the proposal he made to Emma. One of particular importance was that of the charade he wrote for Emma in which he asked permission to pay his addresses to her. She was to give her permission by approving his charade and his intentions in the same glance. Emma, thinking the charade was meant for Harriet, felt free to give Mr. Elton an approving glance; the latter, of course, got the wrong meaning from the glance. Emma should have guessed that his addresses

were not meant for Harriet when he wrote in the charade of her "ready wit." Harriet was "not a sensible girl, nor a girl of any information... She has been taught nothing useful, and was too young and too simple to have acquired anything herself."¹⁹ But the only thought that came to Emma was that "a man must be very much in love, indeed, to describe her so."²⁰

More proof of Elton's affection for Emma, Jane Austen offered when Emma told him about Harriet's sore throat. He was all alarm, but mostly for Emma's sake; he exclaimed; "a sore throat..I hope not of a putrid infectious sort..Indeed you should take care of yourself as well as of your friend."²¹ Actually, Elton had never paid Harriet any attentions except as Emma's friend. This is proof again that Jane Austen's saturation in her work enabled her to tighten the plot so that no inaccuracies occurred. She had thoroughly thought out every action, on the part of Mr. Elton, so that everything he said or did was evidence of his adoration for Emma. Had the affair turned out as Emma expected it to, the plot would have lacked the tightness that Jane Austen sought and insisted on. She allowed her characters to be under such misapprehensions (when their nature allowed them to be) but her own insight into every bit of action brought about incident after incident that grew out of preceding ones; as a result, nothing seems contrived or artificial in the entire chain of incidents.

Jane Austen's intensity of vision is seen also in her characterization. In fact, so closely related are the characters and action that it is

¹⁹Emma, p. 798.

²⁰Ibid., p. 805.

²¹Ibid., p. 829.

impossible to show the author's intensity of vision in one without showing it in the other. Saturation in character is achieved when the author shows the action of the character as consistent with his nature. To balance one evidence with another, the author must really know the character; he must know the character's choices, tastes, environment, speech, and actions well enough to make a pattern of the person, a pattern that must not be deviated from. Jane Austen's ideas and practices concerning characterization are stated in a letter she wrote to her niece in which she criticized the girl's new book:

We are not satisfied with Mrs. F's settling herself as Tenant & near neighbour to such a man as Sir T.H. without having some other inducement to go there; she ought to have some friend living thereabouts to tempt her. A woman, going with two girls just growing up, into a Neighbourhood where she knows nobody but one Man, of not very good Character, is an awkwardness which so prudent a woman as Mrs. F. would not be likely to fall into..You must not let her act inconsistently..Mrs. F. is not careful enough of Susan's health..Susan ought not to be walking out so soon after Heavy rains.. an anxious Mother would not suffer it.²²

Apparently, Miss Austen's niece was not saturated in her work as her aunt was, or she would have been more capable of seeing the inconsistency in her character, Mrs. F. Had she created a mother like Mrs. Bennett, in Pride and Prejudice, then Susan would have been allowed to walk out "so soon after Heavy rains." Jane Austen's initial description of Mrs. Bennett informed the reader of some of her characteristics; "She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news."²³ The author made certain that Mrs. Bennett never deviated from this description. She showed absolutely no scruples in her "business" of getting

²²Letters, II, 400.

²³Pride and Prejudice, p. 232.

her daughters married, but we did not expect her to because we had been told that she had neither understanding nor information. When Mr. Bingley first moved into the neighborhood, Mrs. Bennett immediately considered him as the rightful property of her daughter Jane, and she would have gone to any lengths to capture him. Unlike Mrs. F. in her niece's novel, Jane Austen felt that Mrs. Bennett would not only allow her daughter in the rain, but that she would suggest it as long as Jane was in pursuit of a husband.

More insight into the character of Mrs. Bennett Jane Austen offers us in the former's conversation. Upon returning from the Ball, Mrs. Bennett exclaimed to her husband: "Mr. Bingley thought her [Jane] quite beautiful, and danced with her twice! Only think of that, my dear; he actually danced with her twice! First of all he asked Miss Lucas. I was so vexed to see him stand up with her!"²⁴ These words Mrs. Bennett speaks impulsively; it is by means of impulsive speech or actions that writers can best show what a person really is. Jane Austen's ability to offer this insight into the character of Mrs. Bennett is evidence of her saturation. She had already given the reader direct characterization; that is, she told us ~~some~~ about Mrs. Bennett, but she knew that nothing could take the place of action for revealing the true character of such a woman. The preceding quotation revealed complete lack of concern for other people on the part of Mrs. Bennett when she spoke harshly of Miss Lucas, who was Elizabeth's best friend, and a "sensible, intelligent

²⁴Ibid., p. 237.

young woman."²⁵ Plainly, her (Mrs. Bennett) design was to capture Bingley for her daughter Jane, regardless of how underhanded the method or of who might be hurt. Moreover, she hated any and everyone who seemed to stand in the way of her daughters' marriage. She felt triumphant when she told herself that no one could possibly admire Miss Lucas, a revealing attitude on her part in that it is consistent with the description Jane Austen gave us originally. The author's intense consciousness of the importance of consistency through speeches, actions, tastes, and habits, must have prompted her to work diligently until she had achieved this quality. Throughout Pride and Prejudice, Mrs. Bennett was revealed as a woman who would have stopped at nothing to get her daughters married. She went so far as to resolve never to speak to her own daughter, Elizabeth, if the latter did not marry Mr. Collins. When Elizabeth refused his proposal of marriage, Mrs. Bennett exclaimed to her husband: "You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind and not have her."²⁶ After these and other similar remarks made by Mrs. Bennett, the reader is hardly surprised to learn that she "was more alive to the disgrace which her want of new clothes must reflect on her daughter's nuptials, than to any sense of shame at her eloping and living with Wickham a fortnight before they took place."²⁷

Any one of Jane Austen's characters, minor or major, might be used to illustrate her saturation. In Mansfield Park, she showed the depth of her saturation in the work when she successfully developed into womanhood a

²⁵Ibid., p. 248.

²⁶Ibid., p. 298.

²⁷Ibid., p. 416.

little girl who was introduced into the story at the age of nine. Fanny Price, whose family was too poor to care for her, went to live at Mansfield Park with her aunt and uncle. When she first arrived at the big house, the author described her as having "no glow of complexion, nor any other striking beauty; exceedingly timid and shy, and shrinking from notice; but her air, though awkward, was not vulgar, her voice was sweet, and when she spoke her countenance was pretty."²⁸ Naive Aunt Norris had expected Fanny to rejoice because of her wonderful good fortune at being taken from her poor relations and placed in this home of privileges. But Jane Austen's intensity of vision into Fanny's character helped her to see that this girl, whose feelings were acute, would have difficulty in reconciling herself to the novelty of Mansfield Park, and the separation from everybody she had been used to.

Fanny's cousins were all well grown and forward for their age, "which produced as striking a difference between the cousins in person, as education had given to their address."²⁹ Jane Austen felt that, under these circumstances, Fanny Price would be "afraid of everybody, ashamed of herself, and longing for the home she had left."³⁰ Instead of having Fanny change overnight, Jane Austen produced the change gradually; Fanny slowly learned to transfer much of her attachment for her former home to Mansfield Park. For the author of Mansfield Park there had to be more reason for Fanny's transferring her attachment from home to the Park than the passing of time. It was her cousin Edmund who helped her feel comfortable in her new surroundings. His attentions were of the utmost "importance in assisting the

²⁸Mansfield Park, p. 474.

²⁹Ibid., p. 475.

³⁰Ibid.

improvement of her mind...He knew her to be clever, to have a quick apprehension as well as good sense..³¹ With her own abilities, her cousin's help in developing them, and the superior surroundings she now lived in, Fanny Price grew into a sensitive, reserved, yet sensible girl, who disliked doing anything that she felt was not within the limits of propriety. This characteristic Jane Austen effectively illustrated when the Bertrams and Crawfords became interested in staging a play. The idea came to these young people during the absence of Sir Thomas. Fanny was the only one in either family to agree with Edmund Bertram when he said "...it would be wrong..it would be highly injudicious..it would show great want of feeling on my father's account, absent as he is..³² Only Fanny had "borne Edmund company in every feeling throughout the whole..³³ But Edmund had too many against him, so he finally joined the play, more to keep down a family riot than any other reason. However, no amount of persuasion could induce Fanny to join them. Again, attention must be centered on Jane Austen's complete saturation in the character of Fanny. Every single one of this girl's characteristics was consistent with her refusal to act in the play. Her sense of propriety told her that it was not justifiable; her sensitivity made her shrink from publicity; her reserved manners, quick apprehension, and good sense made her feel the vulgarity of these young boys and girls acting love scenes. It was these same characteristics that later caused Fanny to refuse Henry Crawford's proposal of marriage, and it was Jane Austen's saturation in her character that made her see the objections Fanny would have to Crawford.

³¹Ibid., p. 481.

³²Ibid., p. 545.

³³Ibid., p. 547.

One critic believes that Henry Crawford would have been a better match for Fanny than Edmund Bertram was; Henry, he thought, could have improved Fanny's temperament by assisting her in mental flexibility.³⁴ But saturated as Jane Austen was in her characters and their actions, she could not have been pleased with her work if Fanny had accepted Henry's proposal; such would not have been in accordance with Fanny's nature. In contrast to this reserved, and sensitive girl, Henry Crawford was "the most horrible flirt that can be imagined" who delighted in breaking the girls' hearts.³⁵ He felt that "...there is not one in a hundred of either sex who is not taken in when they marry..it is, of all transactions, the one in which people expect most from others, and are least honest themselves."³⁶ This was hardly Fanny's idea of the same subject, nor could she have cared for anyone who held these opinions. Moreover, Fanny disliked doing anything that she felt was not justifiable and within the limits of propriety; when Crawford exclaimed over his pleasure in the theatrical staged while Sir Thomas was abroad, she was disgusted with him for being happy "when doing what you must know was not justifiable."³⁷ No! Fanny could never have been happy with Henry Crawford. It was understandable though, that Fanny would have affection for her cousin Edmund; he was uniformly kind and had been her friend when she had needed one most.

³⁴Sheila-Kaye Smith and G.B. Stern, Speaking of Jane Austen (New York, 1944), p. 63.

³⁵Mansfield Park, p. 493.

³⁶Ibid., p. 495.

³⁷Ibid., p. 605.

Perhaps Jane Austen's deep sense of the importance of consistency in character may best be seen in her treatment of Fanny's homecoming. A novelist who was less saturated in her work might well have made that a sentimental affair when Fanny, after many years absence, returned to the home she had left as a ten year old child. One's sense of Jane Austen's intensity of vision in her work is deepened upon seeing that Fanny found the change from Mansfield Park to her original home just as strange and uncomfortable as she had found Mansfield Park when she first arrived there. After living at a distance from her family for such a length of time as must lessen her natural affection for them, and having been bred in a superior style to theirs, Fanny could not be expected to react affectionately toward her parents. Instead, she was grieved and stunned upon meeting her family. Scarcely an inquiry was made by the Prices after Mansfield Park, or for that matter, about Fanny herself. She longed immediately for her uncle's house where there would be a "consideration of times and seasons, a regulation of subject, a propriety, an attention towards everybody which there was not here."³⁸

A much more simple character than Fanny Price is Mrs. Allen in Northanger Abbey. The initial description of Mrs. Allen tells the reader that she had neither "genius, accomplishment, or manner. Dress was her passion."³⁹ In one incident and few words, Jane Austen was able to illustrate all of these characteristics. Mr. Allen was discussing the propriety of Catherine's riding in open carriages with young men. He asked Mrs. Allen if she did not think it objectionable. His wife replied that "open

³⁸Ibid., p. 702.

³⁹Northanger Abbey, p. 1067.

carriages are nasty things. A clean gown is not five minutes' wear in them. You are splashed getting in and getting out, and the wind takes your hair and your bonnet in every direction. I hate an open carriage myself."⁴⁰ There is nothing more complex about Mrs. Allen than this quotation implies, and she is only a minor character in Northanger Abbey. Attention has been called to her for the purpose of showing Jane Austen's intensity of vision in character whether they are simple, complex, minor, or major.

Thus far, we have seen how deeply saturated in her characters and their actions Jane Austen really was. Now, we must apply the term to setting, both material and immaterial.

It is readily noticeable that little material setting is used in these novels. Charlotte Bronte once complained that in Pride and Prejudice, there was "no open country, no fresh air, blue hill, bonny beck."⁴¹ It is true that Jane Austen did not emphasize material setting; she was so deeply saturated in her literary work that she could see the need for only a little attention to material setting in her books. She used it sparingly with the same attention to economy and pertinence that she used in her characters and action. Not having involved her characters in any serious adventure, it was not necessary, or even advisable, to describe an elaborate background. She created a domestic world in the eighteenth century English middle class society, a society whose entertainment consisted mostly of an occasional dance, a dinner party, and a walk or a drive through the country. At least, this was

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 1120.

⁴¹As quoted in Andrew H. Wright, Jane Austen's Novels (New York, 1953), p. 7.

Jane Austen's conception of their activities, and she passed her insight into this life on to her readers. With little description, she makes us conscious of the large estates, the big country houses, and the presence of servants. For example, when Fanny Price first came to Mansfield Park, "the grandeur of the house astonished her...the rooms were too large for her to move in with ease.." ⁴² It was not necessary for Jane Austen to elaborately describe the size and grandeur of the house and gardens; her intense vision into the setting she used, enabled her to present it by suggestion rather than enumeration. More evidence of this may be seen in Edmund's reassuring speech to Fanny when the latter thought she might be sent to live with her Aunt Norris. Edmund said: "You will have as free a command of the park and gardens as ever...You will have the same walks so frequent, the same library to choose from...the same horse to ride." ⁴³ The fact that the Bertrams were able to take Mrs. Norris and Fanny in their home, and give them separate rooms suggests the enormous size of the great house. In contrast to this, Jane Austen gives us a feeling of the crowded conditions that the lower class lived in. When Fanny returned to her parents' home, she was taken into a parlour, "so small that her first conviction was of its being only a passage-room to something better," ⁴⁴ but then she saw there was no other door. The author's intensity of vision into immaterial setting may be seen in this same incident; that is, the return of Fanny to her original home. The sensitive girl noticed that the house was the "abode of noise, disorder and impropriety. Nobody

⁴²Mansfield Park, p. 476.

⁴³Ibid., p. 484.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 699.

was in their right place, nothing was done as it ought to be."⁴⁵ Her father swore and drank, and he was dirty and gross. Her mother's time was taken with other things; "she had neither leisure nor affection to bestow on anyone."⁴⁶ In full contrast to the lower class, the upper middle class manners, as seen at Mansfield Park, were elegance, propriety, regularity, harmony, and above all, peace and tranquillity. "At Mansfield, no sounds of contention, no raised voice, no abrupt bursts, no tread of violence, was ever heard; all proceeded in a regular course of cheerful orderliness; everybody had their due importance; everybody's feelings were consulted."⁴⁷ Such were Fanny's thoughts when she visited her parents, and it was through Fanny's mind that Jane Austen gave her readers some idea of the manners of the different classes of people. Had the author simply told her readers of this difference, it would have been less effective. As she handled it, we get insight into character and immaterial setting at the same time, an accomplishment that only a novelist who was saturated in her material could achieve.

In Persuasion, as in the other novels, the reader is made aware of the location of the action only by mention of such places as Somerset County, Uppercross, and Lyme; seldom are descriptions of the places given. There is little physical description of character; we do not know whether Anne Elliot had red, brown, black, or blond hair, or whether she had fair or dark complexion. But just as Miss Austen's characters are in no wise grand or heroic on the whole, and her material hardly startling as to adventure, neither is the setting elaborate nor would such a setting

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 706.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 707.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 708.

have balanced with the other elements in the novel. Even so, the setting that is used in the novel is so effectively described that it is likely to make an impression on the reader. Tennyson said upon visiting Lyme, the place of Monmouth's rebellion, "Don't speak to me of the Duke of Monmouth. Show me the spot where Louisa Musgrove fell!"⁴⁸ Of course, it is the combination of action, character and setting that creates interest such as Tennyson's; but he would hardly have remembered this particular incident had Jane Austen not made him intensely conscious of the Cobb along the seashore, of the strong wind that made the high part of the Cobb a little unpleasant, of the danger there was in jumping the stiles, and of the lifeless figure of Louisa Musgrove when she slipped and fell to the pavement.⁴⁹ To be told of the wind and the pavement is a rarity in a Jane Austen novel, but here is proof that the author's intensity of vision in her work enabled her to use it effectively when she needed to.

The minimized setting in these novels has often been criticized.

Sheila Kaye-Smith said that one of her unsatisfied desires was to:

...know more about how Jane Austen's women were dressed..I longed to know what Emma wore when she gave that dinner party for Mr. Elton. Surely a beautiful and becoming dress had something to do with Anne Elliot's effect on Captain Wentworth..⁵⁰

But Jane Austen had thought out and rewrote her novels so much that she knew that a description of fashions would have been an intrusion - one that would possibly have damaged the quality of the work.

⁴⁸As quoted in Isabel C. Clarke, Six Portraits (London, 1935), p. 132.

⁴⁹Persuasion, p. 1276.

⁵⁰Smith and Stern, p. 49.

It is in Northanger Abbey that Jane Austen shows how deeply saturated she was in the settings she did use. The scene is laid in Bath; she makes the reader aware of the manners and sights in that famous resort, by means of suggestion, action, and sometimes description. We get a feeling of the gaiety in Bath from the awareness of the chattering and running back and forth from Pump rooms to Upper and Lower Assembly rooms, of the continual meetings and saunterings in the streets and coffee houses, of the busy streets like Cheap Street which connects the London and Oxford roads and the principal inn of the city.⁵¹ The setting in this novel is more detailed than that in the other novels, but even here, just enough is said to give the desired effect of the busy and gay life in Bath, a background that Jane Austen felt was needed for the romantically minded heroine who was on the lookout for her hero. Compared with the Gothic heroines, Catherine Morland's life would hardly be described as eventful and gay, but it was not Jane Austen's purpose to imitate them; she hoped to laugh them out of existence.

We have seen beyond a doubt that Jane Austen was thoroughly saturated in her characters, action, and settings. We can be sure that if she rejected any part of her work, the rejection would be partly based on her inability to become thoroughly acquainted with the material; to know her characters well enough to feel what they would feel in every situation and to think what they would think; to see the characters in the entire action of the story so that each incident grows out of and illuminates the preceding one; and to see the material setting and to feel the immaterial setting that is needed to bring about the desired effect. At least

⁵¹Northanger Abbey, p. 1082.

we can be sure that she achieved this quality in her published works, but this is only one aspect of the critical standards she set for herself; we must determine the extent of the author's intellectual power and passion for the universal in order to get a full view of the art in her novels.

Intellectual power is a term that refers to the author's abilities in treatment and interpretation of the subject matter. It is just as important, perhaps more so, than intensity of vision, but it cannot function without the latter. Jane Austen shows intellectual power in her ability to sustain interest throughout stories in which nothing much happens, in her ability to see the limits of her own powers as a novelist, and in her ability to write a very delicate satire on the absurdities, illusions, and weaknesses she saw in human nature.

In her six published novels, Jane Austen makes interesting, events which would ordinarily be uninteresting and commonplace. Samuel Johnson once said: "Life is made up of little things. Trifles are dear to all our hearts, if they are attached to the objects of our affection--whether persons or things."⁵² The trifles Jane Austen writes about are certainly dear to all our hearts, because she makes them seem important, amusing and endearing. The subjects are not elegant or grand, but they are finished with a precision which delights the reader. Sir Walter Scott once said that Jane Austen had "produced sketches of such spirit and originality, that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events, arising from the consideration of minds, manners, and sentiments greatly above our own."⁵³ All of Jane Austen's novels exhibit this intellectual

⁵²As quoted in Chapman, Letters, I, p. xlii.

⁵³As quoted in Wright, p. 197.

power.

A look at some of the novels will illustrate this outstanding ability. Northanger Abbey, for example, is a story about a young heroine who visits in Bath, meets her "hero," visits in the home of the young man, and finally marries him. None of the incidents, perhaps with the exception of Catherine being turned out of her hero's home, are out of the ordinary, but are common, uneventful things that might happen to any girl and usually does. The heroine herself is not outstanding in any way; "she never could learn or understand anything before she was taught, and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive, and occasionally stupid."⁵⁴ But with this material, or lack of it, Jane Austen created a story that is delightful and interesting, an exhibition of her intellectual power.

In Sense and Sensibility the events are different but hardly more out of the ordinary. The two sisters, Elinor and Marianne, are in love and both meet with difficulty in their love affairs before they are happily settled as married women. Though Willoughby loved Marianne, he felt he could not sacrifice his position in life to marry a girl with poor family relations. Edward Ferrars, Elinor's lover, was claimed by an unscrupulous girl who finally relieved Edward by marrying his brother. Unlike the story about Catherine Morland, many families were represented in this novel, and more characters meant more conflict. But the story never involved more than a few trifling domestic affairs. Moreover, the domestic affairs were those familiar to most eighteenth century middle class families in England. The story is free from real complications and serious adventure of any sort, but due to Jane Austen's intellectual ability, it is a story of spirit and

⁵⁴Northanger Abbey, p. 1063.

originality which has delighted readers for many years.

Mansfield Park is usually considered the most ambitious in theme and the best example of Jane Austen's ability as a story teller.⁵⁵ The story centers around Mansfield Park, a great country house where the heroine, an adopted girl, grows into womanhood. She was taken from her own home of poverty at the age of ten and rather reluctantly placed in the home of her uncle, Sir Thomas Bertram, who is a man of dignity and culture. Fanny is not welcomed by her relatives nor is she treated as an equal except by her cousin Edmund. Half of the book is taken up in revealing the character of those at Mansfield Park other than Fanny Price. Fanny's real strength of character, however, gradually develops as the other events take place. She learns by observation; she seldom speaks unless she has something important to say. While she is maturing, the reader's attention is focused on the actions of her cousins. Maria and Julia Bertram become angry rivals over Henry Crawford, who is visiting at the Mansfield Parsonage. Henry is a practised flirt, and his sister Mary uses her charms on Edmund Bertram. The Crawfords involve the Bertrams in what is to be the beginning of their ruin. Fanny warns Edmund against what is likely to happen, but he does not believe her. The Bertram children had been taught self importance above all else, so they could hardly be expected to foresee anything happening to them. Fanny, unable to act, waits until Edmund sees things clearly for himself. Though the plot consists of more complexity than the other novels, the most serious adventure is that of Maria's running away with Henry Crawford. Even this incident does not happen until near the end of the story. The power to sustain interest throughout such a long

⁵⁵Margaret Kennedy, Jane Austen (Denver, 1950), p. 66.

novel in which nothing much happens is positive proof of Jane Austen's intellectual ability.

It is conceivable that the author could have sustained this interest in her novels by means of creating exciting love stories. It has been mentioned that her subject matter was that of domestic affairs such as love and marriage. However, it must be pointed out that Jane Austen's heroes and heroines were never presented in what could be called a love scene. But even without love scenes she was capable of sustaining interest throughout. Romantic scenes would have introduced feeling as a main element in the novels; Jane Austen emphasized good taste, good manners, and common sense in everything. Once, when she criticized a niece's novel, she said: "Henry Mellish, I am afraid will be too much in the common Novel style---a handsome, amiable, unexceptional young man desperately in Love, and all in vain."⁵⁶ Along this same line, she wrote to Cassandra Austen:

I have had a most affectionate letter from Buller; I was afraid he would oppress me by his felicity & his love for his wife, but this is not the case; he calls her simply Anna without any angelic embellishments, for which I respect & wish him happy."⁵⁷

Here is evidence of her dislike for affectation, "angelic embellishments," felicity, and emotional lovers. Fortunately, her intellectual power was such that she could write interesting novels about domestic affairs without the inclusion of feeling as the main element; few novelists have or could do it.

Any one of the heroines in the novels may be used to show this exclusion of love making. For example, more than half of Pride and Prejudice

⁵⁶Letters, II, p. 403.

⁵⁷Ibid., I, p. 85.

is written before Elizabeth Bennett says a kind word to her future husband. When she does accept him, neither of them vow violent love for each other; their conversation is such that a listener, unaware of their feelings, would not suspect that Darcy had proposed. They were so far from acting the part of lovers that Elizabeth found it difficult to convince her father of her love for Darcy. In Emma, the heroine accidentally rode alone with Mr. Elton. Soon she found "her hand seized--her attention demanded, and Mr. Elton actually making violent love to her."⁵⁸ The mention of "violent love" in the Jane Austen novels is a rarity in itself; it never got past a "mention" however, because Emma did not like the attention. She was one of the few heroines who had her hand held by a professed lover, but even in this instance, the scene was quickly made away with when Emma said, "Believe me, sir, I am far, far, from gratified in being the object of such professions."⁵⁹

The fact that Jane Austen did skip over love scenes has been the object of some criticism of her work. Charlotte Bronte complained that the passions were unknown to Jane Austen, and that she "rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood. Even to the feelings she vouchsafes no more than an occasional graceful but distant recognition."⁶⁰ It does not seem fair to say that the passions were unknown to Jane Austen; she simply insisted that her characters behave with decency. "To those who have the power to see and interpret, there is a depth of passion in her characters that far surpasses the emotional

⁵⁸Emma, p. 842.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰As quoted in Wright, p. 8.

power displayed in many novels"⁶¹ in which the lovers seem unaware that such things as honor, virtue, and fidelity exist. In Sense and Sensibility, Elinor Dashwood, who had been disappointed in love, gave this advice to her sister:

..whoever may have been so detestably your enemy, let them be cheated of their malignant triumph, my dear sister, by seeing how nobly the consciousness of your own innocence and good intentions supports your spirits. It is a reasonable and laudable pride which resists such malevolence.⁶²

Elinor was able to say this at a time when she had lost her lover to a silly and scheming young girl. Jane Austen's intellectual ability enabled her to show the depth of Elinor's passion without showing her in outbursts of emotion, another evidence of her power to sustain interest in stories in which nothing much happens. Everything she deals with would ordinarily be uninteresting and commonplace, but she makes it seem important and endearing.

Jane Austen's ability to see the limits of her own powers as a novelist is another evidence of her intellectual power. There were many public events she might have used as subject matter. During her lifetime, there was the American War of Independence and the loss of the American Colonies; there was the French Revolution and Reign of Terror, and there was the rise and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte. But Jane Austen ignored all of these events just as she had ignored pure romance and pure tragedy. Intrusion of great public events, pure romance, and pure tragedy into her novels would probably have ruined them. Her characters and events would

⁶¹Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh, Personal Aspects of Jane Austen (London, 1920), p. 109.

⁶²Sense and Sensibility, p. 112.

not have stood out as they did against a background of romance, tragedy, wars, and bloodshed. Miss Austen certainly proved that it was not the choice of subject matter but the treatment of it that was important. Her power to see her own limitations as a writer is probably one of her greatest intellectual gifts.

Thus far, we have seen Jane Austen's intellectual power as exhibited in her story telling power and in her ability to know her limitations. Another aspect of this intellectual power is her ability to extract so much fun from the absurdities, illusions, and weaknesses as seen in human nature. Her humor is so delicate that it often escapes the unobserving reader's attention. Even in her humor, she has a wholesome, sane outlook; her satire and irony are always delicate, never violent. "Tactfully and secretly Jane laughed at everyone, but what makes her mirth most delicious is her equal readiness to laugh at herself."⁶³ She once wrote to her sister, Cassandra: "Pray remember me to Everybody who does not enquire after me. Those who do, remember me without bidding."⁶⁴ Another time, she said: "I do not want people to be very agreeable as it saves me the trouble of liking them a great deal."⁶⁵

Northanger Abbey is doubly humorous because its author satirizes the Gothic novel at the same time that she creates many humorous characters. Catherine Morland, who often read Gothic novels, felt that she, like the Gothic heroines, was born to be an heroine and that something must and would happen to throw a hero in her path. Jane Austen creates

⁶³Hinckley, p. 74.

⁶⁴Letters, I, p. 13.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 43.

a laughing seriousness in that she is serious in attacking the Gothic novels, but she does so merely by writing realistically about the same places and people that the Gothic novelists romanticized. In this manner, she effectively showed the comic incongruities existing between events taking place in Gothic novels and those more likely to occur in reality. One of the best examples of this is the incident in which Catherine discovers the heavy chest in the abbey. Jane Austen describes the chest in a manner similar to the Gothic novelists' descriptions:

The lock was silver though tarnished from age; at each end were the imperfect remains of handles also of silver, broken perhaps prematurely by some strange violence; and on the centre of the lid was a mysterious cipher in the same metal.⁶⁶

That this is meant to be satirical is evident when nothing but an old laundry list is found in the chest. All the "mystery" in the novel is that created in the heroine's naive and imaginary mind. Before arriving at the abbey, Catherine had imagined that she would find strangeness and mystery on the trip to such an antique building. She was disappointed to find a low building without even an antique chimney. Too, as she had not expected, the road leading to the abbey was not crooked, obstructed, nor was it narrow and dark; it was level, had fine gravel, and nothing prevented their having a smooth ride to the very grounds of Northanger Abbey.

In Emma, the author's intellectual power is revealed in the fun she has with a character whose "talents could not have recommended him at any time."⁶⁷ He was a naive and narrow minded old man who thought that

⁶⁶Northanger Abbey, p. 1154.

⁶⁷Emma, p. 764.

everyone's likes and dislikes should be identical with his own. He refused to eat rich food because he felt it was unwholesome, reason enough for him that everyone should refuse it. He earnestly tried to persuade Emma's governess not to have wedding-cake at her own wedding "and when that proved vain as earnestly tried to prevent anybody's eating it."⁶⁸ Once when Emma gave a dinner party, Mr. Woodhouse's feelings were in sad warfare;

He loved to have the cloth laid, because it had been the very fashion of his youth, but his conviction of suppers being very unwholesome made him rather sorry to see anything put on it; and while his hospitality would have welcomed his visitors to everything, his care for their health made him grieve that they would eat."⁶⁹

This is an example of the true Austen wit; it is handled so delicately that a non observant reader is hardly conscious of the humorous situation. But the observant reader's sense of her intellectual power is deepened upon seeing her ability to handle humorous situations delicately and effectively as she did in this instance.

Jane Austen's humor, always an intellectual humor, is not limited to a certain type character; the heroines themselves do not escape the witty mind of their creator. She was aware that everyone had absurdities and peculiarities which could most effectively be shown through humorous remarks and actions. The heroine of Emma, completely unaware of Mr. Elton's love for her, was warned of it by her brother-in-law who had seen Mr. Elton only once. She amused herself by thinking of the "considerations of the blunders which often arise from a partial knowledge of circumstances, of the mistakes which people of high pretensions to

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 772.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 775.

judgment are for ever falling into..⁷⁰ She was highly displeased with her brother-in-law for thinking her in need of his advice. This humor is good, the more so because it is integrated with the action. For example, in the beginning of the story, we were told that Emma was prone to think too well of herself and her judgments; the remainder of the story was such that it revealed over and over how poorly she had judged every situation.

In Persuasion, Jane Austen used her marvelous insight into human absurdities and inconsistencies to satirize the heroine's sister, a girl who "had no resources for solitude; and, inheriting a considerable share of the Elliot self-importance, was very prone to add to every other distress that of fancying herself neglected and ill-used."⁷¹ When her husband, Charles Musgrave, decided to attend a dinner at his parents' home, Mary pointed out that they had a sick child and that it would be disgraceful to leave him. When Charles insisted "that nothing can be going on better than the child,"⁷² and anyway, a father is of no use in such matters, Mary was furious. She asked her sister Anne Elliot, "How does he know that he [the baby] is going on well, or that there may not be a sudden change half an hour hence?"⁷³ But when Anne suggested that Mary attend the dinner too, Mary accepted the proposal with this comment: "I really think Charles might as well have told his father we would all come. I am not more alarmed about little Charles now than he is. I was

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 831

⁷¹Persuasion, p. 1231.

⁷²Ibid., p. 1243.

⁷³Ibid.

dreadfully alarmed yesterday, but the case is very different to-day."⁷⁴

This incident is typical of Mary's every action. Perhaps Jane Austen reaches the peak of her satirical attack on Mary when the latter forces her company on the Miss Musgroves. The Musgrove girls, in obvious pursuit of Captain Wentworth, came through the grounds and "stopped for no other purpose [at Mary's house] than to say that they were going to take a long walk, and therefore concluded Mary could not like to go with them."⁷⁵

But Mary was overjoyed at the idea of a walk, and no amount of reasoning on Anne's part could dissuade her. Mary felt insulted at their supposing she was not a good walker and yet she knew "they would not have been pleased if we had refused to join them. When people come in this manner on purpose to ask us, how can one say no?"⁷⁶

To add a little spice to the already humorous situations, Jane Austen often made her own interpretative and evaluative remarks. In Northanger Abbey, when Catherine went for a ride with the Tilney family, she was quite lost for words; she knew nothing of the subjects they talked about. She was ashamed of her ignorance, but Jane Austen commented that it was a misplaced shame on Catherine's part: "Where people wish to attach, they should always be ignorant. A woman, especially if she have the misfortune of knowing anything, should conceal it as well as she can."⁷⁷ Here, the author spoke in her own voice, but it is a voice so carefully modulated to the language used by her characters, and a comment so well

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 1259.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 1260.

⁷⁷Northanger, p. 1124.

integrated with the action in the novel that one is hardly aware that she has stepped in. All of her novels are filled with general comments like this one, which deepens one's sense of her intellectual power as well as her saturation in her work.

A summary of the intellectual power as exhibited by Jane Austen in her six published novels would include the following: (1) story telling power (2) power to know her limitations (3) power to see and create humor. Her story telling power is exhibited in her ability to sustain interest throughout her novels in which the events would ordinarily be uninteresting and commonplace; her power to know her limitations as a writer is exhibited in her exclusion of public events, pure comedy, and pure tragedy; and her intellectual humor may be seen in the form of her general comments, or it may be directed at specific characters, while at the same time, it is integrated into the entire story.

The third, and perhaps the least important of the terms of analysis to be applied to the Jane Austen novels is that of passion for the universal. It is not to be implied that universality in a literary work is unimportant; it is. But it is not so important for our purposes because we are concerned with what Jane Austen gained from her severe self-criticism; it is not conceivable that she wrote and rewrote her work in an effort to universalize the material. However, it must be mentioned that her novels are illustrative of country life among the upper middle classes in England at the end of the eighteenth century. She writes about men and women who become congenial friends to the reader; they do not seem to be mere characters of fiction, but people whose thoughts and feelings suggest experience as everyone knows it. She does not transport her readers into fantasy, but simply into another set of problems--problems which make no personal

demands on the reader. One can recognize in her characters, characteristics of people he knows. Probably without a great deal of effort then, especially since this was the life Jane Austen knew and was a part of, she universalized her material.

No analysis of the art in Jane Austen's work would be complete without some mention of her style which is characterized by a normal, clear, and easily understood structure. With the possible exception of her dialogue, it is not highly individual. Still, she attains complete adequacy in expression; every word, though common it may be, has its intrinsic value. The clarity with which she writes may be seen in this short paragraph in which Emma speaks to Mr. Elton about Harriet Smith:

I am glad you think I have been useful to her; but Harriet only wanted drawing out, and receiving a few, very few hints. She had all the natural grace of sweetness of temper and artlessness in herself. I have done very little.⁷⁸

It is seldom necessary to reread a sentence in a Jane Austen novel due to inadequacy of expression. There are no broken sentences; it is free from sporadic composition; there is nothing clumsy or awkward about it. There is clearness, fitness, and always economy.

In dialogue, Jane Austen is not only adequate but exceptionally effective. She often attains originality by means of sentence inversion. The following excerpt, taken from a conversation in Northanger Abbey between Catherine Morland and some friends who want her to join them in

⁷⁸Emma, p.786.

a ride:

'To Bristol! Is not that a great way off? But, however, I cannot go with you to-day, because I am engaged; I expect some friends every moment.' This was of course vehemently talked down as no reason at all; Mrs. Allen was called on to second him, and the two others walked in, to give their assistance. 'My sweetest Catherine, is not this delightful? We shall have a most heavenly drive. You are to thank your brother and me for the scheme; it darted into our heads at breakfast time, I verily believe at the same instant; and we should have been off two hours ago, if it had not been for this detestable rain. But it does not signify, the nights are moonlight, and we shall do delightfully. Oh! I am in such ecstasies at the thoughts of a little country air and quiet! so much better than going to the Lower Rooms. We shall drive directly to Clifton and dine there; and as soon as dinner is over, if there is time for it, go on to Kingsweston.'⁷⁹

Jane Austen once said that a " 'said he' or 'said she' would sometimes make the dialogue more immediately clear; but

I do not write for such dull elves
As have not a great deal of ingenuity themselves."⁸⁰

This is more evidence of the writer's severe self criticism. She must have spent a great deal of time in satisfying herself with the clearness, fitness, and effectiveness of her writing. Before publication, she had selected and combined just those speeches and comments which gave complete adequacy in expression as well as the desired effect.

It was the purpose of this chapter to determine what Jane Austen gained from her severe self-criticism, to determine what she required of her novels before she was willing to present them to the publisher. The answer to this question seems to lie in her deep saturation in her plot, characters, and setting, in her outstanding intellectual power, her passion for the universal, and her lucid style. The reasons for her success lie in her ability as a story teller, her technique as a drawer

⁷⁹Northanger Abbey, p. 1107.

⁸⁰Letters, I, p. 298.

of character, her delicate satire, and her ability to combine these things within a world of reason and common sense, without exaggeration or affectation. One could be sure that her rejection of any part of her work would be based on the same standards which make her published work almost flawless.

CHAPTER III

BASES OF REJECTION OF THE UNPUBLISHED WORK

There can be little question of the quality Jane Austen achieved as a result of the long hours of rewriting, correcting, and reorganizing her novels before she offered them for publication. The standards of perfection that she set for herself are evident in the published work. An application of these standards to the rejected and unpublished work will determine what quality or qualities they lacked. This evidence should support her rejection of them.

The Watsons, a "much corrected manuscript,"¹ is believed by some to be an early draft of Emma;² others feel that the plot and characters of this fragment were taken up in Mansfield Park.³ Jane Austen had thought out and composed the story, and she informed her family what she intended to do with her characters:

Mr. Watson was seen to die and Emma to become dependent for a home on her narrowminded sister-in-law and brother. She was to decline an offer from Lord Osborne, and much of the interest of the tale was to arise from Lady Osborne's love for Mr. Howard and his counter-affection for Emma, whom he was finally to marry.⁴

¹Johnson, Sanditen, p. x.

²Ibid.

³Hinckley, p. 93.

⁴Johnson, Sanditen, p. x.

Like the published work, this novel was to be a story about domestic affairs, relatively uneventful domestic affairs. But Jane Austen does not achieve her usual saturation nor does she show the extent of her intellectual ability in this fragment. As far as she went in the actual writing of the novel, she seems, at a first reading, to achieve that intense vision in plot. However, there is a noticeable weakness when one looks at the plot as she had indicated it would develop in that it seems unlikely that each incident could have grown out of preceding ones. The happy ending that Jane Austen had planned, does not appear to have sufficient cause for occurring. For instance, the Watson family was a poor one, not on the level of the Bennett family in Pride and Prejudice, but more equal to the Price family in Mansfield Park. They lived in such humble style that Emma was mortified at the thought of anyone outside the family calling on them. When the girls attended a ball, they had to dress, dine, and sleep at someone else's house.

Unlike her sisters, Emma was a woman of education and sensitive feeling; she had been brought up by an aunt, a woman of fortune and rank. As a result, Emma had a deep sense of propriety, good manners, and common sense. In contrast, her sisters had been brought up in the poor surroundings of her family with little communication with the middle classes, little education, and no privileges. Marriage was their only vocation, and they had little to recommend themselves to any young men. Margaret Watson was "a little fretful and perverse," while Penelope "never cares what she says."⁵ Both thought everything fair in love; they had no faith, honor, or scruples while in pursuit of a man.

⁵Austen, The Watsons, p. 85. (All footnotes referring to Jane Austen's unpublished work are taken from Sanditon (New York, 1935).

These were the conditions and surroundings in which Emma Watson found herself. Where was she to seek companionship? Had Jane Austen been fully saturated in the work, it is unlikely that she would have felt Emma's situation in life could have brought about the happy ending she had planned. How could Emma remain a lady when she was surrounded by people of bold temper, unladylike conduct, people of her own family with whom she must necessarily associate. With Emma's refined manners and attractive features, she could attract young men; but she, unlike her sisters, felt the inconsistency of an acquaintance with them because of the humble style in which they lived. She had impressed Lord Osborne at the Ball, but when he called on her, the awkwardness of the situation kept her from enjoying the compliments of such a man's attention. Emma, "...having in her aunt's family been used to many of the Elegancies of Life, was fully sensible of all that must open to the ridicule of Richer people in her present home."⁶ Had Jane Austen completed this work, she would have seen the inevitable necessity for a change in the plot that would bring about a closer relationship between the incidents.

Lack of saturation in plot in The Watsons, reveals a discrepancy in character. Emma could not have retained her self control and her good humor when she found herself continually surrounded by inferior people. The planned ending did not allow for any change in her situation. In fact, she was destined for still worse because Mr. Watson was seen to die, and Emma was to live with her narrow-minded brother and his

⁶Ibid., p. 113.

wife, both of whom irritated and grieved her with their every action and word. For instance, her brother Robert insisted on speaking disrespectfully of their aunt and uncle for which Emma disliked him more than he knew. Robert also concerned himself with finding a husband for his sisters. He had hardly welcomed Emma home before he said, "Pity, you can none of you get married! You must come to Croyden as well as the rest, and see what you can do there."⁷

This grieved Emma the more so because she realized the truth in it. Her father was an invalid who would not live much longer, and he had nothing to leave the girls. Emma was at the mercy of people and as it happened, very disagreeable people. It was not nearly so difficult for the other girls because they had always known that their situations in life were such that only marriage could improve them.

Elizabeth once said to Emma:

..you know we must marry. I could do very well single for my own part. A little company, and a pleasant Ball now and then, would be enough for me, if one could be young forever, but my father cannot provide for us, and it is very bad to grow old and be poor and laughed at.⁸

Like Elizabeth, Margaret and Penelope Watson could accept their situations in life because of their belief that they would be fortunate enough to receive an offer of marriage from someone. But Emma could not find solace in a thought like this. Like other Austen heroines, she could not have married without affection; such an action would have been inconsistent with her nature. Too, it would have shown lack of satisfaction on Jane Austen's part. How then, was she to

⁷Ibid., p. 122.

⁸Ibid., pp. 83-84.

have Emma receive an offer of marriage from Lord Osborne as well as Mr. Howard and still achieve that intensity of vision in plot and character? Of course, with Emma's agreeable manners, her respect for other people, and her standard of values, she could attract agreeable young men with whom she might become attached. But one wonders if Emma could have retained these qualities under the circumstances in which she found herself. If Emma were to blossom forth and be noticed, she would have to do it without trickery, phantasy, or miracle. That Jane Austen did not believe this possible is evident in her treatment of Fanny Price in Mansfield Park. Like Emma, Fanny returned home after having been brought up in her uncle's house of refinement and privileges. But Fanny found that her visit consisted of pain upon pain and confusion upon confusion. From the moment she arrived, she began looking forward to returning to Mansfield. "Easter came particularly late this year, as Fanny had most sorrowfully considered on first leaving that she had no chance of leaving Portsmouth [parents' home] till after it. It was a cruel, a terrible delay to her."⁹ Though some of her friends from Mansfield called on her in Portsmouth, the humble style in which her family lived, was painful to her. Moreover, the vulgarity of her nearest relations were enough to drive her friends away. When she learned she was to leave Portsmouth, she "felt she was in the greatest danger of being exquisitely happy."¹⁰

These were Fanny Price's sentiments after a three months visit with her family; how could Emma have been expected to live with hers indefinitely, without a noticeable change of character, possibly brought on by

⁹Mansfield Park, p. 732.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 740.

a different outlook and philosophy of life? How long could she return kindness for insult? How long could she remain unaffected by her narrow-minded disrespectful sisters and brother? When her father died, she would be left with the "dreadful mortifications of unequal Society, and family Discord, from the immediate endurance of Hard-hearted prosperity, low minded Conceit, and Wrong-headed folly."¹¹ Jane Austen must have noticed the problem she was running into because, whether the story was usurped by the plot and characters in Mansfield Park or whether it was the beginning of Emma, it is readily noticeable that the author changed the heroine's positions in both. Emma Woodhouse had innate qualities that only needed bringing out in the open, and she had the right surroundings, both in relations and friends for doing this. Fanny Price, though given birth by poor parents, was brought up by a family of the upper class and never had to return to her home to live. But Emma Watson had no apparent means for releasing her from her dreadful situation; without a means, Jane Austen could not have created incident after incident with causal relationships. Lack of relationship in the incidents meant lack of saturation, a characteristic that we have already seen Jane Austen insisted upon achieving.

It was mentioned in a preceding chapter that intellectual power could not function without saturation. Therefore, a weakness in saturation in The Watsons necessarily meant a weakness in intellectual power. In her finished work, Jane Austen showed this power by means of her ability to make interesting, things which would ordinarily be uninteresting and commonplace; in her ability to write a very delicate

¹¹Watsons, p. 131.

satire which she succeeded in integrating with the plot and characterizations; and in her ability to know and stay within her own limits as a novelist.

Certainly, Jane Austen was within her limits when she wrote The Watsons because she was writing about domestic affairs which were not to involve any public events, pure tragedy, or pure comedy. She was definitely engaged once again in telling a story involving no real conflict or outstanding events. But did she succeed in making these things interesting? Yes, she certainly does succeed in creating some interest in the fragment; however, there is a noticeable weakness in humor. Obviously, a lack of humor in a Jane Austen creation meant lack of interest because it was partly by means of her delicate satire that she achieved interest. The weakness is noticeable in dialogue, description, and general comment. Very little humor is used, and what there is, lacks integration with the plot. The first inkling of humor is found only after the reader is well into the story, when Jane Austen shows the absurd, superior feeling of Emma's sister-in-law. "Mrs. Robert, exactly as smart as she had been at her own party, came in with apologies for her dress."¹² Of course, this is the true Jane Austen wit, but there is so little present in this fragment that the reader must almost search for it. It is evident, however, that the author intended to satirize Emma's sisters who were all rather narrow-minded. When Tom Musgrave dropped in unexpectedly, in hopes of seeing Emma, Margaret Watson took the visit as a compliment to herself. Seeking further compliment, she needled Tom into a conversation about young

¹²Ibid., p. 122.

ladies' complexion in hopes that he would say he preferred hers to Emma's. But Tom merely said that a Miss Osborne was his model for a truly feminine complexion. Margaret would not be insulted when a man was involved; she insisted that he come to dinner the following day, an invitation he accepted with uncertainty, saying, "You will not think of me unless you see me."¹³ Nevertheless, Margaret had no doubt of his coming as she indicated when she saw that "preparations were made for his Entertainment much exceeding what had been deemed necessary"¹⁴ by anyone else. Certainly, Jane Austen created humor in the character of Margaret Watson, but there seems to be less delicacy in the humor than is present in the published work. Margaret's displeasure, due to her own action, meant displeasure to the entire family. When Tom Musgrave did not come, "the Peace of the party for the remainder of that day, and the whole of the next, which comprised the length of Robert and Jane's visit, continually invaded by her fretful displeasure, and querulous attacks."¹⁵ This seems to lessen the effectiveness of the humor. Of course, Mrs. Bennett, in Pride and Prejudice, often embarrassed her family with her silly remarks and her constant concern for the marriage of her daughters, but in her narrow mind, she thought she was helping her family, and they knew it. It was the welfare of her family, not her own, that she was interested in promoting. But Margaret's sole purpose in life was to find happiness for herself at the expense of any or everyone who got in her way.

¹³Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 130.

¹⁵Ibid.

This lack of intellectual humor might be attributed to the fact that Jane Austen, not having revised and rewritten the story, may not have included all the humor she intended to. Perhaps her first drafts were always weak in humor. This does not seem likely however, when one looks at Jane Austen's first literary exercise. Even here, it is evident that the author was concerned very early in her literary career with laughing at the absurdities she saw in human nature as well as in the sentimental novels. In Love and Freindship, [sic] which she playfully wrote while in her teens, she seems to satirize the sentimental novelists by creating characters and incidents that were not congruous with reality. For example, when the heroine of the exercise heard a knock on her door, this is the way she and her family reacted to it:

My father started--'What noise is that' (said he). 'It sounds like a loud rapping at the door'-- (replied my Mother). 'It does indeed.' (cried I.) 'I am of your opinion (said my Father) it certainly does appear to proceed from some uncommon violence exerted against our unoffending door.' 'Yes (exclaimed I) I cannot help thinking it must be somebody who knocks for admittance.'¹⁶

Though no one would say that this passage is strongly humorous, still it shows the author's early concern in her work with satire. This would seem to indicate that had Jane Austen intended to include more humor in The Watsons, it would have been present in this early draft. We must conclude then, that she was not saturated enough in her characters and their actions to enable her to create in them the intellectual humor and interest that she successfully created in the work that pleased her critical standards.

¹⁶Austen, Love and Freindship and other Early Works (N.C., 1922), p. 8.

Unlike The Watsons, Plan of a Novel was never developed beyond a mere four page sketch. It seems indeed to have been "destined to laugh out of existence the idle vapourings of romance."¹⁷ But there is an evident weakness in this plan when one looks for the Austen intellectual power, especially in her ability to work with and successfully create a story about some rather ordinary people involved in uneventful things; the humor is on the extreme, not delicate, and she had planned a story that, according to our findings in the published novels, reached outside the limits of her ability as a novelist.

In Northanger Abbey Jane Austen had already had delightful fun by showing the contrast between life as represented by the romantics and life as actually observed. But in doing this, she never strayed from her own original humor and creative ability. However, in Plan of a Novel, the humor is extreme and exaggerated; it is not the true Austen intellectual humor. For example, Jane Austen writes that the "heroine was often reduced to support herself and her father by her talents, and work for her bread; continually cheated and defrauded of her hire; worn down to a skeleton, and now and then starved to death."¹⁸ There are some traces of exaggerated humor in Northanger Abbey in incidents like Catherine's discovery of the heavy chest, but these ridiculous, imaginative, and humorous situations existed only in Catherine Morland's naive mind. In Plan of a Novel, the characters were actually to be involved in ridiculous situations just as Jane Austen had involved her characters in Love and Freindship which was written for sheer fun on

¹⁷Johnson, Sanditon, p. ix.

¹⁸Plan of a Novel, p. 5.

the author's part. Certainly, she would never have attempted to publish this exercise in composition. It has interest mainly for its value in tracing the progress of her wit. It may be read with enjoyment, but can hardly be recommended to other than Jane Austen enthusiasts who might be interested in seeing the crudeness of her early humor. It is more in the line of what a much less talented writer might do. This may be seen in the following quotation from Love and Freindship in which the heroine tells of meeting the wife of her husband's friend for the first time:

She was all sensibility and Feeling. We flew into each others arms and after having exchanged vows of mutual Freindship for the rest of our lives, instantly unfolded to each other the most inward secrets of our Hearts.¹⁹

This would hardly be called an intellectual humor, especially not for a talented artist like Jane Austen. But this is the same type humor that her "plan" called for. Moreover, the plan called for perfection in character, as well as lots of adventure for the characters to become involved in. In this respect there is a weakness in intellectual power because Jane Austen had, in her published novels, achieved interest without the use of adventure or unusual characters. Such adventure probably took her outside her limitations as a successful literary artist. In Love and Freindship she had done all these things, but we must not forget that Jane Austen had no desire to publish this work. Like Love and Freindship, Plan of a Novel had characters who were exaggerated both in description and in actions: "He [heroine's father] the most excellent man that can be imagined, perfect in character, temper, and

¹⁹Freindship, p. 15.

manners, without the smallest drawback or peculiarity..²⁰

Perhaps this character could have acted consistently with these descriptions, but it seems hardly likely that Jane Austen could have created much interest with this sort of exaggeration even though the reader may be sure that it was meant to be satire directed at the romantic writers. Miss Austen was certainly capable of writing a successful satirical novel as she proved when she wrote Northanger Abbey. But in this published novel, she showed the inconsistency between life as created by the romantic writers and life in reality. The success of the novel was due to the fact that Jane Austen, while satirizing these writers, also achieved the originality that distinguishes her work from that of other successful literary artists. But Plan of a Novel would not have had these distinguishing characteristics. It was to have an exaggerated humor which cannot be called an intellectual humor when compared with the delicate manner in which Jane Austen had handled it in her published work. Moreover, it was to include a considerable amount of adventure and material setting, both of which the author had excluded from the work that had reached her standards of perfection.

It has already been established that adventure and elaborate material setting in a Jane Austen novel would have been intrusions. Such a background would have blurred the essential quality of her work. But this Plan of a Novel needed a different background to that used in her other work. Apparently she wanted to try something a bit different from what she had been doing, and perhaps she could have

²⁰Plan, p. 3.

successfully written this novel in 1816, though she had not been able to in the late eighteenth century when she wrote Love and Freindship. But it is our purpose to determine whether or not Plan of a Novel could ever have reached the high standards its creator always set for her published novels. With this in mind, it is readily noticeable that the "plan" would have been weak in intellectual humor. Moreover, it would not have shown Jane Austen's intellectual ability to work successfully with uneventful things and a minimum of material setting. When the author spoke of using a large variety of characters and events and of taking her characters all over the country, she was getting beyond the narrow scope she allowed herself in the novels that had pleased her. She did not keep close to common incidents and characters which occupy the daily walks of life, thus showing a weakness in universality.

Jane Austen once said that "it was her desire to create, not to reproduce."²¹ If she had written this novel as she had planned, she would probably never submitted it for publication because it would have been an exaggerated reproduction of the ideas in romantic novels. Few, if any, of the Austen characteristics would have been present in the novel. Without them, we may be sure that the critical writer would have rejected it.

Thus far, we have dealt with an unfinished novel and a mere plan for a novel, and we have found weaknesses not only in saturation and intellectual power on the part of the author, but in technical integration as well. Now we will look at a work which was completed but which Jane Austen did not consider worthy of publication. Lady Susan is

²¹Austen-Leigh, p. 104.

assumed to be a final draft; the manuscript is almost free from corrections.²² Nevertheless, the work is very weak in plot and character saturation; and in intellectual power, there is a weakness in humor. Moreover, the work lacks universality. Needless to say, these weaknesses automatically mean lack of interest, another intellectual ability that Jane Austen always achieved before she was satisfied with her work.

The most noticeable weakness is caused by a lack of intellectual humor, especially in the form of general comments. The fault lies in the form she used; the letter form did not permit her to make her own humorous evaluative remarks and comments. Certainly, this story does not lack satire; it is based on the absurdities and inconsistencies of a cruel, heartless, and villainous woman, but the satire has a savage tone instead of the well known Austen delicacy. For instance, Lady Susan spoke of her well behaved daughter as the torment of her life. She flirted with her daughter's friends; she kept company with her best friends' husbands; and she placed her daughter in school only to get rid of her. In short, Lady Susan was an unscrupulous woman without honor or integrity. Jane Austen had created a somewhat similar character in Lady Catherine in Pride and Prejudice. But Lady Catherine was not wholly bad; she had been kind to Mr. Collins and his wife, and she had been kind in a reserved manner to Elizabeth Bennett when the latter visited in the Collins home. Lady Catherine had a lot to lose by the marriage of her nephew to Elizabeth. It seemed natural for her to lose her temper when she talked with Elizabeth about the marriage. However, the young

²²Johnson, Sanditon, p. xii.

people had not been married long before Lady Catherine began to associate with them. Jane Austen had delicately satirized Lady Catherine's absurdities, and she successfully integrated the humorous situation with the story. We do not hate Lady Catherine; we only laugh at her. But Lady Susan is a heartless woman, and Jane Austen attacks her in a different manner; without the delicacy in her humor, Jane Austen is not at her best. Moreover, the delicate satire that Jane Austen writes always shows people and experience as everyone knows them, thus achieving universality in her work. But the savage satire like that used in Lady Susan does not suggest experience as everyone knows it; everyone does not know a Lady Susan!

A weakness in humor usually meant a weakness in character in a Jane Austen work. At any rate, there is little evidence in this work that she was fully saturated in her characters. It is often by means of some humorous evaluative comment as well as a description that she achieves intensity of vision in character. Lady Susan is not without actions and speeches that are character revealing. When she writes: "I really have a regard for him; [her brother] he is so easily imposed upon,"²³ we have indeed some insight into her character. In fact, Jane Austen seems to be saturated in the character of Lady Susan; she effectively has her act and speak consistently throughout. But the weakness lies in the other characters; they are too flat for a Jane Austen novel. They seem to exist only for the purpose of bringing out the various vices united in Lady Susan. The other characters had the delicacy not to write so much, if anything, about themselves, and too few characters are involved to give

²³Lady Susan, p. 156.

insight into each other's lives. We do have Lady Susan's opinions on everyone, but we cannot learn anything of value from a woman like her. As a result, the characters in Lady Susan, other than Lady Susan herself, lack the depth and dimension that we usually get in the Jane Austen characters.

Without saturation in character, it is hardly surprising that the writer did not achieve plot saturation. It is through action that we learn most about characters. In the letter form, the only way we can know the action is by the characters relating it to someone else. We cannot learn much from Lady Susan, and the only other correspondents are Mrs. Vernon and her mother-in-law. It is mostly through the former that action is revealed, but the same problem exists here as does with the characterization. Mrs. Vernon's purpose in the story is to relate the actions of Lady Susan. It was probably not the writer's design to create action or characters other than that of Lady Susan; she writes at the end of the work that it must already have been evident that Mr. Vernon existed only to do whatever might be required of him,²⁴ and the same remark might well apply to the majority of the characters. We do not wish to criticize Jane Austen for not doing something she did not intend to do; we simply want to concern ourselves with determining what her works lose when they do not reach the standards she set for her published work.

Without saturation in character and action, and without delicate humor, Lady Susan lacks originality and interest, an intellectual ability the author had always achieved in her accepted work. When she

²⁴Ibid., p. 221.

created a villain (Lady Susan) perhaps she realized that she was reaching for something outside her ability to handle successfully in a novel. At any rate, she never attempted it again, and she never desired that Lady Susan be published. We have already seen that this was one of her greatest intellectual gifts: the power to know her own abilities and to stay within their limits. But perhaps it was only by experience that she learned what she could and could not do. Apparently she was not satisfied with the results of this novel in which she attempted to be successful with the letter form. We have seen some of the reasons for her dissatisfaction; it lacked the intellectual humor and interest, and it lacked saturation in character and plot. Moreover, the letter form, the villain of the piece, and the savage satire were things that Jane Austen must have decided were not in her power to handle effectively.

Now we have seen the weakness in a plan for a novel, an unfinished novel and a finished but unpublished one. Our next concern is with a cancelled chapter from Persuasion, a chapter that had been rewritten, corrected, and revised, and was ready for publication when the author suddenly cancelled it writing two completely different ones in its place. It is from this chapter that we should be able to see without a doubt the extent of Jane Austen's harsh self-criticism. When she cancelled this chapter, she proved how deeply saturated she really was in her work. The purpose in this chapter had been to bring Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth to an understanding; it was an event that required careful thought and planning that only a novelist who was truly saturated in the work could have handled effectively. The difficulty in creating the scene lay in the fact that Anne and the Captain's strong attachment for each other had heretofore been a secret even to each other. In a Jane

Austen novel, the long deferred understanding could not be an event of passionate outbursts. The incident must be created so that it inevitably grew out of preceding ones. Looking at the chapter as if it were still a part of the novel, it is difficult to understand why she did not like it, but upon comparing it with the replacement, it is readily noticeable that the contrivances of the cancelled chapter for bringing the two young people together are a bit crude.

In the cancelled chapter, Anne's meeting Admiral Croft in the street seemed natural because she had to pass his house on her walk home from her friend's house. It seemed natural too, that Admiral Croft think Anne was calling on Mrs. Croft since he knew of no other friends the girl had in that neighborhood. When Anne explained that she had not planned to call on Mrs. Croft and that it would inconvenience his wife at such a time anyway, the Admiral insisted because, true to his nature, he didn't really hear what Anne was saying. Too, he wanted to learn the truth about the rumor that was going around Bath concerning Anne and Mr. Elliot. This was a matter of great importance to Admiral Croft, because the truth of such a rumor meant that he would need to vacate his home in Kellynch. Captain Wentworth, the Admiral's brother-in-law, was in the drawing room when Anne was invited in, but the Admiral thought nothing of bringing the two people together. As far as he knew, they simply knew each other casually, so there was no reason why they should not be left alone a few minutes while Anne waited on Mrs. Croft. But it was a most awkward situation for both Anne and Captain Wentworth, the more so because the Admiral had asked his brother to confront Anne with the question of her engagement to Mr. Elliot. Wentworth agreed to do this only because there was no getting around Admiral Croft unless of course the Captain informed him of what

had existed between himself and Anne. Rather than volunteer this information, Captain Wentworth agreed to ask Anne. The latter denied that there was any truth in the rumor. The denial brought elation to Captain Wentworth who immediately began to hope that Anne still loved him.

It is doubtful that many writers would have felt anything but pride at having written this ending to the story. But Jane Austen felt that it could be improved upon, that the incident could be brought about in a much more effective manner; and in two masterly written chapters, she arranged for a large group of friends and relatives to arrive in Bath, bringing "drama and emphasis to the appropriately quiet"²⁵ and long awaited understanding between Anne and Captain Wentworth.

A much more intense vision of plot and character on the part of the author is evident in the two chapters that replaced the cancelled one. The circumstances that brought the two together are much more effective. Many incidents led up to the understanding so that it was almost inevitable to the reader when it did come about. In comparison, in the cancelled chapter, the incident was as sudden to the reader as it was to those concerned, because there had been little to suggest such a meeting between the two. In the new version, the first incident to lead directly to the important scene was that of the arrival in Bath of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Musgrove, Captain Harville, Mrs. Musgrove (Charles' mother), and Henrietta Musgrove. All were mutual friends of Anne and Captain Wentworth. As usual, Jane Austen's deep saturation in her plot and characters enabled her to see them in their entirety, thus creating for her readers a feeling of serenity that only a well

²⁵Johnson, Sanditon, p. xi.

organized, well integrated plot can offer. For instance, the Musgrove party's arrival in Bath was of untold importance in bringing the story to its end, but the author dared not allow the incident occur simply on the grounds that any family was likely to come to Bath to visit, relax, or shop. The scheme had begun when Captain Harville spoke of the necessity of making a business trip to Bath. Charles Musgrove, out of courtesy for his guest, offered to make the trip with him. True to her nature, Mrs. Charles Musgrove could not bear to be left behind. Moreover, her father and two sisters were then in Bath. Either the men must cancel the trip or take Mary with them. Rather than take her without any other women along, the trip might have been cancelled had not Mrs. Musgrove decided she would like to call on some old friends in Bath. Too, it was a splendid opportunity to shop for Henrietta's wedding clothes.

It was a combination of all these things that brought the group to Bath, an incident which would inevitably bring the hero and heroine in company together since all were mutual friends. And it was a plan that would allow Jane Austen the advantage of bringing their understanding about gradually instead of suddenly as she had done in the cancelled chapter. After all, it was not likely that a second meeting could be satisfactorily created at the home of Admiral Croft. Therefore, the first incident had to take care of everything. But in the new version, the "arrival of their common friends must be soon bringing them together again,"²⁶ and the inevitable understanding between the two was summed up in Anne's words when she said: "Surely, if there be constant attachment on each side [and the reader knows there is] our hearts must understand

²⁶Persuasion, p. 1344.

each other ere long."²⁷ As Anne pointed out, they were not boy and girl, misled by every triviality, and playing with their own happiness.

Once, when Anne was late calling on the Musgroves and Harvilles, she found Mary and Henrietta gone for a walk, Mrs. Musgrove and Mrs. Croft engaged in a conversation about Henrietta's engagement, and Captain Wentworth engrossed in writing a letter for Harville. The latter, who was the only one not occupied at the time, began talking to Anne about Captain Benwick to whom Captain Wentworth was writing. Anne was told by Harville that Captain Benwick had not waited a proper length of time since the death of his beloved before becoming engaged to the Musgrove girl. In reply, Anne said that such "would not be the nature of any woman who loved."²⁸ This was truly what Anne felt, and in her own case, knew to be true. Captain Harville playfully argued with Anne, but she remained firm in her belief, pointing out that men have their "professions, pursuits, business of some sort, to take you into the world immediately, and continual occupation and change soon weaken impressions."²⁹ Captain Wentworth, supposedly engrossed in his letter, had heard the conversation, hoped that he had been Anne's desire all the while, and wrote to her instead of Captain Benwick. After a few other conflicts with the family and friends, the couple finally professed their concern for each other. But it was not until after all these incidents, conversation and the like that Jane Austen was pleased with

²⁷Ibid., p. 1345.

²⁸Ibid., p. 1351.

²⁹Ibid., p. 1352.

the manner in which she brought them together. Certainly , the contrivances of the cancelled chapter were comparatively crude, but may still be recognized as a "charming example of Jane Austen's best, most finely polished work,"³⁰ and a work that many writers surely would have been pleased to have written..

Unlike the unpublished works we have already worked with, Sanditon was in the process of creation when Jane Austen died. R. Brimley Johnson calls it "the beginning of a rough sketch which may almost be described as shorthand notes of a tale for which all details, possibly even the conclusion or main thread of the plot"³¹ had not been determined. "Miss Austen was merely jotting down ideas for characters and scenes as they came into her mind without a thought for sequence or arrangement."³² We cannot be sure whether or not she would have finished the novel or whether she would have offered the finished novel for publication. Nevertheless, it is of interest for our purposes, to treat this fragment in the same manner that we have treated the others, thus learning what qualities Jane Austen did not achieve in a first rough sketch of her work.

As far as the author goes, she does achieve intensity of vision in plot in that every incident grows out of a preceding one. For instance, the story begins with the overturning of the Parker's carriage in which Mr. Parker suffered a sprained ankle. This incident introduced the heroine, Charlette Heywood, to the story. Her parents offered their

³⁰Johnson, Sanditon, p. xi.

³¹Ibid., p. x.

³²Ibid.

services to the Parkers, nursing Mr. Parker back to health, and treating both him and his wife with utmost kindness. Charlotte, the Heywood's oldest daughter, who had been particularly useful and obliging to the Parkers, was invited to return with them to Sanditon. Mr. Parker's main concern in life was to enlarge and popularize Sanditon, a new settlement near the seacoast. The purpose of the trip in which the accident occurred was to find a medical doctor for the new town. He was not successful in finding the doctor, but he did succeed in persuading the Heywoods to send everyone they encountered to Sanditon. To Mr. Parker was returning to the doted-upon Sanditon with at least one more inhabitant.

It was this same desire of Mr. Parker's that brought his sisters and brother into the action, each one of which was very important to the development of the plot. It was in this manner that Jane Austen tightened her plot so that every incident was integrated with the entire action. However, in this fragment, we notice an undesirable and ineffective break in the action when the author suddenly steps in to describe some incident. It is a Jane Austen characteristic to speak in her own voice occasionally, but in the published novels, her comments were so well modulated with ideas and action in the story that we are hardly conscious of the author's having stepped in. But in Sanditon for example, when Charlotte had been pleased with Sir Edward's attentions, Jane Austen, without necessity to the story, says: "I make no apologies for my Heroine's vanity. If there are young ladies in the world at her time of Life more dull of Fancy and more Careless of

pleasing, I know them not, and never wish to know them."³³ This sentence calls attention to the author, thus breaking the readers' involvement in the flow of the story. It is doubtful, however, that Jane Austen would have published Sanditon before she had improved or cancelled such intrusions as this. Perhaps she always wrote these straightforward comments in her first drafts to remind her of what she must later dramatize.³⁴

With this exception, Jane Austen did achieve plot saturation as far as she takes the plot. The question arises, however, as to whether or not she could have been fully saturated in the action as a whole, because what she had already created seems inevitably to be leading to tragedy, something she had always avoided, seemingly due to its being outside her creative ability as well as its tendency to go against her taste for common sense and reasoning in everything. As in Lady Susan, Sanditon had that degree of savagery, or at least roughness in the satire. This was especially true of the hypochondriac brother and sisters, the bully Denham, and the wicked Sir Edward.³⁵ This amounts to caricature to say the least, a defect which would never have existed had Jane Austen been fully saturated in her characters. Lack of saturation probably brought about this intellectual weakness in humor which, in turn, meant a less interesting work, an ever present intellectual ability in Jane Austen's published work. The difference in the humor may be seen in two satirical situations involving Lady Denham. The first one is seen in her comment

³³Sanditon, p. 42.

³⁴Marvin Mudrick, Jane Austen (Princeton, 1952), p. 242.

³⁵Chapman, Facts, p. 208

to Charlette in which she attempts to impress the latter with her good qualities:

'And when he [her husband] died, I gave Sir Edward his Gold watch!' She said this with a look at her Companion which implied its right to produce a great Impression, and seeing no rapturous astonishment in Charlette's countenance, added quickly: 'He did not bequeath it to his Nephew, my dear. It was no bequest. It was not in the will. He only told me and that but once, that he should wish his Nephew to have his watch; but it need not have been binding if I had not chose it.'³⁶

A degree of harshness prevails in this satire that does not exist in the true delicate satire that Jane Austen is famous for. The fragment does contain some of her intellectual humor though. For instance, when the Parkers met Lady Denham and Clara while all were taking a walk, they asked her and her companion to return home with them for tea. Lady Denham answered that she would not have them hurry their tea on her account, that "my early hours are not to put my neighbours to inconvenience. No, No, Miss Clara and I will get back to our own Tea. We came out with no other Thought."³⁷ But Lady Denham went to the Parker home, took possession of the drawing-room, and seemed not to hear a word of Mrs. Parker's ordering tea! This is an example of the delicate manner in which Jane Austen handled the satire in her published work. A lack of it or an exaggerated style of it often accompanies a weakness in other elements in her work.

Jane Austen treats the material setting in Sanditon much more fully than she had ever done in any of her published novels. She shows evidence of her saturation in the setting, and though it receives more attention than usual, it is not more effective than that

³⁶Sanditon, p. 47.

³⁷Ibid., p. 38.

in the finished novels. In this story, as in Northanger Abbey, there was more need for an atmosphere that a descriptive setting could offer. Like Catherine Morland in Northanger Abbey, Sir Edward's fancy had been overcome by the impassioned, sentimental novels that it was his business to read. But Sir Edward's character had been influenced by the novels more than had Catherine's. Jane Austen created in Sir Edward a man of romantic ideas and sentiment. This, along with a main setting of a resort town along the seashore, would call for a more careful accounting of material circumstances than the author had been used to. By the time she had made her readers aware of the sea breezes and its freshness, in order to balance the elements of the novel, it was not the uncomplicated novel that she was so capable of writing.

In comparison with the published works, Sanditon shows a weakness in plot saturation (at least, in the plot as a whole), as well as a weakness in intellectual humor. We found also that Jane Austen was attempting something she had never before achieved in her published works; she was much less the controlling artist in this fragment in that she was concerned with topography, romantic feelings, sex, and tragedy. Until now, these things had been omitted from her work, except of course, in a few of the other fragments, which even in them, we found did not satisfy her taste. Before Sanditon, she had described surroundings with little attention, had treated sex with a quarantining moralism, and she had worked with a few domestic affairs with little, if any, concern with tragedy.

We do not want to criticize Jane Austen for attempting something different. Perhaps she felt that she had carried her type novel as far as she could, and that she must do something else if she were to

write more novels. In Sanditon, she resists the "conventional pressure" and the "moral imperative in effect to which in her published novels she has always yielded."³⁸ Judging from the other fragments and unpublished work however, it is doubtful that Jane Austen would ever have been satisfied with Sanditon. We have seen that in every unpublished work, there is a weakness or weaknesses in her saturation, intellectual power, and/or universality. These same weaknesses in Sanditon would probably have caused her to place it on the shelf as she had done the others.

No attention has been given to differences observed in style because the publishers have corrected, by means of insertion, the sentences in which clarity is not achieved. We may be sure that Plan of a Novel and Sanditon, which were merely hurried sketches, had signs of carelessness and haste. But with Jane Austen's "natural aptitude for expression,"³⁹ she often attained that lucid style even in these short sketches.

The Watsons and Lady Susan had received more attention from Jane Austen than had the preceding unpublished work. In The Watsons we still find some broken sentences, but this is probably due to lack of revision. Lady Susan and the cancelled chapter of Persuasion have the same clear style that is present in the published work. Lack of clarity in style then, only meant that Jane Austen had not yet revised the work.

We may conclude that it was because of her failure to achieve, in these unpublished works, the quality that she had always insisted upon

³⁸Mudrick, p. 242.

³⁹Johnson, Sanditon, p. x.

in her published work, that Jane Austen rejected them. In The Watsons, she lacked saturation in plot and character, and she showed a weakness in intellectual humor; in Plan of a Novel, she had planned to create exaggerated characters and events which would have shown a weakness in her intellectual ability to work successfully within a world of common sense and reason, without exaggeration or affectation; Lady Susan lacked plot and character saturation as well as intellectual humor and universality; and Sanditon showed a weakness in plot saturation and intellectual humor. The cancelled chapter of Persuasion was not weak or lacking in anything especially until it was compared with the new version that took its place. Jane Austen's method of bringing the story to an end was comparatively crude in the cancelled chapter.

CONCLUSION

Jane Austen's standard of perfection was a strict one, but it is evident that she always insisted upon achieving it before she was willing to present her work for publication. It is in keeping with her work and character that there should be no decline, that all should be good. Though she achieved the same quality in all of her published works, each one is stamped with its own individuality.

Some of the novels are preferred by one, some by another; some are stronger in one point, some in another, but not one can justly be called inferior. Had any one lacked the quality that the others had, Jane Austen would not have allowed it to be published. The proof of this is found in a comparison of their quality with that in her rejected work. Each unfinished, unpublished, or cancelled part of her work lacked one or more of the qualities that were found to be always present in the six published novels.

It is true, perhaps, that even these rejected works might well be joyfully claimed by a novelist who was less saturated in her materials, or one who lacked outstanding intellectual ability, or a less critical novelist. But because of her insistence on perfection and her real devotion to her work, she spent long, patient, and delighted hours of labor in writing the published novels, and she showed clearly her perception of weaknesses in some of her work when she refused to publish it.

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