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JANE AUSTEN, HENRY JAMES, AND THE FAMILY ROMANCE

The University of Oklahoma

PH.D.

1980

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

JANE AUSTEN, HENRY JAMES,

AND THE FAMILY ROMANCE

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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Norman, Oklahoma

1980

JANE AUSTEN, HENRY JAMES,
AND THE FAMILY ROMANCE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to many people for helping with this work: to my colleagues in the Oklahoma Writing Project who listened to various portions and who believed--sometimes against all the evidence--that I would someday finish. And to the three members of my committee who obligingly read and wisely advised: Professors Rudolph Bambas, Herbert Richek and Ronald Schleifer.

I am especially grateful to my two directors. Professor David French first encouraged this study, and all the way through he gave unsparingly of his time, protecting me, as much as anyone could, against my own mistakes. As for Professor Victor Elconin, he is the one I wrote this for, his approval the best reward for having done it.

Last of all, Jess, Colin and Doug. They have given love and encouragement and patience, enduring a sporadic family life and never, never--well, hardly ever--complaining. Now if they will just forget all those promises I made for "When I finish my dissertation. . ."

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JANE AUSTEN, HENRY JAMES,
AND THE FAMILY ROMANCE

INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago I first encountered Henry James, moving in a few weeks from the youthful gaiety of The American through the questions and crisis of The Portrait of a Lady, reaching finally the calm reconciliation of The Ambassadors. As I read, there echoed at the back of my mind an old favorite, Jane Austen. In her books, from Northanger Abbey through Mansfield Park and Persuasion, I had traced that same path, guided always by the same wise, ironic voice.

At first I assumed direct influence. How, otherwise, could two writers be so much alike? But when I looked for the scholarship which compares Austen and James, I found it limited, consisting almost entirely of brief suggestions about what could be done. Even more surprising, I learned that James's own comments on Austen deny any influence at all, or even similarity. I was curious enough to investigate the matter more thoroughly, and this study is the result.

I still suspect James was influenced by Austen, if only unconsciously, but I have concluded that this influence

would be impossible to prove. Perhaps their similarity lies merely in their perfection of a common tradition: F. R. Leavis thought so, placing Austen first in a line of great English novelists, including James. What I find more useful now than showing direct influence is to compare two great novelists--uncommonly alike, except that one wrote at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the other at its close--and to see reflected in their work the changes which that period made in our world.

In the following pages, then, I first try to establish the similarities. Chapter One deals with these in three ways: with James's opinions on Austen, with the five critics who have seen some of the same likeness that I see, and finally with the many critics who have recognized slight areas of similarity. I include this last group because, although the resemblance found by each critic alone is unimpressive, all of them together imply, I believe, a significance larger than the sum of their parts.

In Chapter Two I compare Austen's Pride and Prejudice with James's "An International Episode" in order to illustrate, in a restricted area, the many resemblances that I see in James's and Austen's work as a whole. Using these two works, I try to demonstrate the writers' concern for form, some of the techniques which produce the ironic voice by which we recognize them both, and their use of manners--conventions of speech, of dress, and of social behavior--as a

metaphor to reveal profound truths about their characters and their society. I compare a faulty marriage in each novel and then two remarkably similar scenes, in order to illustrate a common theme: the use of a woman to symbolize the individual, and of the marriage union to represent the individual's adjustment to and reconciliation with society.

The third chapter discusses this story of marriage in the works and lives of James and Austen. Both authors' closest attachments were to parents, brothers, and sisters, and their work focuses largely on family relationships. They also share a preference for one particular story, the Cinderella fairy tale. In Pride and Prejudice Austen writes a rather straightforward version of this story, but in "An International Episode," James presents the variation which can be found throughout most of his work and in an important segment of Austen's. In this variation, the heroine does not marry the romantic prince, but turns instead to a family figure.

To psychologists such as Bruno Bettelheim who see great value in fairy tales, marriage in these stories would symbolically represent the individual's movement from childhood to adulthood. Austen and James, through their variation of a Cinderella who decides to remain within her childhood family, portray the individual who is unable or unwilling to move beyond her childhood refuge into full adult responsibility. In taking for my title Freud's famous phrase, "the

family romance,"¹ I am not giving it his meaning: children's substitution, in fantasy, of one or both parents by more exalted or by humble persons, so that they themselves are imagined as foundlings. Such a meaning is not entirely inappropriate here, since the Cinderella tale is based on this fantasy. I use the term in a broader sense, however, to indicate Austen's and James's turning to their childhood family for the emotional satisfactions more often obtained in marriage and for the reflection, in their use of this story, of the nineteenth century's desire to take similar refuge from the anxieties and demands of the rapidly developing capitalistic society.

Chapter Four compares two books which demonstrate this plot variation, Mansfield Park and The Spoils of Poynton. Here I try to show how James and Austen use setting in a highly symbolic manner to reflect the loss of the eighteenth century's firm, protecting social conventions, which made possible a full public life. Through their incomplete courtships, their rejection of strongly sexual unions, they depict the fragmentation of society during the nineteenth century and the retreat from the anxieties of a new industrial and urban complexity into the intimacy of the family, with women and children cloistered in the home and innocence glorified, often at the expense of confronting life realistically.

This theme is not unique to Austen and James. An important part of Austen's artistic heritage is the novel of

Richardson and the eighteenth century's anti-jacobin novel, which was a conservative reaction in England against the turmoil of the French Revolution.² Both these earlier forms depict the individual's uneasy position during the transition from a pre-industrial society--in which each person had a secure place in a familiar neighborhood and within a strong religious framework--to the modern world where social and geographic mobility produce uncertainty and estrangement. Working during the early nineteenth century when society's pressures grew rapidly, Austen used her powerful representation of family attachments to make the theme of sanctuary especially significant.

James's generation saw the great popularity of Barrie's Peter Pan, the drama of a boy who decides never to grow up. But it was American literature which especially responded to the desire for a family haven. Leslie Fiedler, for example, believes the rejection of adult sexuality he finds throughout American novels to be an unconscious rejection of society's values.³ Characters in these books, he contends, do not choose to form new families, but return instead to an earlier time, an idyll of childhood.

In the twentieth-century American fiction which is perhaps closest in tone and subject to James, that of Edith Wharton, the theme which arises with such power in Austen and intensifies in James is carried even farther. A recurring pattern in Wharton's later fiction, according to Judith Fryer,

is "normal family relationships perverted by incestuous attractions, particularly between older and younger generations." I believe that in Wharton's work, as in that of Austen and James, this deeper retreat into family relations symbolically indicates the need to escape from a malignant society. For, according to Fryer, when Wharton depicts an incestuous relationship, it is "no aberration at all: it is Wharton's message that the world of the drawing room was suffocating, perverted, destructive. It created childish, stunted men and women; it stifled individual growth."⁴

It is easy to assume that Austen's and James's depiction of this flight into the family indicates their strong conservative position. Certainly both respected society's attempt to quell the barbarian in human nature and thus admired the value of custom. Too, the strong family affection in the backgrounds of both writers attracted them to the safety and protection offered by the familiar and the long-established in our lives. Thus Alistair Duckworth can see Austen's heroines as representing the individual who confronts a hostile society, their expulsion from the family reenacting

the journey from the corporate life of a traditional society. . . . into a modern capitalistic world in which competitiveness and individualism have separated men from a society of enclosure and support.⁵

To Duckworth, the family and the state are Austen's metonyms

for traditional society, and thus Mansfield Park is not the countertruth many critics consider it, but the core of Austen, since she is essentially conservative: "The typical Austen plot may move in the direction of isolation and subjectivism, but in the end there is a rapprochement between self and society."⁶

Marilyn Butler would agree with the judgment of Austen as a conservative who condemns the individual's rebellion against society. Butler is typical of readers who place Austen entirely on one side of the equation established in the title of Sense and Sensibility. For she contends that the novelist was a thoroughgoing apostle of common sense and reason, condemning sensibility unequivocally, equating it with "individualism, or the worship of the self,"⁷ a liberal attitude which became a threat especially in the wake of the French Revolution. But other critics see Austen entirely on the opposite side, as a proponent of sensibility. Christopher Gillie, for instance, casts her as a follower of the eighteenth-century philosopher, Shaftesbury, from whose ideas the sentimental movement grew.⁸ Such mutually exclusive readings by careful readers lead one to believe that both these views are present in Austen. Perhaps she was, as some believe, balanced between the two sides of passion and reason, left and right.⁹

It seems more probable to me, however, that she was as still other readers see her, profoundly ambivalent. Tony

Tanner, for example, thinks Marianne in Sense and Sensibility is an early Catherine Earnshaw or Maggie Tulliver and that Austen lacked the courage to investigate the fate of passion existing in society.¹⁰ Joan Rees calls Marianne "too persuasive a protagonist, like Milton's Satan."¹¹ And to Andrew Wright,

What the book most significantly illustrates is that both sense and sensibility are desirable, indeed necessary, for a whole life: but they are mutually exclusive. . . . the not insubstantial theme of the book is that the claims of sense and sensibility are irreconcilable.¹²

This last view best explains the novel's inconsistency of tone, which has always troubled readers because it switches from the brilliant opening comedy to the tragedy of Marianne, occupying the largest part of the book, and then back at the end to light-hearted satire.¹³ Austen's ambivalence also explains readers' uncertain reaction to the plot and to most of the characters, resulting, as will be clearer in the discussion of Mansfield Park in Chapter Four, in the frequent failure to sympathize with the marriages in the novel.

Thus Sense and Sensibility provides an early example of the problems Austen faced in reconciling self and society. She tried hard to write a denunciation of the rebel, but, in the most moving and powerful parts of the novel, she ended up with a spirited defense of such a person. The conclusion is typical of the ironist: one should not rebel because such acts tear the delicate texture of our society; but whoever

does not rebel stands a good chance of being overwhelmed and devoured by that society. It is, if we substitute "society" for "parents," the same equivocal advice offered at the close of Northanger Abbey: "I leave it to be settled, by whomsoever it may concern, whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience."

A strong indication of Austen's ambivalent position is the symbolic scheme which I see emerging in her work. It is by the marriage suitor that she represents the larger community. And the heroine's integration into society is represented by her marriage to him. My scheme differs in important ways from that of Duckworth. Whereas he believes Austen uses the family to symbolize society, I think it is the marriage suitor she uses in this way. And to me the heroine's integration into society is represented not, as Duckworth would contend, by her return to the family, but by her marriage to this suitor. Thus Duckworth believes the retreat is a desirable event, symbolizing the return to Eden from a hostile outside world. To me, Austen is ambivalent toward this retreat. Sometimes she views it as desirable, at other times necessary but finally constrictive, just as one might view maturity itself as a mixed blessing, conferring powerful rights but also producing painful responsibilities and difficult realities to be faced. It follows that Duckworth views Austen as a conservative, while I see her as ambivalent in

her attitude toward society.

Always it is marriage or its failure which is most significant in both Austen and James. And marriage has the same meaning in their work that Fiedler sees for it in all American fiction:

Marriage stands traditionally not only for a reconciliation with the divided self, a truce between head and heart, but also for a compromise with society, an acceptance of responsibility and drudgery and dullness.¹⁴

In Pride and Prejudice, Darcy symbolizes a traditional culture, one which is infused with fresh life by Elizabeth, the individual. But later, in Henry Crawford, Austen depicts a new order which is selfish and greedy, threatening to engulf the individual. In Henry's opposite, Edmund, Austen portrays the traditional society so turned inward that it cannot be revived with new ideas and customs, and is thus doomed to sterility and eventual extinction. This ingrown community becomes, in its way, as repressive as the new society from which the heroine flees, but at least it offers a refuge. Flawed though the world of Mansfield Park is, it represents the best hope for Fanny. The outside world of London has become too terrifying for survival. Thus it is only Austen's two early novels, Northanger Abbey and Pride and Prejudice, that depict a rapprochement between the individual and the larger world.

In Emma, Austen continues to recognize the dominance

of the parent. Emma and Knightley must, even after marriage, live with her father, rather than moving to Knightley's estate. Knightley also remains a strong father figure himself. It is probably for this reason that, in spite of his attractiveness, he often fails to excite women readers, as I suggest in Chapter Three. Many critics--men and women--see the novel portraying a relationship not between lovers but between father and daughter. Perhaps Edmund Wilson was the first to do so, describing Knightley as a "substitute father" for Emma.¹⁵ To still others, Emma's marriage is a constriction or diminishment. Angus Wilson, for instance, asserts that "Emma hates Hartfield, where nevertheless all her affections lie, all her limited life has been spent. . . . It is a sad ending, a depressing compromise."¹⁶ And Mark Schorer describes the twilight feel of the novel.¹⁷

Yet the tone of Emma is totally different from that of Mansfield Park. This difference can be attributed, in part, to the sexual vitality of Knightley, who, when he and Emma dance at the end, as he considers whether they are "Brother and sister?" declares, "No, indeed!" The knowledge that the couple will eventually move to his estate of Donwell Abbey inspires a hope that Emma, with her wit and intelligence and energy, will ultimately assume that equal partnership to which meek Fanny cannot aspire. Perhaps Emma is the reverse side of Mansfield Park: Fanny's story bleakly details the necessity and the resulting misery of retiring into family

rather than growing up; Emma shows us the happy side of the pattern. Trilling said the novel was never meant to be realistic, that it is a "pastoral idyll," representing "the idea of innocence in a sensuous way."¹⁸ In it, Austen allows her heroine to retain the protection of a father a little longer, and also offers the possibility that she will eventually grow up.

Anne Elliot does. Through her marriage with Wentworth, she renounces family, father, even her physical home. She dismisses forever the nostalgic dream, entertained while she briefly considers marriage to her cousin, of someday filling her mother's place, Lady Elliot of Kellynch Hall. But even though she grows up and accepts full adult responsibility, Anne does not achieve what Elizabeth Bennet could, retaining the best of the old society to form a vital new one. In this last novel, Austen's heroine rejects the old order entirely, forsaking even the land itself to live upon the sea with Wentworth. Though this is no longer the retreat of a child, it is still a retreat from society into a private world, a refusal to participate fully in the larger community. Persuasion is, as Julia Brown says, "the epic of a failed world, or the failure of the self to fulfill itself in the world."¹⁹ Here Austen faces the dilemma of the individual in a frightening nineteenth century, and acknowledges the impossibility of either sanctuary or reconciliation. Anne's marriage is achieved, but it is not the union of two people with

the pressing sexual demands of youth. As in the best of James's work, the power of such passion is acknowledged, but only in retrospect.

Perhaps James's only novels to celebrate the retreat into family are the early Watch and Ward, which reads like simple wish fulfillment, and The Europeans, whose sparkling irony reminds many of Austen. In each, a family marriage--with a father figure in one case and a foreign cousin in the other--offers the same satisfying idyll we see in Emma. But Roderick Hudson, The American, "Daisy Miller," and "An International Episode" all depict the individual spirit threatened by a retreat into tradition, and their protagonists all refuse to make the compromise necessary for a full reconciliation of self and society.

James himself fled to Europe from his real family, seeking a richer tradition, the truer family often represented in the fairy tale by godparents, perhaps fulfilling Freud's idea of "family romance." In The Portrait of a Lady, he portrays this search for tradition through Isabel's marriage, with Osmond and Madame Merle representing the parent figures. Here, in one of his largest and most successful books, James first fully explores the sinister implications of such a family refuge. He continues this study in the next novels: The Bostonians promises great unhappiness in marriage for Verena, another childlike figure who will be dominated by her husband; The Princess Casamassima turns the yearning for safety into

tragedy, with Hyacinth unable to reconcile the conflicting demands of his various sets of parents.

In the nineties the heroines--Fleda, Maisie, Nanda--all continue the pursuit of a new family. Fleda's quest ends not only with her own failure, but also with the destruction of the family itself and of the things it has come to value through the centuries. Maisie, in refusing to join the bizarre family composed of her two stepparents, Sir Claude and the young Mrs. Beale, moves to a greater maturity than earlier James heroines. Nanda, in The Awkward Age, is older physically, but seems, like Maisie, to be a child-like observer of her elders. Here the gathering of the cast of characters within the confined drawing room atmosphere suggests the frozen, unyielding nature of the traditional society. At the end, Nanda sets up a household with Mr. Longdon, who had, years before, loved her mother. Margaret Walters observes the depressing significance of such a relationship, remarking of this strange pair that they

disturb and move us because, as they reject society, their strange relationship--father and daughter, mother and child, husband and wife--serves, in its half-sublimated sexuality, its sad but loving sterility, as the book's most complete image of social living.²⁰

In The Ambassadors, James comes to recognize the value of passion and of attachment to an outside life, and he realizes the constriction of innocence, so that growing up becomes necessary. As Strether tells Bilham in the Eden-like

garden of Gloriani, "Live all you can; it's a mistake not to. . . . now I'm old--too old at any rate for what I see. . . . Do what you like so long as you don't make my mistake. For it was a mistake. Live!" (Bk. 5, ch. 2, p. 132) Like Austen in Persuasion, James recognizes the value of passion, if only when its greatest force is past. In The Wings of the Dove, he acknowledges the power of sexual love more fully than ever before, in the bold love scene between Kate and Densher, unprecedented in his fiction. But on the opposing side he balances not merely the equally attractive innocence and purity of Millie, but also all the force of moral right. We feel the equation has not been fairly drawn; the sides do not balance, the conflict is not equal, so that what might have been the greatest tragedy in all American fiction becomes instead a fine and delicately wrought moral fable.

In The Golden Bowl Maggie and her father, devoted to each other even to the exclusion of their married partners, represent to F. W. Dupee "devotees of the private life. . . even addicts of it. . . . they huddle together, even at first shrinking from attendance at London parties. . . . Their being partners in solitude is for the Ververs their distinction, their pathos, and their original sin."²¹ And Dupee decides, "Surely The Golden Bowl is an unsparing picture of the inevitable strain of the private life."²² Stephen Spender sees the Ververs' problem as the need to

invent some new marriage, by which they can divorce themselves from their own inner world of a

marriage between father and daughter, and create a new synthesis, a marriage of the inner with the external world. That was James's own problem.²³

Maggie achieves this new synthesis at the end of the book, but it is a triumph won at the expense of deep pain for all--humiliation for Charlotte, deprivation for Adam of the one thing he loves, and an unbearable sense of loss for Maggie herself. Only the thoroughgoing realist, the Prince, accepts the outcome without regret. He embraces Maggie and tells her, in a situation reminiscent of "Dover Beach," "Everything's terrible, cara--in the heart of man." (Bowl, ch. 41, p. 534)

Throughout their careers, when Austin and James use the Cinderella story and reject it in favor of the marriage to a family member, they are expressing contradictory views within themselves. Like Austen, James was drawn to the life of tradition and custom, and he represented this attraction through a retreat into the family. But also like her, he saw the danger of seeking such a refuge from the real world, so that one never grows and matures, never experiences life. Just as they seek the comfort and lesson of the Cinderella story, so also do they reject it because the entrance into society, which it represents, has become too painful in a world which James and Austen--with their unsparingly realistic outlook--recognized for the place of corruption it had become.

It is inevitable that these two should be among the world's great ironists, for both are disappointed idealists,

hopeful realists. Their very style presents us with comfort and simultaneously withdraws it, creating a tension which is the major source of their powerful and permanent appeal. Their outlook on life is ironic in the largest sense of that word. Theirs is not simple irony, which says one thing and means another, but a means of embracing both meanings, allowing, at the same time, the claims of opposite sides, admitting, on an equal level, attitudes which differ or even conflict. Fittingly, their final response to the world is as balanced as Austen's syntax, as complex and comprehensive as James's late style.

CHAPTER ONE

AUSTEN AND JAMES: THE CRITICAL BACKGROUND

A writer who treats "marriage as a practical and calculated affair," whose subject is an "amused and aloof observation of . . . society," and who presents "a world of manners and problems of behaviour." A "brilliant and witty observer of life" who always maintains "a certain distance." A writer who uses "verbal irony, satire, paradox," "maxims," "the epigrammatic style," who has always a "genius for essential detail." A writer with a "sense of high comedy," who provides "urbane laughter" and is distinguished by a "high, dry, humorous light." Last, a writer whose "exuberant joy of creation . . . [and] spontaneous quality of wit," together with "neatness, economy, scenic precision and much good-natured comedy" remind us of "the comic tradition of Moliere."

If we presented this description to most readers and asked which nineteenth-century novelist's work it describes, many would quickly name Jane Austen. Certainly these phrases capture her essential qualities: sparkling wit, detached yet good-humored comment on society and relations between the sexes, pervasive irony and paradox, and a precise, economical style which yet manages to capture delicate nuances of

behavior. But this is not a description of Austen's work. Instead, these are the words Leon Edel¹ uses to characterize the "international period" (1878-1884) of Henry James, who was writing three quarters of a century after Austen.

Edel does not speak of Austen here. Indeed, in all five volumes of his massive James biography, the only reference to her are in quotations from James's own writing. Most James critics share this approach and either ignore Austen or comment on her merely in passing. Cornelia Kelley, for instance, in a book that deals largely with the literary influences on James,² makes almost no mention of Austen. William Veeder, whose announced subject is "the materials that James received from various traditions and the ways that he transformed those materials into great art,"³ buries in midparagraph the information that Austen was one of James's favorite novelists⁴ and makes little connection between her work and his. Other readers, such as Richard Poirier, point out startling likenesses but insist that they are merely superficial.⁵ That these writers on James see little debt owed to Austen is understandable in the light of his own comments on her.

Perhaps his most damaging opinion is "the want of moral illumination on the part of her heroines, who had undoubtedly small and second-rate minds and were perfect little she-Philistines."⁶ But he always saw her as a limited writer. In his review of George Sand he makes the charge, often since

repeated, that Austen shares with other Anglo-Saxon writers a lack of sexual passion:

Miss Austen and Sir Walter Scott, Dickens and Thackeray, Hawthorne and George Eliot, have all represented young people in love with each other; but no one of them has, to the best of my recollection, described anything that can be called a passion--put it into motion before us, and shown us its various paces. . . . few persons would resort to English prose fiction for any information concerning the ardent forces of the heart--for any ideas upon them. It is George Sand's merit that she has given us ideas upon them--that she has enlarged the novel--reader's conception of them and proved herself in all that relates to them an authority.⁷

In his essay on Emerson, James includes Austen among those writers who fail to treat the darker side of life. He explains that Emerson had "no great sense of wrong--a strangely limited one, indeed, for a moralist--no sense of the dark, the foul, the base. There were certain complications in life which he never suspected. . . ." But James is puzzled because even this limitation fails to explain Emerson's "indifference to Cervantes and Miss Austen."⁸

In "The New Novel," James complains that Austen left "much more untold about aspects and manners even of the confined circle in which her muse revolved. Why shouldn't it be argued against her that where her testimony complacently ends the pressure of appetite within us presumes exactly to begin?"⁹ In "The Lesson of Balzac," every instance of Austen's achievement is prefaced by the diminutive: James speaks of her "little touches of human truth, little glimpses of steady

vision, little master-strokes of imagination."¹⁰ In his review of Braddon, he limits Austen's genre to the "novel of domestic tranquility."¹¹

In some of his comments on Austen, James practices what Mary Ellmann calls "phallic criticism," tending "to admit grudgingly to the literary value of works by women, and then to deny that it is consciously attained."¹² In "The Lesson of Balzac," for instance, he patronizes subtly, granting Austen superior intuition to compensate for meager logical or intellectual abilities:

Jane Austen, with all her light felicity, leaves us hardly more curious of her process, or of the experiences in her that fed it, than the brown thrush who tells his story from the garden bough. . . . The key to Jane Austen's fortune with posterity has been in part the extraordinary grace of her facility, in fact of her unconsciousness: as if, at the most, for difficulty, for embarrassment, she sometimes, over her work-basket, her tapestry flowers, in the spare, cool drawing-room of other days, fell a-musing, lapsed too metaphorically, as one may say, into wool-gathering, and her dropped stitches, of these pardonable, of these precious moments, were afterwards picked up. . . .¹³

In "Gustave Flaubert," he includes the whole sex in this "unconscious" category; speaking of the novel being

. . . so preponderantly cultivated among us by women, in other words by a sex ever gracefully, comfortably, enviably unconscious (it would be too much to call them even suspicious) of the requirements of form. . . . For signal examples of what composition, distribution, arrangement can do, of how they intensify the life of a work of art, we have to go elsewhere. . . .¹⁴

Irene Simon is surprised over these judgments:

I have sometimes wondered if James himself, who more than once insisted on how much one would see if only one paid attention, may not have been guilty of inattention in reading Jane Austen. . . . I have an uncomfortable feeling that he hardly realized what this young lady had been at. . . . Could he have written these words if he had realised, as we do, that Jane Austen was not only a consummate artist, but a highly conscious one?¹⁵

James's praise of Austen is always qualified. It is true that he says, in a review of Felix Holt, that George Eliot practices "a kind of writing in which the English tongue has the good fortune to abound--that clever, voluble, bright-colored novel of manners which began with the present century under the auspices of Miss Edgeworth and Miss Austen."¹⁶ But Eliot is also described as "stronger in degree than either of these writers" and is said to bring "to her task a richer mind" since she possesses "a certain masculine comprehensiveness which they lack." (This same early review disparages George Eliot in comparison to the now largely-ignored novelist, Charles Reade, whom James rates as "a distant kinsman of Shakespeare.")

Although James puts Austen in excellent company, "You have only to remember that talents so dissimilar as those of Alexandre Dumas and Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Gustave Flaubert have worked in this field [the novel] with equal glory,"¹⁷ we must remember when reading this that his opinion of Dickens and of Dumas varied considerably from that he held

of Flaubert. We also pause at that word "glory." Does he mean the kind of glory he himself sought, that of the enduring artist, or does he mean the glory conferred by the bookseller and the sometimes blind public?

James says Austen is popular because we have "lost our hearts to her," but he also attributes her fame to

the body of publishers, editors, illustrators, producers of the pleasant twaddle of magazines; who have found their "dear," our dear, everybody's dear, Jane so infinitely to their material purpose, so amenable to pretty reproduction in every variety of what is called tasteful, and in what seemingly proves to be saleable, form.¹⁸

In his Balzac lecture he includes her in that passage which captures so well the spirit of great novelists that we keep it in our minds long after:

Why is it that the life that overflows in Dickens seems to me always to go on in the morning, or in the earliest hours of the afternoon at most, and in a vast apartment that appears to have windows, large uncurtained and rather unwashed windows, on all sides at once? Why is it that in George Eliot the sun sinks forever to the west, and the shadows are long, and the afternoon wanes, and the trees vaguely rustle, and the color of the day is much inclined to yellow? Why is it that in Charlotte Bronte we move through an endless autumn? Why is it that in Jane Austen we sit quite resigned in an arrested spring? Why does Hawthorne give us the afternoon hour later than anyone else?--oh late, late, quite uncannily late, as if it were always winter outside?¹⁹

But perhaps the emphasis rests here not on praise for Austen's masterly recreation of a mood and spirit, of a whole time of life, but on those qualifying words "resigned" and "arrested."

Perhaps her limits are stressed here, her leaving us "re-signed" rather than "satisfied" or "content"; her spring "arrested" rather than "caught" and held in a moment of perfection, "forever warm and still to be enjoy'd, / Forever panting, and forever young." And James focuses only on the springtime in Austen, forgetting the wintry sorrow of Mansfield Park, the autumnal fulfillment of Persuasion.

Nevertheless, James reveals an easy familiarity with her, developed no doubt in his childhood. Veeder tells us that the English eighteenth-century masters "received special attention during young Henry's formative years" because of Thackeray's first lecture tour in 1853.²⁰ And a late diary entry of Alice James displays her warm affection for "Miss Austen." Alice describes a sketch she has received "of Lyme Regis and the veritable Cobb off which dear, sweet Louisa Musgrove jumped." And she offers as the image of two "exceptional friends": "They give forth a sound as unlike that of this tin-pan generation as if they had just stepped out of Miss Austen."²¹ In "The Passionate Pilgrim," when James himself wishes to recreate the placid charm of an earlier English countryside, he paints a "russet town--where surely Miss Austen's heroines, in chariots and curricles, must often have come a-shopping for their sandals and mittens . . ."²²

In his early reviews, Austen comes easily to James's mind when he needs an example or a comparison. For instance, he takes Mrs. Seemuller to task for employing unbelievable

characters, unlike those of Trollope and Austen,²³ and he quickly places M. E. Braddon by saying that Wilkie Collins is to her as Richardson is to Austen. ". . . we date the novel of domestic mystery from the former lady, for the same reason that we date the novel of domestic tranquility from the latter."²⁴

Finally, he respects her. He lists her, along with Shakespeare, Cervantes, Balzac, Fielding, Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, George Meredith and George Eliot as "the fine painters of life."²⁵ He is shocked by Emerson's insensitivity to her (and to Shelley, Aristophanes, Cervantes, Hawthorne, and Dickens), explaining it by deficiencies within the Sage of Concord himself: "The truth is . . . there were certain chords in Emerson that did not vibrate at all."²⁶ Perhaps as he grew older he better recognized her quality. In the Balzac lecture late in his life, he offered her as an example of the way discrimination

does, with all its embarrassments, at last infallibly operate. . . . Practically overlooked for thirty or forty years after her death, she perhaps really stands there for us as the prettiest possible example of that rectification of estimate, brought about by some slow clearance of stupidity, the half-century or so is capable of working round to.²⁷

Still, these words lack the warmth of his praise for George Eliot or Hawthorne, Turgenev or Balzac.

It may be that his attitude can be explained by his early familiarity with Austen, so that he takes her for

granted. Those who come later to our lives are often admired more, since their strengths, being fresh to us, are more easily perceived as such. Whatever the reasons for his failure to recognize her achievement, it is probable that he took little or nothing from her consciously. No doubt they were both influenced by eighteenth-century novelists and playwrights. Certainly both were molded by the Anglo-Saxon moral tradition within which they worked. But perhaps Austen exercised a subtle influence of which James was unaware. Experiencing her novels at an early age, he may have retained an unconscious feeling for her style, wit, strong structural sense, and ironic view of life. It is impossible to say. But when their work is compared, strong resemblances do emerge, and at least three major critics have written of them at some length.

* * *

Virginia Woolf was the first to recognize a fundamental similarity between James and Austen.²⁸ She speculated in 1923 that Austen would have been James's forerunner if she had not died at the age of forty-two, since she was moving steadily in the direction he was later to take: an emphasis less on facts and more on feelings, a broader knowledge of the social world, reliance less on dialogue and more on reflection to reveal her characters, concentration on showing not only what people say but on what they leave unsaid, a view of her

characters more as a group and less as individuals, less frequent but more stringent and severe sarcasm. Woolf did not do more, however, than suggest these directions. In 1948 F. R. Leavis identified Austen as the inaugurator of "the great tradition of English literature," the precursor of George Eliot and Conrad, as well as James, in her "moral intensity." But Leavis never supported his claim, taking Austen's "obvious" influence on James so much for granted that he found it unnecessary to provide any of the quotations which he believed would easily establish James's debt.²⁹ Irene Simon, in a lecture at Kings College in 1961, provided the fullest and most satisfactory discussion of the two novelists. She compared at great length and with considerable insight their use of point of view. Simon went even further than Woolf, claiming not that Austen would have been a forerunner of James, but that, being as concerned with form and technique as he, she actually fulfilled many of the tenets he was later to proclaim.³⁰

Much more recently, John Halperin³¹ has listed several important concerns which he thinks Austen and James share with George Eliot and Meredith: an interest in characters' psychological processes, intense moral preoccupations, often with money, manners as a reflection of morals, use of the Cinderella motif, dramatization rather than narration to preserve the illusion of reality, and economy of composition. His book focuses only on the first of

these matters, and especially on the use these four writers make of the meditation scene to portray the workings of the human mind, and thus to pave the way for Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique. But Halperin believes that in many other areas as well, James is far more indebted to Austen than he ever admitted, that his writing is more "derivative" of her than he was aware. And Norman Page has investigated more thoroughly the tradition that Leavis saw Austen and James both belonging to. Page sees a strong link between the late Austen and the early James, for his novels up to Portrait continually remind us of Austen "by his recurring themes and situations, and even by the language and tone of his dialogue and commentary."³²

* * *

Other recognition of the similarities between these two novelists, though confined to brief points, becomes compelling because of its great frequency throughout the critical literature. Some readers see Austen in one particular James work: in The Europeans,³³ Washington Square,³⁴ The Ambassadors,³⁵ Watch and Ward,³⁶ or The Spoils of Poynton.³⁷ Or Q. D. Leavis finds one Austen novel surprisingly like James: "in technique and subject and prose style and thoughtful inquiries into human relationships, Mansfield Park looks forward to George Eliot and Henry James; so Mansfield Park is the first modern novel in England."³⁸

It is Emma more than any other Austen novel which is singled out as being like James. Oscar Cargill sees bits of it in Roderick Hudson,³⁹ Richard Poirier finds a scene echoed in The Europeans,⁴⁰ Norman Page believes that, "for the present-day reader, Emma and The Ambassadors are closer to each other than either is to most of the novels that fall chronologically between them."⁴¹ Emma's heroine is most often placed beside Isabel Archer:

Although James's method is so much more inward and complex, and the circumstances of her heroine so different, he is doing in The Portrait of a Lady just what Jane Austen did in Emma. In both books we watch a flawed and immature personality revealing her limitations of head and heart by her thoughts and actions; finding herself trapped in a painful situation entirely of her own making; discovering thereby her own egregious self-ignorance, and growing through suffering to a position of maturity.⁴²

And it is in point of view that readers especially compare Emma to The Portrait of a Lady. Page observes that in his preface to the novel, James's account of his method, as placing the center in the young woman's own consciousness, is an incredibly accurate explanation of what Jane Austen is doing in Emma.⁴³

* * *

Point of view is but one of five aspects of style or technique in which Austen and James are often seen as alike. Many readers have noticed that Austen preceded James in the

use of dramatic point of view,⁴⁴ of the central mirror,⁴⁵ and of the adroit alternation between the central consciousness and a spectator's viewpoint. As Irene Simon says of Persuasion, "By sliding into Anne's mind yet maintaining the spectator's viewpoint, Jane Austen invites us to look both ways. . . . As in the case of Maisie [or of Strether], we share her vantage point though we can see things that escape her notice."⁴⁶

A second technique, the advancement of the story by a means other than narrative, is discussed by Philip Grover, who notes that James searched for "a unified language--one in which there is no distinctive break between narration, description, dialogue and interior monologue." Explaining that James used indirect speech in particular to blur the distinction between narrative and dialogue, he attributes this stylistic device to Flaubert's influence but adds that "In English it is found notably in Jane Austen."⁴⁷ Norman Page, who has written extensively on Austen's development of indirect speech,⁴⁸ says that James's novels are like Austen's in that

If we ask what happens in [his] novels, the answer is that people talk; and some of the most momentous "events" are the climaxes of conversation. . . . the real events lie not in action but in the drama of verbal communication. James, like Austen, offers us a world in which the first requirement of a character is that he be articulate. . . .⁴⁹

In an aspect of technique important to him, economy

of composition and firm artistic control, James underestimated Austen, as we have seen. But others have reflected on how completely Austen fulfills his dictates. Katherine Tweedy offers a specific example of Austen's economy:

She can do in the opening chapter of Pride and Prejudice what it takes him the whole first half of The Wings of the Dove to accomplish. In one scene covering two pages she has the tone set, the situation laid out, the story plainly foreshadowed, all the principal characters except one introduced and put in their right relations, two of them brilliantly characterized, and the reader hardly able to wait for chapter two; whereas at the end of Book II in The Wings of the Dove James has finally brought forth half of his situation (or rather one of his two situations) and acquainted us with two characters. . .⁵⁰

And of the novelists' similar control, Simon observes:

If she is open to criticism it seems that it is for too much rather than too little articulation in the structure of her novels. She certainly delighted in symmetry and antithesis; but so did James, whose first step on realising that the story of Maisie contained a "germ" was to see that "for a proper symmetry the second parent should marry too."⁵¹

Another technical consideration, style as revealed in diction and sentence structure, has evoked surprisingly little comparison between Austen and James. Edgar Pelham isolates James's early writing as being most Austen-like: "in its flexibility, its purity, and in the fine ironic edge to which he can temper it at will it suggests the classic strain that Jane Austen inherited from the Addisonian tradition. . . ."⁵² Buitenhuis notices that Washington Square is

"remarkably Austenian in its use of parallelism and balance and in its pervasive precision, irony, and wit."⁵³ An example which Page cites from James's early story, "A Day of Days," is "She was . . . mistress of a very pretty little fortune, and was accounted clever without detriment to her amiability, and amiable without detriment to her wit."⁵⁴ But John Halperin finds this resemblance in James's other work as well. He suggests that readers who have difficulty equating the portentousness and heavy qualifications of James's late style with the crispness and precision of Austen, should try to identify the author of the following:

The attachment, from which against honour, against feeling, against every better interest he had outwardly torn himself, now, when no longer allowable, governed every thought; and the connection, for the sake of which he had, with little scruple, left her sister to misery, was likely to prove a source of unhappiness to himself of a far more incurable nature.⁵⁵

A final aspect of style is especially important in Austen and James: their humor. Poirier says James's comedy can be like Austen's in its use of irony, the contrast between what a passage first states and what is later revealed to be true: "the opening sentence of Pride and Prejudice is no more ironically modified by what follows it than is the assertion here [in the opening of Roderick Hudson] . . ."⁵⁶ And Grigg sees the amusement of What Maisie Knew deriving, like that in an Austen novel, from the narrator's ironic attitude toward the characters.⁵⁷ Although Richard Chase

believes that James's wit is unlike Austen's, "not the epigrammatic wit of Moliere or Congreve or Austen, not the concise witticism, but a more elaborate levity, a mock-serious playing with language," he cannot resist pointing out that James uses the "terse mot" effectively,⁵⁸ especially in The Bostonians, the book containing Miss Birdseye, with whom, James tells us, "Charity began at home and ended nowhere." And Grigg thinks that this very quality of "elaborate levity" is what aligns James with Austen. Quoting Andrew Wright's description of Austen's language as "too heavy for the structure it must support," Grigg reflects:

"Language too heavy for the structure it must support"--a perfect summary of much adverse criticism of James's late style, yet if we speak of comedy this statement may be complimentary. This late style, as it developed between 1895 and 1901, is not simply overblown wordage but is really James' recovery of a vein of comic fiction not often allowed to be his. "Cervantic humour," Lawrence Sterne called it, describing silly and trifling events with the circumstantial pomp of great ones.⁵⁹

Wyllie Sypher identifies James and Austen as two of five writers whom he sees writing "high" comedy, where

. . . laughter is qualified by tolerance and criticism is modulated by a sympathy that comes only from wisdom. Just a few writers of comedy have gained this unflinching but generous perspective on life, which is a victory over our absurdities but a victory won at a cost of humility, and won in a spirit of charity and enlightenment. Besides Shakespeare in, perhaps, The Tempest, one might name Cervantes and Henry James and Jane Austen, or Thomas Mann in his Magic Mountain. . . .⁶⁰

* * *

In addition to these five technical considerations--point of view, dialogue or indirect speech, firm structural control, style, and humor--James and Austen have been observed as similar also in the themes or subject matter which they treat.

Personal relationships are seen as the primary subject. Tweedy says, "Like his, her novels are diagrams of relationships."⁶¹ Page explains that these relationships are always set off by the framework of manners:

Like Jane Austen, James pursues his narrative leisurely but purposefully by presenting a series of formal and semi-formal social occasions--a ball in The American, an engagement-party in Washington Square, visits and interviews conducted with a decorum which seems little more relaxed than in the England of half a century earlier.⁶²

F. R. Leavis points out that in both Austen and James, manners are always intimately bound up with moral interests. Indeed, John Halperin offers as a characteristic of the novel of manners the conviction that manners are a reflection of morals.⁶³ But most critics, while agreeing that morals are at the center of James and Austen, see the moral standard as different in the two writers: supplied in Austen by coherent social values, in James represented by some character or set of characters struggling against the established values of society. Naomi Leibowitz observes,

Pride and Prejudice suggests that human connections are made by the adjustment to firm moral societal poles of conduct; but The Portrait of a Lady, The Wings of the Dove, and The Golden Bowl, carry the weight of the tense struggle of the personal relation against ritual.⁶⁴

Ronald Wallace makes the distinction clear:

In Jane Austen, the ideal standard is usually the existent society of the novel. In Emma, for example, Knightley represents the highest possibility of Highbury society. . . . In James, the norm of moral conduct is rarely present in the society of the novel, waiting only to be discovered by the protagonist. . . . James's comic curve is one that moves toward a creation of value, toward the adoption of a standard of conduct which did not exist within the original society. Strether, for instance, cannot base his action on either Woollett morality or Parisian sophistication; he must create his own moral value.⁶⁵

Austen's and James's development of point of view reflects this shift toward an individual rather than a societal standard of morality. For Elizabeth Drew and John Halperin believe that in portraying how the human mind works, as in the meditation scenes of Emma and Portrait, the novelists establish an interior, rather than exterior, view of reality.

Still another concern that the two share is economic. Tweedy notices, "In Jane Austen money or the lack of it is one of the important figures in the drama. . . . [With James's characters] the question of money--where shall we get it?--is always creeping about in the background."⁶⁶ Page realizes that in both authors, the money is inexorably tied up with marriage:

Marrying and giving in marriage, and the economic implications and consequences of these ever-interesting activities, are as much a preoccupation in James's early fiction as in Austen's novels. Newman in The American is a single man of good fortune in want of a wife; and the fortune-hunter in Washington Square might have given Mr. Elton a few points. A favourite early-Jamesian gambit is to create problems for his characters through inequality of wealth: repeatedly the heroine is loved by a poor man, or some other fiscal hazard is encountered; whilst his early narrators are apt to speak of romance and finance in the same breath, and even to use monetary metaphors in describing the human heart, in a manner that recalls the first page of Mansfield Park and many a similar passage. A heroine of one early story is "twenty-five years of age, beautiful, accomplished and conscious of good investments"; the hero of another is "rich in . . . his little capital of uninvested affections." In conveying such sentiments, Henry James can even be led to imitate Jane Austen's diction and syntax to a degree that verges on pastiche.⁶⁷

The similarity of James and Austen in two other areas has been little noticed. Halperin points out their common use of the Cinderella motif, seeing it especially in Mansfield Park and The Wings of the Dove. And Norman Page mentions that James "has given us a series of 'studies of the female sensibility', of those 'frail vessels'. . . . who are also at the centre of Jane Austen's world."⁶⁸

* * *

Thus, although James himself never acknowledged any influence of Austen on his work, although his chief biographer sees no important link between the two, and although only a few readers--Woolf, F. R. Leavis, Simon, Halperin and

Page--have written of any strong resemblance, James and Austen are, nonetheless, seen as similar by a large number of people. When brought together, their individual comments, brief and merely suggestive if seen alone, make a convincing case. The technical similarities they see are in point of view, artistic control, methods other than narration for advancing the story, style, and an ironic sense of humor. They see as common subjects: personal relations, morality, money and marriage, Cinderella, and the feminine sensibility.

In the chapters to come I will try to develop some of these resemblances more thoroughly, as well to establish one or two which have, I believe, been overlooked. Not that I am arguing a single literary ancestor for James. He is the inheritor of many artistic traditions, the writer who perhaps best weaves together threads of the English, American and Continental novel. As Bradford Booth has said, "In him we see the culmination of all the forces of the last half of the century."⁶⁹

But he also belongs in the tradition of Austen. No doubt one reason his place there is not recognized is this tradition's comic emphasis, while the dark or tragic side of James is seen as most significant. Charles Samuels believes this side of James has been stressed because his critical re-discovery in the 1930's coincided with a time of profound national pessimism: "To a Jacobite, the Depression might have seemed a national enactment of Isabel Archer's personal

drama, in which expansive hopes ironically constrict the future."⁷⁰ If so, we should remind ourselves that although James's work was first produced during periods just as bleak, it yet glows with warmth and genial humor. Edel acknowledges this:

Criticism has long recognized--for all its preoccupation with James's alleged "imagination of disaster"--this his was an extraordinary wit and that comic irony informs much of his writing. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that James's comic sense is comparable to Moliere's, in certain of its finest qualities, and to certain of our own great wits.⁷¹

In Chapter Two which follows, therefore, I will try to establish the resemblance I see in the early James to Austen's ironic wit. It is for several reasons that I put alongside Austen's masterpiece, Pride and Prejudice, only a short work of James, "An International Episode." First of all, this novella only a little longer than "Daisy Miller" is very much like Austen's novel in style, characters, plot, and structure--even, as I hope to show, in the climactic scene. Perhaps it resembles her work in part because it is short. The most humorous sections of James's novels are usually the openings, with the tone deepening as he proceeds. And even short works like "Daisy" often close with tragedy or melodrama; in "Episode" the comic tone remains to the very end, without in any way diminishing the book's achievement.

"Episode" deserves study also because it is an early version of James's great novel, The Portrait of a Lady,

rehearsing the same situation, along with many of the same characters, providing, thereby, an easy initiation into his great international theme.

Still another reason I chose this book is my own great fondness for it. It is vastly underrated, I believe, perhaps because of James's own reaction to it. The British, who had already laughed at Daisy, delightedly praised the first half of "Episode," in which Americans are the primary object of satire; but they grew indignant over the second half, in which the Americans become the heroines, and the English the main butts of humor. An annoyed James wrote to Grace Norton,

You may be interested to know that I hear my little IE has given offence to various people of my acquaintance here. Don't you wonder at it? So long as one serves up Americans for their entertainment it is all right--but hands off the sacred natives! They are really, I think, thinner-skinned than we!⁷²

The only time he was provoked enough to write a reviewer was in defense of "Episode."⁷³ Months later he was disgusted with the book for another reason: it had made him no money.⁷⁴ Even in "The Art of Fiction" five years later, he still smarted over criticism of "tales in which 'Bostonian nymphs' appear to have 'rejected English dukes for psychological reasons.'"⁷⁵ And although he included the book in the New York edition, he virtually ignored it in the preface there, mentioning it only once in twenty-one pages. Probably because

of the low value he finally accorded it, "Episode" has seldom been reprinted and is little known. Yet it is a delightful sample of the early James, blending the sure control and important subject matter of The Portrait of a Lady with the astringent wit and light ironic style most commonly seen in his more trivial tales.

In Chapter Two, in addition to establishing strong similarities between Austen and James in style and humor, I will develop as well the idea of a woman's marriage as a symbol for the individual's integration into society, as a sign of her willingness to subordinate her private claims to larger public needs. This idea will be expanded in the last two chapters. Chapter Three discusses similarities in the lives of Austen and James, relating these to their symbolic use of marriage and to their variation of the Cinderella story. Chapter Four compares a later work of Austen and of James, Mansfield Park and The Spoils of Poynton, to show how their change of the Cinderella story, so that the heroine does not fulfill the romantic union, symbolizes the nineteenth-century's retreat into the family in response to the surrounding social disintegration. Thus by tracing an important theme through the work of two writers similar in technique and subject matter, I hope to reach conclusions about the society reflected in their novels.

CHAPTER TWO

MARRIAGE IN PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND

"AN INTERNATIONAL EPISODE":

MANNERS AS METAPHOR

In "The Janeites," Kipling's Cockney narrator reports a debate between two army officers. One of them laments that Jane Austen "'ad died barren." The second opines that while she left no "direct an' lawful prog'ny," she was "fruitful in the 'ighest sense of the word." The question is finally settled when a third character declares, "Pahardon me, gents, but this is a matter on which I do 'appen to be moderately well-informed. She did leave lawful issue in the shape o' one son; an' 'is name was 'Enery James."¹ Readers of some of James's early fiction might agree, metaphorically, with this judgment.

Works such as The American and The Europeans might easily be the fruit of that glorious family tree that had earlier yielded Sense and Sensibility and Northanger Abbey. But the early James book which might best invite comparison with Austen's is "An International Episode," described by Philip Rahv as:

One of the least reprinted and least known of Henry James's short novels. It surely deserves to be better known. A companion-piece of "Daisy Miller" and written in the same year, it is quite as brilliant a rendering of the author's favorite theme of transatlantic relations.²

Certainly, with its dazzling wit and gaiety, it reminds us of Austen's early masterpiece, the book she herself described as "light and bright and sparkling,"³ Pride and Prejudice. The two novels are amazingly alike in structure, narrator's voice, characters and symbolic use of setting. In each novel, one scene in particular reveals these similarities: Elizabeth Bennet's famous duel with Lady Catherine, and a parallel scene between James's heroine and her prospective mother-in-law. A brief tableau in each book makes clear that they share a common theme.

* * *

Both books tell the same story: a wealthy, high-born young man falls in love with and proposes to marry an intelligent, sensitive, and independent young girl of lesser social class. During the first section of each book, the male protagonist is attracted to the girl while accompanying a male friend on a visit to her geographical and social territory. At this time, each girl misjudges the young man. The second half of each book relates the heroine's visit as a tourist to his home environment, where she learns to estimate his true value. Through this structure, each novel contrasts the

manners characteristic of particular places and uses these manners to define its characters.

In Chapter One I described James's failure to respect Austen as a conscious artist. Pride and Prejudice is a good example of her firm organization and clear plan. Examining its symmetry, one can understand why Austen's work has been compared to Mozart's.⁴ The novel, which originally appeared in three volumes, displays a three-part structure. Volume one revolves around Elizabeth's home surroundings--Longbourn, Meryton, and Netherfield, which Bingley rents. Volume two brings Elizabeth and Darcy together in intermediate territory--at Hunsford with Charlotte and Collins, at Rosings, home of Lady Catherine. Its last words promise, "To Pemberley, therefore, they were to go," and volume three opens with Elizabeth's first glimpse of Darcy's estate.

The novel, in moving ever closer to Darcy's home, simultaneously moves Elizabeth nearer an understanding of his true character. The contrast is established between the haughty Darcy at the opening assembly ball, the loving but proud and distant young man bemused by Elizabeth's piano playing in his aunt's home, and finally the cultivated and generous owner of Pemberley. Darcy's character is revealed more thoroughly at each successive location, as his manners become more and more reflective of his true nature.

Moreover, the exact center of the novel is Darcy's letter, which opens Elizabeth's eyes to her self-deception

and to her wrong estimation of him, of Wickham, and of her own powers of character analysis. The turning point, or moment of revelation, thus occupies the exact mid-point of the novel. And in keeping with Austen's symbolic use of place, Darcy presents his letter to Elizabeth at the gate which divides his aunt's grounds from the lane outside, so that the event which produces a meeting of minds occurs at the boundary where two geographical territories meet.

James's concern for form extends throughout his career. Lyon N. Richardson reminds us that

The Ambassadors is composed of twelve "books" into which the thirty-six chapters are gathered. The Awkward Age is built of ten major divisions, which James envisioned as ten "lamps" around the story, each illuminating a "social occasion." The Wings of the Dove is also constructed of ten major "books," each treating in detail a major situation applying to the fate of Milly Theale. The large blocks of The Golden Bowl are themselves grouped into two sections, the prince being the uniting principle of the first part and the princess of the second.⁵

"An International Episode" is a good early example of this concern for form. Like Pride and Prejudice, it uses the publication schedule as a control for form. It was published in two parts, appearing in monthly installments in Cornhill Magazine. As Charles Hoffman points out,

James utilized this practical consideration to serve his artistic purpose. The two parts of each of these novels ["Daisy Miller" was the companion piece to "Episode"] are a study in contrasting settings and social atmospheres: [in "Daisy"] Vevay,

the gay resort area and Rome, the somber and foreboding setting; and [in "Episode"] the contrast of Englishmen in America and Americans in England, each for the first time.⁶

Thus the novel is, like Austen's, patterned on a contrast between places and the consequent revelation of manners typical of those surroundings.

James is as symmetrical as Austen. At least four times, he meticulously parallels scenes in the two halves of "Episode." Both parts open with the tourists' arrival in the new country and give us a Cook's tour of important sights--Broadway, Union Square, Fifth Avenue, Wall Street, and a luxurious steamer in section one; the Tower of London, Hampton Court, a presentation at Court all in section two. In two comparable shipboard conversations, between the young men in the first section and between the two sisters in the second, James satirizes the customs of each country through its visitors' superior attitude, and at the same time he makes fun of the reactions themselves, portraying each set of visitors as narrow and provincial in its own way. A major focus in each section of the novel is an important social locale: first the quintessentially American Newport, and, later, Hyde Park, the symbol of English culture and values; each scene depicting, at a typical gathering of the "first people" there, the very different cultural and intellectual responses of America and of England. And in the novel's two most amusing scenes, the shrewd American businessman, in part

one, and the American society matron, in part two, demolish their English counterparts. I will in a moment examine this last scene between the two social matriarchs, in order to show how James's dramatic approach there resembles that of Austen.

* * *

But before this close look, let us continue the overall comparison of Pride and Prejudice and "An International Episode." These two novels have the same ironic tone, produced in large part by the narrator's voice. On the surface level, these narrators appear to be urbane members of the society they describe, accepting as proper and suitable all its affairs and concerns, refraining from questions or assessments. Yet over and over again this calm, matter-of-fact acceptance is disturbed by some subtle incongruity--a disturbing bit of syntax, an unexpected idea, a word out of place, diction vaguely unsuited to its subject--so that we, as readers, perceive these seemingly amused, unruffled narrators for what they are: stringent judges of their society's customs.

A good illustration of this ironic undercutting is the use which both James and Austen make of parallel sentence structure. Certainly Austen--and perhaps James--inherited this balanced form from the eighteenth century and from Samuel Johnson in particular, who used it to achieve a smooth

and flowing style and to give to comparable ideas the same syntactical weight. In number 208 of The Rambler, for instance, he provides parallel direct objects:

He that condemns himself to compose on a stated Day, will often bring to his Task, an Attention dissipated, a Memory embarrassed, an Imagination overwhelmed, a Mind distracted with Anxieties, a Body languishing with Disease. . .

In the same way, Austen describes Mrs. Bennet with parallel phrases,

She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper (p. 5).

and James similarly describes an American businessman, Mr. Westgate,

he had a thin, sharp, familiar face, with an expression that was at one and the same time sociable and business-like, a quick, intelligent eye, and a large brown mustache, which concealed his mouth and made his chin beneath it look small (p. 60).

But at other times in Austen and James, the structure remains parallel, though the terms given the same rhetorical weight in the sentence are not comparable in sense or substance. As Norman Page describes it, often in her employment of Johnson's style, Austen's "method is that of the saboteur."⁷ Such occasions jolt us out of our complacency and make us rethink our priorities. When Austen's narrator describes, for example, the eligible bachelor at the ball, the

first three attributes are features of his appearance which we would expect to draw the attention of the spectators, but the fourth item is of an entirely different sort:

Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year (p. 10).

By giving his financial status the climactic position, like a cunning mother intent on matchmaking, the narrator tells us that what mattered most to these people was not a man's noble appearance but his monetary value. Likewise, when James describes the two Englishmen, who,

had very good manners; they responded with smiles and exclamations, and they apologized for not knowing the front door (p. 69).

the last part of the description is not comparable to the first part: smiling is part of good manners, but usually one can tell the front door from the rear. James's irony here cuts both ways. He makes fun of the Englishmen for not being perceptive enough to tell the difference between a front and rear door, but he also ridicules the Americans for not distinguishing clearly the public entrance from the private one.

Another way the narrators say one thing on the surface and another underneath is to damn with faint praise. The sharp comment on Mr. Collins' intellectual ability, for

instance, is cast in the form of praise for his physical prowess, since he is "much better fitted for a walker than a reader" (p. 71). Two women are lacerated simultaneously when we are told, "Lady Lucas was a very good kind of woman, not too clever to be a valuable neighbour to Mrs. Bennet" (p. 18). In James's book, the young Englishman receives the same treatment:

And to speak of Lord Lambeth's expression of intellectual repose is not simply a civil way of saying that he looked stupid. He was evidently not a young man of an irritable imagination; he was not, as he would himself have said, tremendously clever; but though there was a kind of appealing dulness in his eye, he looked thoroughly reasonable and competent, and his appearance proclaimed that to be a nobleman, an athlete, and an excellent fellow was a sufficiently brilliant combination of qualities (p. 76).

Still another device is anticlimax, puncturing the overinflated balloon with a sharp pinprick of irony. In the famous opening,

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

the portentous words, "truth," "universal," and "acknowledged," lead us to expect a significant and weighty pronouncement. Even the grammar contributes to the effect: the passive voice and impersonal construction remove the responsibility of judgment from one person and invest it in a community, just as the grammatical construction of "It is

raining" acknowledges that the weather is beyond our control. But instead of the inexorable decree that we anticipate, we learn only that society is greedy to marry off its girls to wealthy young men. In a similar way in *James*, the splendid rotundity of the narrator's Latinate diction is abruptly deflated by the commonplace vocabulary of the young Englishman, so that simultaneous fun is made of him and of the pretensions of a young, raw country:

In crossing Union Square, in front of the monument to Washington--in the very shadow, indeed, projected by the image of the pater patriae--one of them remarked to the other, "It seems a rumlooking place" (p. 54).

In all these cases, the narrators preserve a facade of approval for everything described, but through language incongruous with its subject, they adroitly reveal the things about society which are inconsistent with the image it projects. They comment on manners in order to reveal another meaning underneath.

This conception of social convention is, according to Richard Sennett, new in the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, he contends, manners were signs, rather than symbols, and were not expressive of inner character. Public behavior at that time could be, and usually was, detached from personal attitudes. The body, for instance, was treated as a mannequin, with street clothes possessing "a meaning independent of the wearer and the wearer's body," so

that items of dress--wig, hat, vest-coat--"were objects in themselves, and not . . . aids to setting off the peculiarities of . . . face or figure."⁸ These wigs completely obscured the shape of the head, rather than "expressing" its contours, to make a public statement about its wearer's position in society. Similarly, the face became merely a background for patches which designated one's politics or the attitudes one wished to assume. In this way clothing and conventions of grooming assumed a reality of their own; they were a public sign independent of one's private self and could be assumed like a costume or a role. In the same way, speech was a sign rather than a symbol. In coffee houses the custom was to disregard, as far as possible, tone, elocution and diction which might distinguish social class, so that in this setting men could come together as temporary equals. This creation of rituals and roles gave eighteenth-century people a freedom to express themselves in public.

But then a gradual change occurred Sennett believes, so that manners became symbols, standing for something else and losing their independent reality. Clothes became a code to interpret the individual they covered. Speech became a revelation of the true person within. Under the convention, people thought, "lay an inner, hidden reality to which the convention referred and which was the 'real' meaning."⁹ To find this meaning, observers became adept at finding clues in subtle details of dress: they learned to read the

"symbolic" meaning of public and private manners. Whether or not Sennett is right about his explanation of this change in attitudes toward manners during these two periods, he describes in persuasive detail changing manifestations of public and private manners in eighteenth and nineteenth-century society.

In the work of Austen and James we see manners treated as expressive of a deeper reality. A character like Madame Merle understands this belief and uses it to create for others the self she wishes them to see:

What shall we call our 'self'? Where does it begin? where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us--and then it flows back again. I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've a great respect for things! One's self--for other people--is one's expression of one's self; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps--these things are all expressive (Portrait, ch. 19).

Apparently preoccupied with the trivial surface of their world, Austen's and James's narrators make profound comments about its values. As James said,

It is an incident for a woman to stand up with her hand resting on a table and look out at you in a certain way; or if it be not an incident I think it will be hard to say what it is. At the same time it is an expression of character.¹⁰

Austen was similarly aware of the importance of manners in the novel. As she read the draft of her niece's novel, she advised,

. . . we think you had better not leave England. Let the Portmans go to Ireland, but as you know nothing of the Manners there, you had better not go with them. You will be in danger of giving false representations. Stick to Bath & the Foresters.¹¹

In a James novel the heroine may discover the adultery of her husband and best friend entirely through his manners, his failure to stand in the presence of a lady. In Austen, the characters' behavior in a casual word game at a picnic reveals utterly the attitude they hold toward other human beings. To both writers, manners show us the person and the society underneath, becoming finally a metaphor for the deepest moral concepts.

* * *

Many of the characters in Pride and Prejudice and "An International Episode" bear a strong resemblance. Both heroines' names, "Elizabeth" and "Bessie," recall the spirited Renaissance queen, though that of the little American cousin is fittingly countrified, reduced to an affectionate nickname, just as James's book seems almost a fond, diminutive version of Austen's great novel. Both heroes, Darcy and Lambeth, grow in charm and understanding as the story progresses, though Lambert to the end reveals an "appealing dulness." Each is schooled in noblesse oblige by the socially inferior heroine, Darcy at overcoming his haughty reticence so that he is friendly toward those less

fortunate than he, Lambeth at fulfilling the responsibilities of--to use Bessie's favorite phrase--an "hereditary legislator." Darcy, in keeping with Austen's optimistic outlook here, learns his lesson well; but Lambeth, reflecting James's bleaker attitude and sharper satire of the aristocracy, gains only a faint glimmer of Bessie's lesson. In both novels, the heroines learn much more than their suitors, and come to place their earlier romantic ideals in a realistic framework.

Each heroine is provided with a sister, each hero with a young male friend. In both novels, these companions are attracted to each other, although since Bessie's sister is already married, that relationship remains a flirtation. In each novel, a haughty, aristocratic female relative interferes with the romance and forces it, in the novel's most amusing scene, to a quick climax, Elizabeth's acceptance of Darcy, Bessie's refusal of Lambeth.

Especially similar are the parents, or surrogate parents, of the heroine: Mr. and Mrs. Bennet in Pride and Prejudice, Bessie's sister and brother-in-law, Kitty Westgate and her husband. These fathers are both intelligent and witty, with a dry sense of humor, but they turn these admirable qualities toward a wry observation and enjoyment of the folly they see all about them, rather than toward a correction of these absurdities. For both men, irony is a substitute for moral responsibility. Both indulge their garrulous and pretty but superficial wives and allow them to control the

social relationships of their family, rather than trying to improve the women or to correct the consequences of their folly.

This similarity of parents is important, for both Austen and James contrast the faulty marriage with the proposed union of the hero and heroine. The elder couples demonstrate a relationship based initially on physical attraction and held together by legal and social obligations. They have no genuine enjoyment of each other's company, no true companionship or sharing of interests. In each novel, a successful marriage is symbolic both of the maturity and healthy adjustment of the heroine and also of her integration into society. The bad marriages between the Bennets and the Westgates reflect the difficulty of men and women in reconciling their differences and subordinating their individual needs to those of the mutual union, and they represent the trouble individuals have in adjusting their own desires to the demands of society.

* * *

Both Mr. Bennet and Mr. Westgate charm the reader with Attic wit. When Mrs. Bennet complains to her husband that Elizabeth refuses to marry Collins and demands, "Tell her that you insist upon her marrying him," Mr. Bennet first questions Elizabeth as to the truth of this and then gravely announces,

An unhappy alternative is before you Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do (p. 112).

Just as trenchantly, Mr. Westgate explains why Bessie doesn't know much about Englishmen, "She has always led a very quiet life; she has lived in Boston" (p. 62).

Both men's humor veils hostility. When Mrs. Bennet complains, "You have no compassion on my nerves," her husband's reply is amusing to us but unkind to her: "You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least" (p. 5). Similarly, when Mr. Westgate greets Lambeth and Percy,

I am always very glad to see your countrymen. I thought it would be time some of you should be coming along. A friend of mine was saying to me only a day or two ago, "It's time for the water-melons and the Englishmen" (p. 60).

he is jovial, but he compares them to a frivolous, somewhat inelegant fruit, ponderous, red, orotund, which Americans enjoy annually but hardly consider significant.

Both men are shrewd observers of others. But neither their judgment nor their humor is used to correct the mistakes of others. Instead, each relishes in solitude the absurdities he observes. Of Wickham, who has run off with Lydia Bennet without benefit of marriage and who shows no shame for it when finally introduced into the family as a

son-in-law, Mr. Bennet says,

He is as fine a fellow as ever I saw. He simpers, and smirks, and makes love to us all. I am prodigiously proud of him. I defy even Sir William Lucas himself, to produce a more valuable son-in-law (p. 330).

When the English complain of gnats in their hotel room, Mr. Westgate does not inform them that these were mosquitoes. Instead he says,

Oh no, of course you don't like the gnats. We shall expect you to like a good many things over here, but we sha'n't insist upon your liking the gnats; though certainly you'll admit that, as gnats, they are fine, eh? (p. 61).

Both men encourage others to express their foolishness more completely. When Mr. Collins speaks of the compliments which he pays Lady Catherine from time to time, Mr. Bennet enjoys the "mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance and humility" (p. 70), but he anticipates a still keener pleasure: "May I ask whether these pleasing attentions proceed from the impulse of the moment, or are the result of previous study?" To his delight, Collins answers,

They arise chiefly from what is passing at the time, and though I sometimes amuse myself with suggesting and arranging such little elegant compliments as may be adapted to ordinary occasions, I always wish to give them as unstudied an air as possible (p. 68).

At this, we are told,

Mr. Bennet's expectations were fully answered. His cousin was as absurd as he had hoped, and he listened to him with the keenest enjoyment, maintaining at the same time the most resolute composure of countenance, and except in an occasional glance at Elizabeth, requiring no partner in his pleasure.

Mr. Westgate compels a similar admission from Lambeth:

"But I didn't know you Englishmen ever did any work, in the upper classes."

"Oh, we do a lot of work; don't we, Lambeth?" asked Percy Beaumont.

"I must certainly be at home by the 19th of September," said the younger Englishman, irrelevantly but gently.

"For the shooting, eh? or is it the hunting, or the fishing?" inquired his entertainer.

"Oh, I must be in Scotland," said Lord Lambeth, blushing a little.

"Well, then," rejoined Mr. Westgate, "you had better amuse yourself first, also" (p. 62).

Thus neither man is ultimately social. Each preserves for his own benefit both his humor and his wisdom. With them, irony does not enforce moral responsibility; it becomes a substitute for it. When Elizabeth urges her father to forbid Lydia's visit to Brighton, he ignores the warning. Rather than trying to prevent such a display, he jokes,

Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public place or other, and we can never expect her to do it with so little expense or inconvenience to her family as under the present circumstances (p. 230).

When Percy Beaumont announces his purpose in New York is to bring suit against an American railway, we know from Mr. Westgate's reaction that he has a vested interest in the transaction. But instead of declaring this, he bustles the English off to Newport: "'Well, I'm sorry you want to attack one of our institutions,' he said, smiling. 'But I guess you had better enjoy yourself first!'" At this, an earlier remark assumes a sinister quality. When Beaumont had complained of the heat, Westgate had assured him, "Ah, well, we'll put you on ice, as we do the melons. You must go down to Newport." Newport is obviously a luxurious playpen where women, children and Englishmen are kept amused so that they do not interfere with grown-up affairs of business.

These two ironists have both married beautiful but superficial women. Pride and Prejudice opens with Mr. Bennet's telling his wife she is as pretty as any of her daughters. We are told that he

captivated by youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humour which youth and beauty generally give, had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her. Respect, esteem, and confidence had vanished forever; and all his views of domestic happiness were overthrown (p. 236).

In James's novel, Mrs. Westgate is "superfluously pretty" (p. 79). She is "thirty years old, with the eyes and the smile of a girl of seventeen" (p. 70). She contrasts sharply with Bessie, who, she admits, "is very cultivated--

not at all like me; I am not in the least cultivated" (p. 80).

The women's superficiality is even portrayed in the same way, first through their concern with clothes at the most materialistic or purely fashionable level. Mrs. Bennet judges Bingley's sisters on the basis of their clothing's value:

. . . his sisters are charming women. I never in my life saw anything more elegant than their dresses. I dare say the lace upon Mrs. Hurst's gown. . . (p. 13).

And after Lydia's disgraceful elopement,

Mrs. Bennet found, with amazement and horror, that her husband would not advance a guinea to buy clothes for his daughter. . . . 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 (pp. 310-311).

In "An International Episode," the response of Bessie and of Kitty when confronting the glorious spectacle of Hyde Park is comically different. Bessie watches "the crowd of riders and spectators and the great procession of carriages" along the famous avenue, letting her imagination "loose into the great changing assemblage of striking and suggestive figures." Her reflective mood is shattered by Kitty's, "Look at that green dress with blue flounces. Quelle toilette!"

Their superficiality is clear too because both are

garrulous. At one point, Mrs. Bennet embarrasses Elizabeth by running on to Lady Lucas about the prospects of marriage between Jane and Bingley: "It was an animating subject, and Mrs. Bennet seemed incapable of fatigue while enumerating the advantages of the match" (p. 99). When Lydia returns after her shot-gun marriage, Elizabeth, Jane and their father are solemn and quiet, but "There was no want of discourse. The bride and her mother could neither of them talk fast enough. . . ." (p. 316). Mrs. Westgate greets the English on their arrival in Newport with a speech which continues unabated for one thousand words (pp. 70-73). "Mrs. Westgate's discourse, delivered in a soft, sweet voice, flowed on like a miniature torrent, and was interrupted by a hundred little smiles, glances, and gestures, which might have figured the irregularities and obstructions of such a stream." (p. 73)

Both women are prickly about their social position. Mrs. Bennet takes care to tell Bingley that she, unlike Lady Lucas, does not allow her daughters to help with the mince pies (p. 44). She rejects most of the homes in the neighborhood as too small or unimportant for Lydia and Wickham (p. 310). She is flattered when Lady Catherine calls, in spite of the woman's supercilious behavior (pp. 352, 359). Mrs. Westgate in her turn has an exaggerated sense of her own importance; she

caused herself and her sister to be presented at the English court by her diplomatic representative--for it was in this manner that she alluded

to the American minister to England, inquiring what on earth he was put there for, if not to make the proper arrangement for one's going to a Drawing-room (p. 107).

The men indulge their wives. Mrs. Bennet, we are told, "had no turn for economy" (p. 308), and her husband has never required her to save. "Mrs. Bennet had very often wished, before this period of his life, that, instead of spending his whole income, he had laid by an annual sum, for the better provision of his children, and of his wife, if she survived him" (p. 308). The spoiled and pampered Kitty is a figure repeated many times throughout James's work, the ubiquitous consumer rather than the creator of value. As she brags to Percy Beaumont, "An American woman who respects herself must buy something every day of her life. If she cannot do it herself, she must send out some member of her family for the purpose" (p. 79). In a comparison which surely says more than she intends, Kitty well expresses the American woman's arrogant position as society's parasite: "For me there are only two social positions worth speaking of--that of an American lady, and that of the emperor of Russia" (p. 102).

Both men are morally irresponsible. Mr. Bennet realizes that Lydia's disgrace is in some measure his fault, but knows too that he will lapse back into apathy: "Let me once in my life feel how much I have been to blame. I am not afraid of being overpowered by the impression. It will pass away soon enough" (p. 299). When he learns that he is

indebted to Darcy for the money to save Lydia, instead of shame he feels humor and relief:

And so, Darcy did everything; made up the match, gave the money, paid the fellow's debts, and got him his commission! So much the better. It will save me a world of trouble and economy. Had it been your uncle's doing, I must and would have paid him; but these violent young lovers carry everything their own way. I shall offer to pay him tomorrow; he will rant and storm, about his love for you, and there will be an end of the matter (p. 377).

As we have seen, Mr. Westgate is willing to put his own wife's charms to immoral use. After being dispatched to Newport with Beaumont, Lambeth is told by a local gossip that

Mr. Westgate was always away; he was a man of the highest ability--very acute, very acute. He worked like a horse, and he left his wife--well, to do about as she liked. He liked her to enjoy herself, and she seemed to know how (p. 75).

Sure enough, Lambeth notices that,

Beaumont was having a very good time with Mrs. Westgate, and that, under the pretext of meeting for the purpose of animated discussion, they were indulging in practices that imparted a shade of hypocrisy to the lady's regret for her husband's absence (p. 85).

When Beaumont returns briefly to New York to talk over the Tennessee Central suit with Mr. Westgate, he is absent only forty-eight hours, for "Mr. Westgate had seemed very uneasy lest his wife should miss her visitor--he had been in such an awful hurry to send him back to her" (p. 85).

* * *

In these faulty marriages, both the men and the women are selfish and irresponsible. The women spend too much money; the men offer money as a substitute for love and companionship. The women talk too much, so that they never listen to others; the men listen but they never engage in the other half of conversation: they never speak openly, they never share what they have learned from their intelligent listening. These are not true marriages with a communion of interests and understanding.

The emotional separation in these marriages is reflected in the geographical separation of their members. Mr. Bennet sequesters himself in his library, relegating to his foolish wife both the governing of his home and the moral education of his daughters. At one point he sees his own folly, for after Lydia's elopement, he returns from London to find Mrs. Bennet secluding herself in her dressing room, sending down to Jane for her tea,

"This is a parade," cried he, "which does one good; it gives such an elegance to misfortune! Another day I will do the same; I will sit in my library in my nightcap and powdering gown, and give as much trouble as I can, or perhaps I may defer it, till Kitty runs away" (pp. 299-300).

Even after this recognition, however, he returns to the old irresponsible ways. Both Bingley and Darcy must seek him out when they request his daughters' hands in marriage, for

"After tea, Mr. Bennet retired to the library, as was his custom" (p. 344).

In "Episode," James describes with sexually charged metaphors the two landscapes which house the two sexes. Wall Street bristles with skyscrapers, Mr. Westgate's office reached by a "snug hydraulic elevator . . . which, shooting upward in its vertical socket, presently projected [its occupants] into the seventh horizontal compartment of the edifice" (p. 59). Newport, on the other hand, is dominated by broad expanses of sea and sky. The hotel there is

an enormous wooden structure, for the erection of which it seemed to them that the virgin forests of the West must have been terribly deflowered. It was perforated from end to end with immense bare corridors, through which a strong draught was blowing. . . . In front was a gigantic veranda, upon which an army might have encamped--a vast wooden terrace . . . a measureless expanse (p. 67).

The villas are all "embosomed in shrubs and flowers, and enclosed in an ingenious variety of wooden palings." The Westgate home is entered through "an open gate." It has

a veranda of extraordinary width all around it, and a great many doors and windows standing open to the veranda. These various apertures had, in common, . . . an accessible, hospitable air. . . (p. 68-69).

Kitty rules like a queen over this domain, while her husband remains in Wall Street, engaged in the fiendish but gentlemanly pursuit of wealth. (He is described as "devilishly civil") (p. 65). During the weeks the English remain

visiting in his Newport home, he never leaves New York:

His wife more than once announced that she expected him on the morrow; but on the morrow she wandered about a little, with a telegram in her jewelled fingers, declaring it was very tiresome that his business detained him in New York; that he could only hope the Englishmen were having a good time (p. 85).

These faulty marriages are a warning of what the heroine herself may encounter if she makes the wrong choice of partner. But they are more. A frequent charge against Austen is her narrow scope, the confinement of her novels to young women chasing or being chased by eligible bachelors. But as Lloyd Brown says, marriage in Jane Austen's fiction is primarily a literary convention which symbolizes the "maturation of the protagonist's perception and relationship."¹² This is true in James as well, as we have seen with the Westgates, whose inadequate union is a reflection of their own moral inadequacy, and of their inability to join their efforts toward a common goal. Again, manners are involved. For marriage is that aspect of manners designed to control the most long-lasting sexual relationships in human society. It is the meeting ground for two basic drives, for survival and sexuality. The first, by providing food and shelter, preserves the individual; the second, involving procreation, preserves the species. Marriage is the invention of society to integrate these often contradictory urges, controlling them for the mutual benefit of individual and of society.

* * *

Thus Austen and James are alike in carefully structuring these two novels around geographical locations which come to have a symbolic meaning; in defining their characters through manners, through language and through these locations; in the narrator's ironic voice which superficially approves but actually judges society's customs; and in the use of marriage as a symbol both of the individual's maturation and of her integration into society. All these characteristics are apparent in the most obviously similar scenes of the two novels--pages 351-359 of Pride and Prejudice and pages 115-118 of "Episode" (pages 380-386 in the New York edition)--which depict the verbal battle between the heroine and the hero's wealthy relative. Lady Catherine de Bourgh calls on Elizabeth Bennet to forbid a marriage with her nephew, Darcy; the Duchess of Bayswater tries to intimidate Bessie Alden and prevent a visit to her son's country home, knowing such a stay would be a prelude to marriage.

A visit from a condescending noble relative is standard fare in the novel of sensibility which Austen inherited from Fanny Burney¹³ and Samuel Richardson.¹⁴ Certainly Austen and James would have been familiar with this stereotype both there and earlier in Restoration and eighteenth-century plays.¹⁵ But Austen and James breathe new life into their model through their wit and irony, their vivid characters, and through their strongly dramatic dialogue. In addition,

these scenes fulfill a symbolic role, depicting the individual's confrontation with the harsh demands of the established society, represented in this case by the older woman.

Austen and James are alike in their sensitivity to small details of social intercourse, presenting them carefully and vividly not only in order to amuse us and bring their scenes to life, but also in order to portray society's values. During their visits, for example, the very movements of their bodies disclose that both great ladies consider their opponents unworthy of even common civility. Lady Catherine, we are told, "entered the room with an air more than usually ungracious, made no other reply to Elizabeth's salutation than a slight inclination of the head, and sat down without saying a word." She requests no introduction to Elizabeth's mother and sister, but asks Elizabeth questions about them in their presence as though they were no more socially existent than servants.

With comparable tastelessness, James's Duchess makes no secret of her purpose in coming to examine the young lady who has ensnared her son. She stares fixedly at Bessie even while conversing with Kitty, behaving so outrageously that she embarrasses even her daughter:

In a moment she slowly rose, walked to a chair that stood empty at the young girl's right hand, and silently seated herself. As she was a majestic, voluminous woman, this little transaction had, inevitably, an air of somewhat impressive attention. It diffused a certain awkwardness, which Lady Pimlico, as a sympathetic daughter, perhaps desired to rectify in turning to Mrs. Westgate.

Through these trivial trespasses against social decorum, both authors depict a society which condones otherwise inexcusable behavior, if the violators are but rich and noble.

Both noblewomen warn about the marriage, and through the language they employ to do so, both are characterized. Lady Catherine openly denounces Elizabeth as a "young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world, and wholly unallied to the family!" Here, as she often does, Austen parodies Johnson's three-part syntactical structure. The last of Lady Catherine's terms occupies the climactic and thus the most important rhetorical position, yet it provides an ironic juxtaposition to the other two objections, since it is of a different order of importance. Being a member of the same family would not usually be as important as an honorable birth and a position of social significance, but to Lady Catherine, the family connection is a consuming necessity, because she covets Darcy for her daughter.

Through this rhetorical anticlimax, Lady Catherine's perverse values surface again and again. She argues against the marriage "because honour, decorum, prudence, nay, interest, forbid it." She describes why Darcy is intended for her daughter:

They are descended on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and, on the father's, from respectable, honourable, and ancient, though untitled families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid.

A sentence later, she objects to "the upstart pretensions of

a young woman without family, connections, or fortune." The narrowest term--that which represents self interest rather than a broad outlook, that which refers to the family rather than the larger world, that which indicates the virtues of material possessions rather than nobility of character--over and over again, this narrow term is placed in the climactic position. Indeed, Lady Catherine's whole personality is one of anti-climax, of never putting the emphasis where it properly belongs, either in the sentence or in life.

The emphasis, of course, is always on herself. She--her opinions and desires--is always the climax, the most important point, as the structure of her argument reveals. She thinks a telling objection to the marriage is the personal affront to herself:

Obstinate, headstrong girl! I am ashamed of you!
Is this your gratitude for my attentions to you
last spring? Is nothing due to me on that score?

She believes her own personal comfort matters as much to others as to herself: "I have not been used to submit to any person's whims. I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment." She thinks, merely by her own stubbornness, to sway a matter entirely unconnected with herself: "I shall not go away till you have given me the assurance I require." The best example of all is her summation of the argument, which Johnsonian rhetoric would require to be the strongest and most persuasive point, the one which would most strongly move one's

audience by addressing their interests. In hilarious anticlimax, her final words are the imperious, totally self-centered, "I am seriously displeased."

James's Duchess is also characterized through the language of her warnings. She is less comic and more menacing than Lady Catherine, since her threats are not open but disguised in the language of polite discourse. She maintains the unruffled surface of social decorum, but underneath each of her remarks lies an uglier, more aggressive meaning. Yet her verbal irony is obvious and conventional, lacking the subtlety and wit James's more sympathetic characters display. In this way, James reveals her unquestioning conformity, her lack of imagination. For instance, she pretends to speak of Lord Lambeth only as a casual social companion for Bessie when she says, "He is very inconstant. It won't do to depend on him," and "He will disappoint you yet," and "The less you expect of him the better." Actually here she is referring to him as a potential husband. And underlying the superficial courtesy of a hearty welcome lies a veiled threat: if Bessie makes the next step on the playing board and presumes to visit Branches, it will bring the two women into direct conflict; Bessie will have to deal with her rather than with the easy-going Lambeth: "I shall expect to see a great deal of you. When I go to Branches I monopolize my son's guests."

Both James's and Austen's heroines penetrate the rhetorical falseness of their opponents' position and put words

in their proper positions, events in their proper perspective. Elizabeth Bennet does this through irony: she turns Lady Catherine's inverted statements right side up again, revealing their falsity, aligning them with the real world rather than the world of Lady Catherine's ego. The rhetorical device is antithesis.¹⁶ It is, of course, a splendid device for stage dialogue, moving the story along through the verbal clash of ideas.

When Lady Catherine announces that the purpose of her visit is to contradict the marriage rumors which are circulating,

Elizabeth replies:
"Your coming to Longbourn, to see me and my family, will be rather a confirmation of it."

When Lady Catherine demands, "Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?"

Elizabeth turns her opponent's own remarks against her: "Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible."

Lady Catherine accuses Elizabeth of capturing Darcy through "arts and allurements."

Elizabeth counters that such a subtle practitioner as this accusation implies would scarcely admit to the charge: If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it."

When Lady Catherine declares, "Mr. Darcy is engaged to my daughter. Now, what have you to say?"

Elizabeth wonders how such a categorical statement can issue from someone who has traveled so far to be reassured: "Only this; that if he is so, you can have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me."

Lady Catherine threatens that Darcy's family will "censure, slight and despise Elizabeth" if the marriage is carried out.

Lady Catherine argues on the basis of her own personal comfort: "I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment."

A self-serving appeal which pretends to consider Elizabeth's own interests: "If you were sensible of your own good, you would not wish to quit the sphere in which you have been brought up."

Lady Catherine switches the argument to the other side of Elizabeth's unworthy family: "Do you imagine me ignorant of your mother's family position?"

Elizabeth, suffering all the unpleasantness of this present interview with a member of Darcy's family, answers with amused irony, reducing the threat to its true absurdity: "These are heavy misfortunes."

Elizabeth observes that Lady Catherine is not the one under consideration here: "That will make your ladyship's situation at present more pitiable; but it will have no effect on me."

Is rebutted by the facts: "In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter: so far we are equal."

And Elizabeth points out the irrelevance of either Lady Catherine's knowledge or her ignorance: "If your nephew does not object to them, they can be nothing to you."

Like Austen, James characterizes his heroine through the weapon he gives her, the rhetorical device with which she demolishes her opponent. Thus she, like the other characters, reveals herself through her particular pattern of language. But James splits Austen's heroine into two characters. He gives them both the same weapon, but since they are the opposing sides of one personality, they employ this weapon in exactly opposite ways.

Bessie Alden retains Elizabeth's intelligence, moral delicacy, and independence, along with her inability to judge the hero properly. Elizabeth's wit and irony and social skill go to the older sister, Kitty. Austen had earlier divided a personality in this way, with Elinor and Marianne in Sense and Sensibility, although there the split does not occur between irony and innocence. This opposition of ideas embodied within different characters was a convention of the novelistic tradition Austen inherited.¹⁷ James himself had provided split characters in Roderick Hudson. Edel observes¹⁸ that, whereas in that early novel two characters are required to express James's full intention, we find in The American

one substantial individual who embodied both the active-creative part of himself as well as the still-lingering Cambridge cautionary elements. It took Rowland Mallet, playing God, to complete Roderick; Christopher Newman also wants to play God--to the whole world--but in the process he stands aggressively planted on his own two feet. The novelist's divided and conflicting selves had come together: unified, he could launch them in the Old World, in Paris, where he himself was now launched.

It may be that here with Bessie Alden and Kitty, James is going through the same splintering process before he can unite the characters in Isabel Archer. Many critics have noted that Isabel is a fuller development of Bessie, and that, with Warburton, she is even placed in the same situation, that of a young American refusing an English nobleman's hand.¹⁹ Though Isabel lacks Kitty's irony and wit, she acquires, in the last part of The Portrait of a Lady, Kitty's social awareness. And of course Christopher Newman is a combination of only some parts of Rowland and Roderick; notably, he lacks Rowland's intellectual and Roderick's artistic sensitivity.

At any rate, James confers upon both sisters a genius for irony. Bessie, however, disarms her antagonist through irony that is unintentional, while Kitty is a conscious warrior. She has Elizabeth Bennet's sharp social perceptions and supreme confidence. She immediately perceives the duchess's courtesy as the hostile threat it truly is. But unlike Elizabeth, who can both penetrate falseness and translate it into truth, Kitty cannot reply directly, but only through irony or some other oblique form of language. Even after the aristocrats leave, for example, as she explains what they had hoped by their visit to make Bessie do, she must cloak the honest Anglo-Saxon "let go" with elegant French, "lacher prise." And earlier, aboard ship, the warning she issues to Bessie is hidden within a "story,"

with which she amuses the young girl.

For Kitty is as confined by her society as is the duchess by hers, and must remain within its conventions. Her interests are just as restricted, her values, though different, just as false. At the beginning of the scene, the narrator has made this clear through the symbolism of dress. Though Kitty is far more intelligent than the duchess, she is just as superficial, and James's irony cuts both ways when he refers to:

Mrs. Westgate, who perceived that her visitor had now begun to look at her, and who had her customary happy consciousness of a distinguished appearance. The only mitigation of her felicity on this point was that, having inspected her visitor's own costume, she said to herself, "She won't know how well I am dressed."

But because Kitty's American society is not based on codified rules, because it is still young and fresh, full of inventiveness and fancy, her wit, unlike that of the duchess, has not hardened into cliché, nor her irony fossilized into convention. So her conversation, while it is not open and truthful like Elizabeth Bennet's, has much of the earlier heroine's wit and sparkle.

The duchess begins the interview by hinting at the Americans' indelicate attentions to her son: "He says you were so kind to him in America."

Kitty pretends to take the remark at face value, accepting it as a compliment to their generous hospitality and

modestly disavowing it. But she also counterattacks. She hesitates as though trying politely to avoid mention of the young man's own lack of social poise when surrounded by the "first" society in America: "We are very glad to have been able to make him a little more--a little less--a little more comfortable."

When they discuss the proposed visit to Branches, the duchess says: "He has asked me to go, but I am not sure I shall be able"--social code for: "I do not wish your company."

Kitty's code conveys just as effectively, but with much more wit, her own indifference to knowing the duchess: By another hesitation which she pretends is unintentional, she alters the expected social cliché, "the pleasure of meeting you" to the cool observation: "He had offered us the p---the prospect of meeting you" (*italics mine*).

When the duchess performs her "little transaction" of walking over to sit near Bessie, the duchess' daughter Lady Pimlico tries to conciliate with a conventional pleasantry: "It's rather nice in town just now."

But Kitty has noticed the maneuver too, and her tone is icy as she distinguishes between such behavior and that of Americans, who are free from the social hypocrisy of associating with enemies. "It's charming. But we only go to see a few people--whom we like."

Lady Pimlico replies: "Of course one can't like everyone."

And Kitty broadens her attack, suggesting that people whom one cannot like are found primarily in England, not America. "It depends upon one's society."

A few moments later, she overhears the duchess, who is irritated with Bessie's naivete, or seeming naivete: "Is that what you call it? I know you have different expressions," the pronoun "you" implying here that American ways are strange and uncouth.

Kitty enters the fray, changing the "you" to "we," insinuating that the strangeness may be on the other side: "We certainly don't always understand each other."

The duchess haughtily clarifies: "I am speaking of the young men calling so much upon the young ladies."

Kitty feigns confusion, concluding that it is indeed the English who have strange and unpredictable customs: "But surely in England the young ladies don't call upon the young men."

Lady Pimlico rushes in to protect her no doubt speechless mother. She comes close to a direct confrontation of the real issue, which the duchess has been skirting for some time, Bessie's supposed pursuit of Lambeth: "Some of them do--almost. When the young men are a great parti."

Kitty wins the skirmish by pretending amusement over the barbaric behavior of the English, describing them as she might primitive natives whose bizarre rites must be observed and recorded by an anthropologist: "Bessie, you must make a

note of that. My sister is a model traveller. She writes down all the curious facts she hears in a little book she keeps for the purpose."

But Bessie's is the greater triumph. James is often ironic at her expense, presenting more clearly in this book than in many others his reservations about the value of innocence. Yet, because of her moral delicacy, he exalts her, even with her shortcomings, over the other characters. In their naive way, her bright remarks are as hilarious and scathing as were Elizabeth Bennet's earlier.

Though clad with scant civility, the duchess's insults never ruffle Bessie. When told, "My son tells me the young ladies in America are so clever"--"clever" here obviously equated with "manipulative" or "scheming"--Bessie merely smiles, pleased with the tribute, and answers, "I am glad they made so good an impression on him."

At this point, James tells us, "The duchess was not smiling; her large, fresh face was very tranquil." No doubt she is surprised, but through rigorous social training, she carefully preserves her equanimity. She returns to the charge: "He is very susceptible. He thinks everyone clever, and sometimes they are." Clearly, she identifies Bessie as "clever" in the pejorative sense she has just established.

But again James keeps Bessie victorious in her ignorance: "'Sometimes,' Bessie assented, smiling still."

Here, we are told, "the duchess looked at her a

little, and then went on: 'Lambeth is very susceptible, but he is very volatile, too.'

Bessie is merely puzzled. "Volatile?"

And her Grace begins to be irritated. How trying to master the language of polite menace, only to find oneself in a land of foreigners who do not understand the tongue. She explains sharply: "He is very inconstant. It won't do to depend on him."

We picture Bessie shaking her head gaily: "'Ah,' said Bessie, 'I don't recognize that description. We have depended on him greatly--my sister and I--and he has never disappointed us.'"

Now the duchess must be more direct: "He will disappoint you yet."

Bessie, we learn, "gave a little laugh, as if she were amused at the duchess's persistency. 'I suppose it will depend on what we expect of him.'"

And the next verb James applies to the duchess subtly informs us of her growing frustration: "'The less you expect the better.' Lord Lambeth's mother declared."

Bessie is unassailable: "Well, we expect nothing unreasonable."

With wry understatement, the narrator conveys the grimness of the older woman: "The duchess for a moment was silent, though she appeared to have more to say." But she regains her composure, and attacks with a new virulence:

"Lambeth says he has seen so much of you."

Bessie responds to the superficial meaning, expressing her gratefulness to the duchess: "He has been to see us often; he has been very kind."

By now the duchess is so speechless that she must resort to schoolgirls' vocabulary and use the vague pronoun with which they insinuate indelicate, unmentionable acts. "I dare say you are used to that. I am told there is a great deal of that in America."

With wonderful irony, Bessie understands this menacing "that" as referring to a positive quality. "'A great deal of kindness?' the young girl inquired, smiling."

Thus in the course of the dialogue, James has gradually blunted her Grace's blade, reducing it from the fine, pointed adjective, "volatile," to the more vigorous, double-edged verbs, "depend," "disappoint," and "expect," and then finally to the flat crudeness of the unreferenced pronoun, "that." Through the collapse of her language from subtle Gallic diplomacy down to inarticulateness, he has depicted her social defeat. Bessie too has been defined through her language, for with impenetrable naivete she has turned aside each blow, gracefully transforming them all into courtesies and compliments and kindness.

A moment later, she surpasses even this. Her eyes wide and unaware, she shifts to the offensive, putting her opponent en garde with a remark about how much she wishes to

see Lambeth's castle: "I have never seen one--in England, at least; and you know we have none in America." And then, with faultless aim against the adversary who had come to conquer her, the thrust home: "It has been the dream of my life to live in one."

No wonder the duchess cannot decide whether she has been bested by innocence or superior guile. As James tells us, in a turn of phrase Austen might envy: "this assurance . . . from her grace's point of view, was either very artless or very audacious."

Thus both Kitty and Bessie are limited in their language. Neither displays Elizabeth's ability to function in the worlds of both the individual and of society, and to mediate between the two. Their limitation is shown clearly in the way James's conclusion of the scene differs from Austen's. All alone, Elizabeth puzzles over the visit, until she understands fully its significance. But neither Bessie nor Kitty can realize the full meaning of the duchess's visit, although they discuss it after her departure. Bessie cannot comprehend the duchess's motive in trying to frighten Bessie away from Lambeth; Kitty can never understand why the visit must make Bessie refuse Lambeth. One sister has only moral perceptions, the other only social ones.

* * *

A close look at "Episode" has shown us how Austenian

was the early James technically: in structure and plotting, ironic voice, characters, and symbolic use of setting. Thematically too he is her inheritor. Through seemingly superficial details of social intercourse--the language the characters speak, the clothes they think are important, the places they live--Austen and James treat the same profound issues which other novelists handle in settings often believed larger or more significant: a ship at sea, warfare, the political world. Austen and James use manners--the customs and behavior of people toward one another--metaphorically, to depict society and its values as fully as a Melville or a Tolstoy.

And the aspect of manners which Austen and James treat most is that concerned with relations between the sexes. Marriage in their work assumes the same symbolic value that might elsewhere be given to war or death. Through marriage they express their beliefs about the relationship of the individual with society, a relationship symbolized by the union of the heroine with her suitor.

In both Pride and Prejudice and "An International Episode," a striking tableau makes this point. At Pemberley, Elizabeth unexpectedly encounters Darcy.²⁰ Standing with him a little apart from her aunt and uncle, she "astonished and confused, scarcely dared lift her eyes to his face, and knew not what answer she returned to his civil enquiries after her family" (pp. 251-252). As she looks up, it is his face on

which she focuses, but behind him stretches Pemberley and all it stands for: a life of taste, reason, generosity, the best of English tradition and culture. Commitment to him will also be to the society whose best aspects he represents. In "Episode" a similar arrested moment occurs when Bessie, visiting Hyde Park with her sister and a young American man, is surprised to meet Lord Lambeth. "The scene bore the stamp of the London social pressure at its highest." Lambeth, like Darcy, becomes inextricably involved with the magnificent social panorama which frames his presence:

And then Lord Lambeth, raising his hat afresh, shook hands with Bessie--"Fancy your being here!" He was blushing and smiling; he looked very handsome and he had a note of splendor he had not had in America. The girl's free fancy, as we know, was just then in marked exercise; so that the tall young Englishman, as he stood there looking down at her, had the benefit of it. "He's handsomer and more splendid than anything I've ever seen," she said to herself (p. 95).

A measure of the difference in these two societies--Pemberley's and Hyde Park's--is the conclusion of the two novels. Elizabeth Bennet is able to adjust her own needs to those of society, forming with Darcy a true union of minds and hearts. Their home shelters their younger sisters, who will learn from Elizabeth that Darcy may be teased into new attitudes. But welcome too is the arrogant Lady Catherine, with whom Elizabeth reconciles Darcy. As Litz says,

the entire movement of Pride and Prejudice tends toward a resolution of conflicts which is a union

rather than a compromise. . . . a union of opposites--without injury to the identity of either. . . . For once in her career, Jane Austen allowed the symmetry of her imaginative creation to prevail over the protests of her social self, and the result is a triumph of ideal form. It was a triumph not to be repeated, one that was replaced in the later novels by less comforting views of human nature. Yet it remains valid as the finest expression of one aspect of Jane Austen's personality, her desire to endow human behavior with the order and symmetry of art.²¹

In this early novel, Austen still believed possible a resolution of the tension in her world, or at least there she showed such a resolution reached through art. Bessie, however, comes to see that Lambeth's society is false and superficial, closed to the best intellectual and cultural ideas, as well as to the rejuvenating effect of a new group, represented by the Americans. She rejects his proposal and retains her individuality. Later her countrywoman, Isabel Archer, will similarly reject an English lord but will find no happiness with the American expatriot she chooses instead. For James's lifelong theme was the final inability of any human being to reconcile opposing forces of the individual and society. This was the tragedy he saw in life and expressed symbolically through the failure of the innocent to enter the world of experience. Austen stands at the boundary between that century in which it was still believed that human beings could fulfill their individual needs within society and that century which witnessed profound doubts about this hope. James's greatest work falls at the dividing line

between this latter century and our own, to which his great theme speaks most poignantly.

CHAPTER THREE

BIOGRAPHICAL SIMILARITIES: THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE IN "CINDERELLA"

Mark Twain disliked Jane Austen so much that he once praised a ship's library for not including her work: "Just that one omission alone would make a fairly good library out of a library that hadn't a book in it."¹ And although in later years he respected James's literary achievement, Twain never read the Master with pleasure. His objection was the same in both cases. He said of Austen, "Whenever I take up Pride and Prejudice or Sense and Sensibility, I feel like a barkeeper entering the Kingdom of Heaven." And in regard to James, he vowed he had rather "be damned to John Bunyan's heaven than read The Bostonians."² Twain's perception of corseted correctness in the two novelists, his identification of them with a puritanical repression of natural feelings, his objection that Austen's characters cannot "warm up and feel a passion,"³ is typical of many readers. Other wits take similar aim. Garrod speculates,

I daresay there is a land of promise in which we may one day meet such young women as Fanny Price, Anne Elliot, Elinor Dashwood; but it will be a land flowing with milk and water.⁴

Forster says of James's characters that "their clothes will not take off."⁵ And Colby declares that in James's books, "nobody sins because nobody has anything to sin with."⁶

Yet another group of readers sees the work of these two novelists as filled with passion and sexual emotion. Such a perceptive reader as the short story writer, Frank O'Connor, says of Austen,

If I read her rightly, she was a woman afraid of the violence of her own emotions, who rode the nightmare of her own emotions, who rode the nightmare and sometimes rode too tight a rein.⁷

George Moore, the novelist, expressed the opinion that we go into society not for conversation but for the pleasures of sex, everything being arranged for that end. And he asks, "But should we have discovered it without Miss Austen's help?"⁸ As for James, Edel asserts that he was as concerned with sex as Joyce was with damnation.⁹ This preoccupation is obvious in such early work as Watch and Ward, whose unconscious eroticism is sometimes suggestive to the twentieth-century reader. Edel wonders why the zealous censors of Boston never objected to such images in the novel as,

. . . Roger caught himself wondering whether, at the worst, a little precursory love-making would do any harm. The ground might be gently ticked to receive his own sowing; the petals of the young girl's nature, playfully forced apart, would leave the golden heart of the flower but the more accessible to his own vertical rays.¹⁰

or to this vivid episode:

. . . the door opened and Nora came in. Her errand was to demand the use of Roger's watch-key, her own having mysteriously vanished. She had begun to take out her pins and had muffled herself for this excursion in a merino dressing-gown of sombre blue. Her hair was gathered for the night into a single coil, which had been loosened by the rapidity of her flight along the passage. Roger's key proved a complete misfit, so that she had recourse to Hubert's. It hung on the watch-chain which depended from his waistcoat, and some rather intimate fumbling was needed to adjust it to Nora's diminutive timepiece.¹¹

Edel remarks, ". . . we must once more ask ourselves (with our own active Freudian imaginations ticking away furiously) how the future author of The Wings of the Dove could allow himself a scene which D. H. Lawrence might have written." Certainly it's clear that such passages show us "the young James, at his writing-desk, finding verbal release for much libidinal feeling that was later to be artfully disciplined."¹²

It is significant that one of the few written comments on Austen that we have from James concerns this matter of sexuality:

In of course an infinitely less explicit way, Emma Woodhouse and Anne Eliot give us as great an impression of "passion"--that celebrated quality--as the ladies of George Sand and Balzac. Their small gentility and front parlour existence doesn't suppress it, but only modifies the outward form of it.¹³

James is talking here about manners, conventions or rituals which govern our behavior in society, modifying our expression of basic drives or emotions. Thus one explanation for the wide difference of opinion on Austen and James might be

that the work of both contains much sexuality, but that its generally indirect presentation--so that it is not "suppressed" but just "outwardly modified" and expressed through manners--prevents many readers from recognizing its power. This chapter will first consider this possibility and will then explore the two novelists' particular use of the Cinderella fairy tale, for in so doing, I believe we can find some understanding of their attitudes toward sexuality.

* * *

In real life neither Austen nor James fanatically avoided the discussion of sexual matters. Austen's letters to Cassandra often startle with their frank and sophisticated treatment of the physical, bragging about being able to spot an adultress,¹⁴ joking about Lord Lucan and Lord Craven taking mistresses,¹⁵ making facetious plans to have a cook and housemaid "with a sedate, middle-aged Man, who is to undertake the double office of Husband to the former and sweetheart to the latter."¹⁶ We can see from the difference of tone in the novels and here in the letters that she believed art should be restrained and controlled as life cannot always be. Similarly, James is plainspoken and more amused than shocked as he writes Howells of a novelistic episode Edmond de Goncourt plans about "a whore-house de province."¹⁷ And in planning The Wings of the Dove, he is matter-of-fact about adultery:

If I were writing for a French public the whole thing would be simple--the elder, the "other," woman would simply be the mistress of the young man, and it would be a question of his taking on the dying girl for a time--having a temporary liaison with her.¹⁸

Another consideration is that Austen as the daughter of an eighteenth-century rural clergyman and James as a child of the Victorian age, were strongly influenced by their reading public. Only a year or so after Austen's death, for example,

James Plumtree and Thomas Bowdler went to work on the English classics to expunge any hint of sexual innuendo from Shakespeare and other great poets, playwrights and novelists of the past. They changed "Under the greenwood tree / Who loves to lie with me", from As You Like It, so that it became "Under the greenwood tree / Who loves to work with me."¹⁹

Especially in America, the reading public often consisted of prudish, middle-class women, dictated to by a Calvinistic clergy preaching the evils of tobacco, alcohol, dancing, card playing and novel reading.²⁰ From his many complaints, we know that James often felt the taboos of his culture: "For many people art means rose-colored window-panes and selection means picking a bouquet for Mrs. Grundy."²¹

Yet in the work of James and Austen, sex and the proper relationship between the sexes is central. Irvin Ehrenpreis points out to Austen that

. . . her main characters include a bastard daughter (Harriet Smith, in Emma), the seducer of an

orphan, (Willoughby, in Sense and Sensibility), three runaway girls and their lovers (Lydia Bennet, in Pride and Prejudice; Maria and Julia Bertram, in Mansfield Park), and an unctuous widow who elects to be the mistress of a double-dealing gentleman (Mrs. Clay in Persuasion).²²

A similar list for James would include examples even more striking: a mother who forces her daughter into a lucrative marriage to conceal her illegitimate birth (Mrs. Light), a girl driven to suicide because of sexual indiscretion ("The Patagonia"), a husband's encouragement of his wife's adultery in order that his own behavior might be justified ("Madame de Mauves"), a young man who cannot marry an eminently suitable young woman because he is carrying on an adulterous affair with her mother (The Awkward Age), parents who wish to sell their daughter on the marriage market (The American), adultery between step-mother and son-in-law (The Golden Bowl), a woman's plot to marry her lover to a wealthy girl who will soon die (The Wings of the Dove), a governess who commits adultery with her pupil's father (What Maisie Knew). The list could go on. Sexual relations pervade even the books ostensibly about large social issues such as women's suffrage (The Bostonians) or class revolution in England (The Princess Cassamassima).

Considering this centrality of sex in their work, it is not surprising that Dorothy Van Ghent says of Austen that

Curiously and quite wonderfully out of her restricted concern for the rational and social definition of human performance there does arise a

strong implication of the physical from her cool, unencumbered understanding of the linguistic exhibitions of the parlor human, she gives us, by the subtlest of implication, the human down to its "naturals". . . .²³

Nor are we surprised when Clifton Fadiman remarks of James that "Seen in the light of what Freud has taught us, James suddenly demonstrates an extraordinary perception of the hidden and even sinister drives of men and women."²⁴

Yet these "sinister drives" are most often depicted in Austen and James from a distance rather than directly. Robert Heilman discusses Austen's dramatic innovation in Pride and Prejudice, where she pushes the stereotypical action into the background, so that it happens offstage.²⁵ He points out that the event's interest lies not in the elopers, "but in the impact of their escapade on others." In the same way, in his early novel The American, James makes acceptable a similar stereotype of the fatal duel, emphasizing its causes and after-effects rather than the duel itself. Later, in The Wings of the Dove, James "creates a novel in which all the 'great scenes'--all the expected ones--are left out."²⁶ Thus both novelists achieve distance in two ways simultaneously--by focusing not on the melodrama itself, but on its effects, and not on the participants in the event, but on its observers. This is why a synopsis of a James or an Austen book usually has a different effect from the book itself. When the plot is recounted, it sometimes glows with a lurid sensationalism that is never sensed upon actual reading.

The technique of viewpoint keeps passion at a distance. In Austen, we never witness events through the eyes of the seducer or the seduced. We never see Marianne's passion, vivid though it may be, through her eyes, but always from the calm viewpoint of Elinor.²⁷ David Cecil notices that "We are shown exactly how Anne Elliot's love of nature coloured her mood, but she is never allowed to tell us of it in person." And he explains that Austen "traces brilliantly the effect of emotion, the way it heats a situation, modifies character; but she expresses it only by implication. Her plots turn on love but only one of her lovers, the self-controlled Mr. Knightley, do we hear declare his passion."²⁸ It is through the less passionate, less committed viewpoint of Emma that we see the deep devotion of Jane Fairfax for Frank Churchill. We do not see Henry Crawford elope with Maria Bertram; we read a newspaper account of his doing so, and we watch the events beforehand and afterward through the quiet eyes of Fanny. In Henry James, we see events as Rowland Mallet does, not in the violent way of Roderick Hudson. We stay in the skin of the well-named, chilly Winterbourne, not the warm-blooded Daisy. In "The Aspern Papers," we do now know directly of the great love affair between the poet and his now-aged Juliana; we learn of it only through the calloused reactions of the publisher/critic/narrator. We see not with the passionate gaze of Madame Vionnet, but with the thoughtful one of Strether. We

experience Caspar Goodwood only through Isabel, who fears, rather than welcomes his sexual energy.

In order to distance passion in this way, James and Austen develop their viewpoints carefully. In her two early books, Austen's control is readily apparent. Elinor, the personification of restraint, filters for us the love felt by Marianne, the most deeply passionate Austen heroine. In Northanger Abbey, the author-narrator remains strong so as to undercut satirically the emotions of Catherine Morland. By the time of Emma, as Wayne Booth has demonstrated,²⁹ Austen is a delicate manipulator of point of view, presenting simultaneously the narrator's and heroine's view of events, so that we develop sympathy for Emma by seeing things from her viewpoint, but at the same time we are distanced by the narrator's revelation of Emma's faults. Elizabeth Bennet is handled similarly, though not with such mastery. Anne Elliot and Fanny, because of their reticent personalities, keep their emotions under tight verbal control. The careful reader senses their strong feeling in every line, but it is usually conveyed through gesture and nuance rather than through direct words of either the character or the narrator, for Austen keeps us in "that delightful state when . . . while much is actually given to the sight, more yet remains for the imagination" (MP, ch. 15, vol. III).

In later novels, James solves the problem of distance through his passive observer.³⁰ At other times, he develops

viewpoint characters in whom the sexual emotion is overpowered by another: possessiveness in Christopher Newman, who sees Claire as a desirable object to be owned rather than a flesh-and-blood woman, sorrow over imminent death in the case of Millie Theale, greed and ambition in Kate Croy, regret over the absence of passion in John Marcher, or over the failure to explore it in time in the case of Lambert Strether. In "The Turn of the Screw," the governess's sexual passion is distanced for us by her repression of it, her refusal to acknowledge it. In the case of Maggie Verver, James begins the book at a point when sexual passion has ceased to influence her as much as does the wish to assert herself with the Prince, and--as we cannot help feeling to be more important at times--against Charlotte. If the passion does continue to assert itself strongly, the viewpoint character is made to flee from it, as does Isabel from Casper Goodwood. Even in The Bostonians, which reveberates with the strongest sexual desire in James, Basil's even greater drive is to dominate Verena and prevent Olive from owning her.

This indirect manner of handling sexuality is significant, for what people handle indirectly but persistently can be more important than what they handle directly. It is also significant that this curiously muffled sexuality is--frequently in Austen and almost always in James--presented within the structure of "Cinderella."

D. W. Harding traces the Cinderella motif throughout Austen's novels. Avrom Fleishman has brilliantly analyzed Mansfield Park as a retelling of the Cinderella story, citing numerous parallels, including characters, plot and theme. He believes the fairy tale to be the prototype for the novel, as for the story in The Merchant of Venice of the three caskets and for Lear's choice of his three daughters.³¹ David Paul thinks that Austen used the Cinderella pattern consciously and ironically in Mansfield Park:

At first glance this may seem astonishing and absurd, but the parallels are too frequent and too carefully displaced not to be conscious. Fanny, the heroine, is virtually but not actually an orphan. Julia and Maria, with their coarseness and self-confidence, admirably serve the functions of ugly sisters, and Mrs. Norris just as admirably fills the role of stepmother. And when the critical moment arrives Sir Thomas Bertram comes appropriately forward as the overpowering fairy godfather. . . .

Moreover, elements which have almost vanished from the tale are curiously restored in the novel. The element of ordeal, for instance, which relates Cinderella to the story of Cupid and Psyche, is most convincingly reinstated in the agonies of poor Fanny, secretly loving Edmund, openly pressed by Crawford, and having to submit to all the terrors of Sir Thomas's disapproval. Again, one of the most telling touches in the fairytale, the switch-back from the splendours of the ball to rags and cinders, has of course grown banal with repetition. But in the novel it is re-established in all its force. When Sir Thomas, to teach Fanny a lesson for her stubbornness, sends her off home to what he hopes will be a salutary taste of the poverty and meanness she was born to, the transition from the upholstered calm of the Park to the hard, bright vulgarity of Portsmouth effects one of the simplest yet most magical changes of key in all fiction.³²

Surely Pride and Prejudice is an even more direct application of the story, without the ironic overtones Paul sees in Mansfield Park: Elizabeth is the daughter mistreated and undervalued by her (step)mother, Mrs. Bennet, who favors the three unpleasant younger (step)sisters. At the ball, where her (step)mother hopes the other sisters will attract attention, it is Elizabeth with whom Darcy falls in love. She endures many trials but through the good offices of her godmother, Mrs. Gardiner, is finally reunited with the Prince and lives happily ever after.

Though none of the other Austen novels fulfills the pattern so completely, all conform in various ways. All of the heroines lack a loving, helpful mother. Anne's and Emma's are dead; Fanny's has indifferently given her up; Mrs. Dashwood is giddy and indulgent, encouraging Marianne in the very attitudes which prove her downfall. Since in Northanger Abbey, Austen's satire consists of reversing every Gothic stereotype, Mrs. Morland must be depicted as an ordinary loving mother, but she is kept out of most of the novel by her geographical separation from Catherine. If we look at the minor works, Lady Susan provides an excellent example of a mother far closer to a stepmother even than Mrs. Bennet. Stepmothers in the other novels include Lady Russell who, though well-meaning, is destructive of Anne's happiness for many years; and Mrs. Allen, who gives Catherine so little in the way of rational advice and examples that she hinders the

girl's love affair with Henry. Sense and Sensibility provides a less clear example; early in the novel, Mrs. Jennings seems close to the conventional stepmother figure, but as the book progresses, she becomes more sympathetic, evolving into a godmother.³³ Stepsisters are present in other books: in Persuasion as Anne's older and younger sisters, as well as in the two Musgroves, who temporarily compete for Wentworth's affections, and in Sense and Sensibility as the two Steeles. In Pride and Prejudice, though the plot hardly seems to require another character, Austen carefully provides Bingley with not one, but two disagreeable sisters to fawn over Darcy. (In the same way, the heroines of Sense and Sensibility and Persuasion are carefully provided with two sisters, rather than just one. In Sense and Sensibility, Margaret Dashwood's role seems merely vestigial, but by the time of Persuasion, Austen has learned to integrate the third sister into the novel's structure.)

Mansfield Park and Emma follow the story less closely than do the other books. In his interpretation of Mansfield Park as a consciously ironic inversion of Cinderella, David Paul points out that Fanny refuses Crawford, the handsome prince, even after he discovers her in poverty at Portsmouth, and shows his worthiness by continuing to love her. Emma departs from the pattern because the heroine is herself the wealthy princess from the beginning. As D. W. Harding observes of that novel, the Cinderella theme is relegated to

the subordinate role of Jane Fairfax.³⁴ The complete inversion of the fairy tale results, then, when the heroine gives up her childish belief in fairy tales. Emma learns that Harriet Smith will never be revealed as the offspring of romantic, well-born parents, that she is, instead, exactly what she seems, an illegitimate child of a tradesman. Emma finally grows up when she realizes not only that Harriet will marry the ordinary farmer, Robert Martin, rather than the handsome prince, but also that Harriet will lead with him an ordinary, contented life. The three-sister pattern is again present, with Jane Fairfax and Harriet as Emma's two rivals in love, but, in keeping with the novel's parodic treatment, neither is evil or unkind.

Only John Halperin has noticed³⁵ that the Cinderella motif is one of the ways James and Austen are alike; he mentions it briefly. Several others have remarked on James's use of the story. Lebowitz³⁶ observes that the innocent American rich girl in James is the image of Cinderella. Lisa Appignanesi³⁷ goes farther, stating that this Cinderella image is James's principal heroine--Mary Garland, Catherine Sloper, Isabel Archer, Milly Theale and Maggie Verver--and includes even heroines who are not American--Fleda Vetch, Maisie Farrange, and Nanda Brookenham.³⁸ Appignanesi also sees the Cinderella pattern in Hyacinth Robinson and Lambeth Strether, both of whom, she feels, display feminine sensibility. She thinks this characteristic is synonymous with

extraordinary perceptiveness, the ability to observe and understand other people, obviously a quality in which Jamesian characters would score high. But she is either unfamiliar with more common elements of the story, or she has not read much Austen, for at one point she states, "Neither George Eliot nor Jane Austen, George Sand, Balzac or the Brothers Goncourt--all writers whom James admired--share this particular characteristic [of using the Cinderella motif]." ³⁹ Still, to her already extensive list of Cinderellas in James, we might add Bessie Alden, Francie Dossen of "The Reverberator," and Gertrude Wentworth of "The Europeans;" and The American could be the tale told from the prince's point of view.

As in Austen, good mothers are absent from James's stories. Ernest Earnest has remarked in another connection,

In the whole body of James's work, it is difficult to find a nourishing family relationship. A number of his heroines are either orphaned or have the most tenuous relationships with parents. It sometimes seems as if the typical Jamesian heroine has been born by parthenogenesis. ⁴⁰

The mothers are dead in Washington Square, The Portrait of a Lady, Watch and Ward, The Spoils of Poynton, The Turn of the Screw, The Wings of the Dove, and The Golden Bowl. They are transformed into the step-mother, either too dull and unaware to offer their daughters any help and advice as in The Bostonians, The Tragic Muse, and "Daisy Miller," or truly wicked as in Roderick Hudson (Mrs. Light), The American, What Maisie

Knew, and The Awkward Age. Elizabeth Stevenson⁴¹ remarks on the "extraordinary number of fairy godmothers or godfathers" in James: Roger Lawrence to Nora in Watch and Ward, Rowland to Roderick Hudson, The Touchetts to Isabel Archer, Christina Light to Hyacinth, Olive to Verene in The Bostonians, Mr. Carteret to Nick and Peter Sherringham to Miriam in The Tragical Muse, Mrs. Gareth to Fleda in The Spoils of Poynton, Mr. Longdon to Nanda in The Awkward Age, Mr. Betterman to Graham Fiedler in The Ivory Tower. Naomi Lebowitz also calls Fanny Assingham in The Golden Bowl a fairy godmother, although a false one, since the whole point of that novel, she believes, is that Maggie must become her own fairy godmother, must learn to act for herself.⁴² Certainly Mrs. Tristram in The American is every bit the matchmaker that Cinderella's godmother was, while Mrs. Wix of What Maisie Knew seems almost a Disney-like caricature.

* * *

The use of the Cinderella story is hardly unique to Austen and James. It is a common basis for romance, and writers frequently invert the story for purposes of comedy or realism. Henrietta Ten Harmsel traces the pattern in Austen's work, especially in novels like Pride and Prejudice and Mansfield Park, and points out the novelist's inheritance of the structure from minor writers of her time, who, in turn, appropriated it from Richardson's Pamela.⁴³ What I

believe to be significant with Austen and James is the variation which they make on the story, both changing it in a similar way. James introduces this variation in almost all of his work, while Austen uses it part of the time, at other times retaining the original Cinderella story.

Joseph Wiesenfarth divides Austen's work into those novels, Pride and Prejudice and Persuasion, which complete the Cinderella story, and the other four. Thus Mansfield Park

finally denies the actuality of the Cinderella myth and only affirms it as what could have been if Henry had been faithful to Fanny. . . . In other words, Fanny would have been Cinderella had Henry only persevered in being Prince Charming, but he did not.⁴⁴

(Wiesenfarth believes that those Austen novels which deny the Cinderella myth turn to a different pattern, which I will consider later.)

In support of this idea, that certain Austen novels begin but do not complete the Cinderella story, is the disappointment which readers sometimes feel as the stories develop. In Sense and Sensibility, for example, the inconsistency of tone provokes discussion. Laurence Lerner points out that the book "begins as pure comedy, and continues so for eight chapters, chapters of unmixd delight," and then returns to a bantering tone at the very end. But the thirty-nine chapters in between, he reminds us, have related the tragedy of Marianne, whose impassioned outburst "shatters the shell of comedy."⁴⁵

To more than one reader, the proof conjured up of Willoughby's villainy seems contrived, not nearly so artistically satisfying nor so powerful as the scene in which he confesses to Elinor his love for Marianne. And Brandon never convinces these readers of his ability to attract the seventeen-year-old heroine. Marvin Mudrick, for example, contends that with this turn of events, Austen betrays her heroine and shatters the novel's tone, trying to make us believe that "the cure for a broken heart is to remove it." And Robert Garis calls the marriage to Brandon "a kind of refusal."⁴⁶ Even the much more credible marriage of Elinor and Edward fails to satisfy a good many readers.⁴⁷

In Mansfield Park, Austen disappoints the anticipations of certain readers when Fanny and Edmund do not marry the Crawfords. G. B. Stern suspects an unplanned plot shift, with Austen originally intending Crawford to marry Fanny:

Henry Crawford needed only one instant of acknowledgement from his creator, and we would have had him where I truly believe most of us desire him: as the hero of Mansfield Park, instead of its attractive villain.

She thinks that Austen at first was persuaded Henry would make a good husband, and sees sincerity in

Henry's exciting, eloquent wooing at Mansfield; his charming and considerate behaviour (not superficially but truly charming) to all Fanny's family when he comes down to visit her at Portsmouth. Through that visit, and after, I am tolerably sure, the author was plainly herself in favour of his marriage with Fanny. What, then, caused her so suddenly to

change her mind and drag in an arbitrary and unconvincing elopement with Maria Rushworth to cause horror and confusion. . . ?

But even among readers who do not go so far, much dissatisfaction has been expressed. Alistair Duckworth writes: "Despite a great deal of critical attention in recent years, Mansfield Park continues to be received antagonistically by many readers." And Lionel Trilling reports that Mansfield Park, unlike the rest of Austen's books, is bitterly resented by the many students with whom he has read the novels.⁴⁸

Even the attractive George Knightley of Emma comes in for his share of disapproval as a marriage partner especially from women readers. Leonie Villard thinks he is rather like Edmund Bertram and would be as boring if he had time to discuss the same subjects. Margaret Drabble has a female character in one of her novels exclaim, "Emma got what she deserved, in marrying Mr. Knightley. What can it have been like, in bed with Mr. Knightley? Sorrow awaited that woman: she would have done better to steal Frank Churchill, if she could." Perhaps Jane Hodge is right in asserting that Emma is Austen's least feminine book, the one most often preferred by men. Even Sheila Kaye-Smith, who favors the novel, emphasizes the portrayal of deep love in Sense and Sensibility and in Persuasion, and then says, "Emma, on the other hand. . . . plucks the flower of friendship in full bloom. . . . No doubt hers is not love as Marianne Dashwood understood it, but though it makes no appeal to sensibility it has much that

would be approved by sense."⁴⁹

The same avoidance of a romantic union occurs in James. In the early Watch and Ward, James creates anticipation of a union between Hubert and Nora, endowing him, in the memorable scene quoted here earlier, with a watch-key which is a perfect fit for her timepiece. But she rejects the sexual attraction so symbolized and marries Roger, the guardian who has reared her. Roger, in his turn, rejects a South American beauty for Nora. James himself admitted years later that in The American, the Bellegardes' aboutface in refusing Newman Claire's hand is not credible, since such people would have felt too much greed to call off the marriage. In The Portrait of a Lady, many readers have commented on Isabel's retreat from the strongly sexual Caspar Goodwood. Edmund Wilson describes the three novels which followed, The Bostonians, The Princess Casamassima, and The Tragic Muse, as "brilliant up to a point" with vividly depicted social and personal relationships, including

a really charged and convincing scene between a man and a woman . . . in place of the mild battledore-and-shuttlecock that we are accustomed to getting from James. . . . Then suddenly the story stops short: after the arrival of Miriam in London, The Tragic Muse is almost a blank. Of the two young men who have been preoccupied with Miriam, one renounces her because she will not leave the stage and the other doesn't, apparently, fall in love with her.

Wilson attributes James's lack of popular appeal at this time to the fact that "you cannot enchant an audience with stories

about men wooing women in which the parties either never get together or are never seen functioning as lovers."⁵⁰ After this period, James continued to produce novels with whose outcomes many readers have difficulty sympathizing. In The Awkward Age, Nanda conducts herself in a way that many find exaggeratedly self-sacrificing; because of this, she loses the charming Van and must set up housekeeping with the fatherly Mr. Longdon. In The Golden Bowl, some readers sympathize most with the physical love Charlotte and the Prince feel for each other, but it is Maggie's and the Prince's more tepid relationship of which the author approves.

* * *

With this consideration in mind then--that many of Austen's and most of James's novels begin but do not complete the Cinderella story--it would be helpful to look at the meaning some interpreters give this tale. Both Freud and Jung believe that important lessons are embedded in familiar stories. In The Uses of Enchantment, Bruno Bettelheim interprets the fairy tale, in particular, as containing such lessons, offering the young child great help in facing and understanding the psychological problems of growing up, in an imaginative form and in an indirect way so that the entire process of education is unconscious, the child always unaware of the true needs the story is meeting.⁵¹ In mastering his or her problems,

. . . overcoming narcissistic disappointments,

oedipal dilemmas, sibling rivalries; becoming able to relinquish childhood dependencies; gaining a feeling of self-hood and self-worth, and a sense of moral obligation--a child needs to understand what is going on within his conscious self so that he can also cope with that which goes on in his unconscious. He can achieve this understanding, and with it the ability to cope, not through rational comprehension of the nature and content of his unconscious, but by becoming familiar with it through spinning out daydreams. . . .⁵²

The Cinderella story is the most universally popular of all fairy tales,⁵³ addressing as it does the problem of sibling rivalry which almost all children face. Bettelheim explains:

No other fairy tale renders so well as the "Cinderella" stories the inner experiences of the young child in the throes of sibling rivalry, when he feels hopelessly outclassed by his brothers and sisters. Cinderella is pushed down and degraded by her stepsisters; her interests are sacrificed to theirs by her (step)mother; she is expected to do the dirtiest work and although she performs it well, she receives no credit for it; only more is demanded of her. This is how the child feels when devastated by the miseries of sibling rivalry. . . . there are moments--often long time periods--when for inner reasons a child feels this way even when his position among his siblings may seem to give him no cause for it.⁵⁴

The story would appeal to James as much as to Austen, "since children of both sexes suffer equally from sibling rivalry, and have the same desire to be rescued from their lowly position and surpass those who seem superior to them."⁵⁵

This feeling of being outclasses by his brother is keenly apparent in A Small Boy and Others, when James describes how William was always ahead of him everywhere and in everything. Speaking of his "very first perceptions," he says:

One of these, and probably the promptest in order, was that of my brother's occupying a place in the world to which I couldn't at all aspire--to any approach to which in truth I seem to myself every consciousness of having forfeited a title. It glimmers back to me that I quite definitely and resignedly thought of him as in the most exemplary manner already beforehand with me.⁵⁶

And on the same subject of his status in the family, he uses a striking metaphor:

I lose myself in wonder at the loose ways, the strange process of waste, through which nature and fortune may deal on occasion with those whose faculty for application is all and only in their imagination and their sensibility. There may be during those bewildered and brooding years so little for them to "show" that I liken the individual dunce--as he so often must appear--to some commercial traveler who has lost the key to his packed case of samples and can but pass for a fool while others' exhibitions go forward.⁵⁷

"Dunce"--an unlikely word to apply to Henry James, but it supports Bettelheim's assertion that even the most improbable child suffers from sibling rivalry. Edel has written at length about the tense rivalry between the two oldest James boys. This surfaces in Henry's fiction, of which Edel remarks,

Readers of Henry James's novels and tales discover at every turn the writer's predilection for second sons. Sometimes he kills off older brothers or turns them into villains; sometimes his hero is an only son, usually with a widowed mother. He thus confers on them an ideal fatherless and brotherless state.⁵⁸

And Edel offers two early examples: Roderick Hudson, who had an older brother killed in the Civil War (In the early edition, James described him as "ugly-faced."), and Valentine

de Bellegarde, a second son, whose older brother, "the Marquis, is a monument of fatuity and corruption."

The impression of Austen's life given by her protective relatives in their memoirs, and by those of her letters which survived their severe censorship, offers no example of such rivalry. But Emma's remark to Knightley gives us thought: "Nobody, who has not been in the interior of a family, can say what the difficulties of any individual of that family may be" (*Emma*, p. 146, ch. 18). And Joan Rees, one of Austen's biographers, observes:

Throughout the whole of life Jane Austen was totally immersed in her family, but much as she loved her own, her family portraits cannot fail to raise doubts about her happiness within this situation.⁵⁹

Both *Pride and Prejudice's* Jane Bennet, perhaps based in part on Cassandra, and Austen's affectionate letters to her older sister, depict Cassandra as an almost faultless woman.

Douglas Bush tells us that she "was, according to a family opinion upheld and perhaps started by Jane, in all important respects the superior of the two. . ." To the young Jane, perhaps she was as much an object of overwhelming, unsurpassable capability as was William to Henry.⁶⁰ Or Jane's rivalry may have inclined toward her brothers. She was a vulnerable age--four years--when her next and last brother was born, and the lines from *Northanger Abbey* sound wistful:

Mrs. Morland was a very good woman, and wished to see her children everything they ought to be; but

her time was so much occupied in lying-in and teaching the little ones, that her elder daughters were inevitably left to shift for themselves (Northanger Abbey, p. 15).

". . . Some of her funniest sarcasms are against babies, [and] . . . she held it against mothers that they showed an irrational adoration of their babies,"⁶¹ Brigid Brophy points out of Austen, suggesting that she was resentful of Mrs. Austen's irrational love either for Jane's older brother, George, who required special care, or for the older brothers in compensation for having sent George away. Jane's envy of her brothers is natural anyway, in an age when boys could achieve fame and financial success as her brothers did by joining the British Navy, while she, as a girl, was condemned to financial dependence upon either parents, brothers, or husband.

* * *

Other things that Bettelheim tells us about the Cinderella story also seem relevant to James and Austen's lives. The story exists in two versions. That which is no longer popular today opened with an episode which has been lost in the story common today. In the first tale, Cinderella's father wished to marry her, so that she was compelled to flee; or he felt such excessive love for her that her mother neglected her.⁶² Our modern version is truncated and also substitutes a stepmother and sibling rivalry for the original oedipal conflict. In the same way, of course, "In real life,

positive and negative oedipal relations, and guilt about these relations often remain hidden behind sibling rivalry," which

has only incidentally to do with a child's actual brothers and sisters. The real source of it is the child's feelings about his parents. . . . Another child being given special attention becomes an insult only if the child fears that, in contrast, he is thought little of by his parents, or feels rejected by them.⁶³

After passing through the normal period of love for the parent of the opposite sex, Bettelheim believes, the child, with greater maturity, realizes that the oedipal jealousy previously felt, the desire to get rid of the parent of the same sex, is unacceptable. The child represses this jealousy, knowing it has serious consequences, but still feels guilt and considers him or herself deserving of degradation because of "dirty" thoughts (hence the cinders of the story). The brothers and sisters are then hated and feared as examples of those believed to be free of such "evil" thoughts.

When we hear the modern version of Cinderella, it is impossible to recognize the oedipal involvements that lie underneath; only the sibling rivalry is apparent. But, says Bettelheim, in the child hearing it, the story will activate those deeper, repressed emotions, those unconscious desires, which are connected with sibling rivalry. The lesson which the Cinderella story teaches is that "Cinderella has to work through her deep oedipal disappointments and return to a successful life at the story's end, no longer a child, but a

young maiden ready for marriage." Thus the story helps fulfill the growth process, which "begins with the resistance against the parents and fear of growing up, and ends when youth has truly found itself, achieved psychological independence and moral maturity, and no longer views the other sex as threatening or demonic, but is able to relate positively to it."⁶⁴ It symbolically reenacts the progress every mature woman must make, from love for her father as the representative of masculinity to love for a man of her own generation whom she marries and with whom she establishes a family.⁶⁵

* * *

Let us consider first how this symbolic meaning of "Cinderella" might relate to Austen's life and then to her writing, and next proceed to a similar discussion of James's life and work. It is impossible to judge how much and in exactly what ways the Cinderella story applies to Austen's life. Bettelheim cautions us, to begin with, that many interpretations besides those he suggests are pertinent, for "fairy tales, like all true works of art, possess a multifarious richness and depth that far transcend what even the most thorough discursive examination can extract from them."⁶⁶ In addition, we know too little of Austen's personal life to judge exactly what relationship she had with her mother and father. Both parents were intelligent and capable, seemingly well-matched, though Mrs. Austen was much better born than

he. Jane's father was well read and knowledgeable; he educated her brothers entirely at home until their college years and also took in a few pupils. Though there is no direct criticism, the impression of Mrs. Austen given by the daughter's letters, and by other relatives' reports, is of a confirmed hypochondriac.⁶⁷ Even four years before Jane's birth, we are told that when the Austen's changed residences, "Mrs. Austen, who was not then in strong health, performed the short journey on a feather-bed, placed upon some soft articles of furniture. . . ."⁶⁸ Throughout her life, she spent so much time on a sofa that even in her last illness when she could not sit or stand, Jane made do with a makeshift arrangement of three chairs so as to leave the accustomed place for her mother,⁶⁹ who survived Jane by ten years, living to be almost ninety. Such figures of fun as Mr. Woodhouse and his daughter Isabel, as well as the petulant Mary Musgrove, may draw their inspiration from Mrs. Austen. And we remember Lady Bertram permanently ensconced on her sofa. Geoffrey Gorer thinks it significant that in all the information available about Jane's mother, "What does not occur in the records is an account of a single good-natured or spontaneous action, any lovable behaviour."⁷⁰ He concludes, after a thoughtful re-reading of the letters and other evidence,

the picture which emerges is of a domineering old lady, fussy and querulous, making the whole tiny household revolve round her comfort and her health, using the threat of disease to avoid or prevent anything which did not please her.⁷¹

Gorer remarks of the Austen family's custom, putting their babies out to be nursed at a cottage in the village until they were old enough to run about and talk,

I have no means of knowing to what an extent the custom of boarding-out infants (as opposed to hiring a wet nurse) was in fact common in the second half of the eighteenth century, though I should question whether it were ever general. It is obviously an arrangement which avoids a great deal of work and trouble for the mother and, one would think on a priori grounds, liable to diminish the deepest emotional bonds between mother and child.⁷²

Although Gorer may be wrong in believing that the practice was never general, it was, according to social historian Lawrence Stone, no longer widely practiced by Austen's day, and was increasingly criticized. William Cobbett observed in 1829 that infants put out to a wet-nurse never succeeded in transferring their affections back to the natural mother. What is more, Stone contends in his extensively documented study of English family life that the practice of wet-nursing was one of the principal causes for the generally cold and often hostile interpersonal relations he finds common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The undesirable effects of wet-nursing have been borne out, he says, by modern studies of psychiatric patients neglected by their parents and left with servants or in boarding schools.⁷³

E. Margaret Moore thinks Jane was separated from her mother even longer than the other Austen children, since the child's return home was connected with the birth of the next

child, and Jane's younger brother was not born for three and a half more years. Moore reminds us too of Jane's subsequent absences from home, first when she was only six to Oxford, where she became drastically ill with fever, and then to boarding school at Reading, from age eight or nine until about eleven. This early deprivation, first of the foster mother to whom she had become attached and then of her real mother, resulted, Moore believes, in an unusual closeness to Cassandra, who shared the two schooling experiences, but in an inability to form ordinary relationships in which Jane was dependent on another person.⁷⁴

We have no evidence of how attached she was to her father, but, in contrast to her sometimes testy comments in letters about her mother, no evidence exists of Jane's unhappiness with or disappointment in her father. We are told that "after his death she used to speak with emotion of 'his indescribable tenderness as a father' and 'his sweet benevolent smile.'" ⁷⁵ He was probably in closer contact with his children than many fathers, since he spent much of his time at home educating them. David Cecil says that, 'If he had such a fine literary taste as people said, he must have perceived something of her unique quality and especially enjoyed talking to her on literary subjects. It was he who woke her feeling for language and style so that she appreciated them in the work of others and cultivated them in her own.'⁷⁶ We know that he encouraged her writing, since he wrote to a

London publisher in 1797 concerning First Impressions, later to become Pride and Prejudice, and offered to publish it at his own expense.⁷⁷ That he was an indulgent parent to Jane we know from her humorous entries which remain today on the specimen pages of his parish registry. On these pages, provided to show prospective brides and bridegrooms where to fill in their names, he sometimes allowed the young Jane to fill in her own name as specimen bride marrying an imaginary figure like "Edmund Arthur William Mortimer of Liverpool."⁷⁸

At any rate, Jane never formed a permanent relationship with a man her own age. That she was attractive to men, we are assured from the number reported to be seriously interested in her.⁷⁹ Joan Rees points out that Austen might have been able to marry late in life:

. . . Fanny Burney was to find happiness in marriage at approximately the same age as Jane was at her death, and she went on to produce a son. Moreover, at a time when so many wives died in childbirth, girls who had been passed over in their youth, often found themselves in demand later on. All Jane's brothers were to lose their first wives, and four of them were to marry again.⁸⁰

Married women of that day enjoyed enormous social and economic advantages. Villard says,

In the England of the eighteenth century, and, above all, amongst the "gentry," it is only the married women who are looked up to and relatively independent. The daughters of the "gentry" had not the resource of retiring to a convent, which is open to the daughters of the French aristocracy and upper classes, where they may rule over a little monastic hive if they have no hope of reigning as

queen in the house of a husband. For these English girls, then, marriage was a necessity, almost a duty towards themselves and their families. If they could succeed in meeting someone to marry whom they could love, or did love at the moment of accepting him, their chances of happiness were thereby increased; but even without love, and short of feeling positive aversion, they had no right to refuse a suitor who could offer them a position which was suitable in the eyes of the world.⁸¹

That these are not Austen's sentiments is made clear in Pride and Prejudice, where Charlotte is condemned for marrying a man she dislikes,⁸² but they were the opinions of a large part of society. Also, all Austen's offers were surely not from men so despicable as Mr. Collins, whom Charlotte cold-bloodedly accepts; most of life's choices are not so clear cut. David Cecil provides a strong case in favor of Harris Bigg-Wither, for example:

. . . marriage then [in Austen's time] was not regarded as a culmination of a romance but as a social arrangement for the promotion and maintenance of a family. As such, however, it did involve solemn obligations and a woman should not enter into it for selfish or worldly reasons: she should be sure that she is marrying a man for whom she could feel respect and affection. Jane Austen might have felt them for Harris Bigg-Wither, who had the reputation of an excellent character, and whose sisters were among her dearest friends. Added to this, he was a man of fortune and position which would enable him to help her parents in their old age; Cassandra too, should she remain unmarried. Finally he lived in a countryside for which Jane felt a lifelong and peculiar affection.⁸³

Austen had no money of her own, and after her father's death, she lived, with Cassandra and her mother, a life that Gorer believes was very close economically to that of the

Price family depicted in Mansfield Park. At one period in Southampton, the Austens had only two maids, reminiscent, Gorer notices, of the domestic situation in Fanny's natural home. Gorer finds another parallel in Sense and Sensibility:

. . . Mrs. Austen and her two daughters [had] 460 pounds a year between the three of them, even with the brothers' contributions. Neither Edward Ferrars nor Elinor were "quite enough in love to think that three hundred and fifty pounds a year would supply them with the comforts of life" (SS, p. 369). They, the Edward Ferrars, were going to live rent-free in the parsonage; Mrs. Austen had to pay rent.⁸⁴

It is clear that Austen felt her poverty keenly. She wrote Fanny in 1817, "Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor--which is one very strong argument in favour of Matrimony." Joan Rees quotes a letter from Jane's brother Frank written at the death of their father, explaining to another brother the arrangements that had been made to bring Mrs. Austen's 210 pounds up to 450 per year with donations from the brothers:

She will be very comfortable, & as a smaller establishment will be as agreeable to them, as it cannot but be feasible, I really think that My Mother & sisters will be to the full as rich as ever. They will not only suffer no personal deprivation, but will be able to pay occasional visits of health and pleasure to their friends.

Rees comments,

Jane would never, of course, have seen this letter, but no doubt Henry held forth to his mother and sisters in much the same vein. If this has an uncomfortably familiar ring to readers of Sense and Sensibility, Henry was never to notice.⁸⁵

Emma's description of how society views a spinster without means, though meant to reflect the young lady's smug self-satisfaction, is, nonetheless, bleak: "Never mind, Harriet, I shall not be a poor old maid; it is poverty only which makes celibacy contemptible to a generous public" (E, p. 85).

We notice, too, the strong reaction in Austen's letters to motherhood. A frequent theme is her distress over a friend or relative's pregnancy. Some of this is understandable: many women aged prematurely or died from bearing too many children, and as a doting aunt, Jane must herself have felt the strain of helping with a large family. Still, the tone of the letters surprises us at times. She writes at one point: "I believe I never told you that Mrs. Coulthard and Anne, late of Manydown, are both dead, and both died in child-bed. We have not regaled Mary [Austen's sister-in-law, then pregnant] with this news." Of a Mrs. Tilson, she exclaims, "poor Woman! how can she be honestly breeding again?" To her niece, Fanny, she laments, "Oh! what a loss it will be when you are married. You are too agreeable in your single state, too agreeable as a Niece. I shall hate you when your delicious play of Mind is all settled down into conjugal & maternal affections." To Mrs. and Mrs. D., who have many children, she tartly recommends, she tells Fanny, "the simple regimen of separate rooms." She advises Fanny not to be in a hurry for marriage: "by not beginning the business of Mothering quite so early in life, you will be young in Constitution,

spirits, figure & countenance, while Mrs. Wm. Hammond is growing old by confinements & nursing."⁸⁶

* * *

In the light of these biographical facts, the step-mother theme throughout her work becomes understandable, and we see that in Pride and Prejudice she may have simply avoided the fairy tale's projection of a guilty emotion onto a substitute object, and, in Mrs. Bennet, portrayed the real object of the child's hatred. D. W. Harding, in one of the best-known articles on Austen, observes that

In Persuasion she goes back to the Cinderella situation in its most direct and simple form, but develops a vitally important aspect of it that she had previously avoided. This is the significance for Cinderella of her idealised dead mother. Most children are likely to have some conflict of attitude towards their mother, finding her in some respects an ideal object of love and in others an obstacle to their wishes and a bitter disappointment. For a child such as Jane Austen who actually was in many ways more sensitive and able than her mother, one can understand that this conflict may persist in some form for a very long time. Now one of the obvious appeals of the Cinderella story, as of all stories of wicked stepmothers, is that it resolves the ambivalence of the mother by the simple plan of splitting her in two: the ideal mother is dead and can be adored without risk of disturbance; the living mother is completely detestable and can be hated wholeheartedly without self-reproach.

And he adds in a note, "This is, needless to say, only a small part of the unconscious significance which such stories may have for a reader. Most obviously it neglects the relationships of the stepmother and the heroine to the father."⁸⁷

In the light of this, we can understand why Austen depicted so few loving marriages: the Gardiners of Pride and Prejudice and the Crofts of Persuasion seem to be the only two.

In analyzing Austen's novels, Gorer "finds a pattern of young women (Marianne, Elizabeth, Fanny, Emma) who are made love to by, but finally reject, the Charming but Worthless lover (Willoughby, Wickham, Crawford, Frank Churchill) and finally marry a man whom they esteem and admire rather than love passionately (Colonel Brandon, Darcy, Edmund Bertram, Mr. Knightley)." And he describes Austen's "central myth--the girl who hates and despises her mother and marries a father-surrogate."⁸⁸ Nor is he the only reader to see fatherly models for the heroes. Angus Wilson, for example:

Mr. Knightley, so much admired by modern critics, seems to me pompous, condescending and a bore. His manliness consists in the looming spectre of a Victorian paterfamilias, authoritative on every subject, lecturing, always being in the right. As a landowner he may be excellent, as an employer model, to be praised as a thoughtful and tactful provider of apples for Miss Bates; but what sort of a husband will he make for Emma's untutored high intelligence? What will she do all day while he is busy, healthily walking about in all weathers? What has he learned but to treat her as "the little woman", "my Emma", who has made him think better of spoiled children. It is a sad sort of father-daughter marriage that has been achieved. . .⁸⁹

Wilson's reaction seems extreme; Knightley's jealousy over Frank Churchill lends him a charming trace of human frailty that makes us suspect he will endear himself with other small imperfections through the years. Still, David Paul finds

similar unhealthy vibrations in Mansfield Park:

. . . Edmund and Fanny have been brought up together. Throughout the story he has been in every possible way her loving and considerate elder brother. That he should begin to consider himself as something else, however gradually, seems to bring into the atmosphere a faint whiff of--incest? It is queer, too, that, while any innocent reader would assume that in the play-acting episode Crawford and Maria are taking the parts of lovers, they are in fact--that is, in the play Lover's Vows--mother and son.⁹⁰

Of Austen's two most attractive heroes, we probably feel closer to Darcy than to Wentworth, perhaps because Darcy reveals his wit and charm in more dialogue. But even Pride and Prejudice does not completely escape the father-suitor problem, for, as Gorer says:

The really warm relationship in the novel is that between Elizabeth and her father, Mr. Bennet; Elizabeth is his favorite daughter (ch. 1) and they are able to share in private intimate jokes from which even the rest of the family are excluded; they are so attached that, when Elizabeth plans to go away for a short visit "the only pain was in leaving her father, who would certainly miss her, and who, when it came to the point, so little liked her going, that he told her to write to him, and almost promised to answer her letter" (ch. 27).⁹¹

Gorer does not include Northanger Abbey in his "central myth" because it is an early work, different from the later novels, being more satirical in purpose and tone. But it is worth noting that Henry Tilney, too, is eight years older than the seventeen-year-old Catherine Morland; is, like Edmund, a clergyman; and fulfills the role of knowledgeable tutor in

aesthetics and in diction (ch. 14). As for Persuasion, the novel Gorer believes is an exception to the myth--"in her last novel she rejected her myth, her fantasy, because she had learned that, like all myths, it was eventually an enemy of life"⁹²--we must observe that, before Anne is allowed by her author to marry Wentworth, he must grow into a mature man, his charm and sexual energy curbed at least somewhat by caution and judgment.

Joseph Wiesenfarth, who divides Austen's books into those which fulfill and those which deny the Cinderella story, believes that in these latter novels, Austen turns to a different pattern:

The Cinderella myth stands in the story as an indication of what has been thrown away. What is kept follows the pattern of another myth, that of Pygmalion and Galatea. The chaste and orderly Pygmalion, finding no woman suited to him, creates the statue of a perfect woman, falls in love with it, and by the indulgence of Venus has it come alive to be his bride. This more precisely represents the relation of Edmund to Fanny than the Cinderella story does. Having found Mary Crawford wanting, Edmund turns to Fanny, whom he has formed. . . . Edmund marries the woman who most closely reflects his values in the novel, the woman whom he has unknowingly shaped from her youth to be his wife. Everything in the novel also makes it clear that Edmund, of all his father's children, is most like Sir Thomas in the values he professes, so that Fanny's relationship to Sir Thomas is also better defined by the Pygmalion story than by the Cinderella story.⁹³

If we accept Wiesenfarth's interpretation, we see that Cinderella is the heroine who grows up and establishes a family of her own, while Galatea remains with her creator.

Because Edmund has so little charm and Henry Crawford so much, Mansfield Park is the Austen novel which most sharply violates the Cinderella story. Its frustration of their expectations is no doubt one reason the novel disturbs so many readers. David Paul believes this denial is the author's conscious intention and that it constitutes the novel's strength. After pointing out all the parallels between novel and fairy tale, he says, ". . . the central irony is that Cinderella-Fanny, weak, submissive, and priggish as she is, should refuse, should insist on refusing Prince Charming, against all the apparently superior and terrifyingly pressing council of her friends and her guardian."⁹⁴

A. Walton Litz asserts that,

. . . the denial of the fairy tale could be related to the frustrations of a spinster approaching forty, but on another--and more interesting--level, the reversal of the fairy tale may be seen as part of a general attack on the dangers of fiction. At its deepest reaches Mansfield Park questions the motives and consolidations of art itself.⁹⁵

Gorer speculates that Mansfield Park, along with Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, and Emma, on a more personal level, all derive from an experience in Austen's youth when she refused a charming lover because she could not bear to part with her father or even because he urged her to deny the proposal. Gorer thinks that then

Through the intervening years she wrote and re-wrote her personal dilemma proving to herself that

all had been for the best, even though meanwhile father had died, leaving her alone with her mother, and the novels show her belief was that the only good mothers were dead mothers.⁹⁶

He believes that "by thus reworking her fantasies, Jane Austen had finally uncovered for herself the hidden motives behind the too-warm, too-loving relationships which circumscribed her life" and that "her regret, her despair" were finally voiced in Persuasion.⁹⁷ Perhaps Mansfield Park is all three of these things: the witty, ironic inversion that Paul sees, a serious criticism of the very function of art, as Litz would have us believe, and, at the same time, the attempt of an individual human being to work through her own anxieties and misery and find a private peace. Surely it is not diminished by being all these at once, by serving up to both author and readers that "multifarious richness" of which Bettelheim speaks.

* * *

We know much more about James's life than Austen's. He was unusually close to his mother, who was possessive toward him,⁹⁸ smothering him with maternal solicitude, controlling him and the rest of the family with a "concealed but . . . iron grip."⁹⁹ When he traveled in the Alps as a mature young man, she hovered by mail:

Since your last letter, darling Harry, I have had a new anxiety awakened in my too susceptible mind by thinking of you traversing alone those mountain

solitudes. Of course I know you would not attempt any dizzy heights or any but well beaten tracks without a guide. But you might easily overestimate your strength and sink down with sudden exhaustion. . . .¹⁰⁰

This trip, at twenty-six, was his first venture abroad by himself, and he was thirty-two before finally cutting the ties that bound him to the family scene.¹⁰¹ Permanently settled in London at the age of thirty-three, he received a letter telling him that what he lacked in his life was the affection she could give him were he at home." . . . your life must need this succulent, fattening element more than you know yourself. . . ."¹⁰² She warned him about designing women, and he felt obliged to explain that he was not taken in by them, assuring her that one, for instance, was merely "a beautiful Bore."¹⁰³ She scolded him for being too free with his father's money, and he felt compelled to enumerate his expenses in detail, justifying what was actually a modest style of living.¹⁰⁴ Or, as Edel reports, "she might simply complain, in a manner likely to arouse distinct feelings of guilt or uneasiness in her favorite son: "Another mail dear Harry, and no letter. I am trying not to be anxious."¹⁰⁵

In Notes of a Son and Brother, he gave her what Edel describes as "only a few ambiguous paragraphs."¹⁰⁶ But the metaphors he finds for her there (*italics mine*) seem revealing of his underlying attitude rather than ambiguous:

To have attempted any projection of our father's aspect without an immediate reference to her sovereign care for him and for all of us as the so widely open, yet so softly enclosing, lap of all his liberties and all our securities, all our variety and withal our harmony, the harmony that was for nine-tenths of it our sense of her gathered life in us, and of her having no other--to have so proceeded has been but to defer by instinct and by scruple to the kind of truth and of beauty before which the direct report breaks down. I may well have stopped short with what there would be to say, and yet what account of us all can pretend to have gone the least bit deep without coming to our mother at every penetration? This was a support on which my father rested with the absolute whole of his weight, and it was when I felt her listen with the whole of her usefulness, which needed no other force, being as it was the whole of her tenderness and amply sufficing by itself, that I understood most what it was so to rest and so to act.¹⁰⁷

In another place, James describes a common scene with his father:

We all used brutally to jeer at him. . . . The happiest household pleasantries invested our legend of our mother's fond habit of address, "Your father's ideas, you know!" which was always the signal for our embracing her with the last responsive finality (and, for the full pleasure of it, in his presence).¹⁰⁸

Edel offers this anecdote as an example of the boy's efforts to align himself with his mother and against his father, since Henry saw her as strong and his father as weak, and part of Edel's explanation: "We pause over the pleasure the son derived from this good-humored defiance and mockery of the parent and especially at the supreme moment of embracing the mother 'in his presence,'"¹⁰⁹ suggests other emotions

that are also apparent--possessiveness toward the mother and envy of the father.

Edel believes Henry loved Minny Temple in part because she resembled his mother:

If the first object of a young man's affection usually has in her some of the attributes of the most familiar figure in his life, namely his mother, this was certainly true of Minny. Her very name, Mary, was his mother's; she was a kinswoman and she had a capacity, similar to Mary James's, for being all charm and simplicity while holding back her feelings.¹¹⁰

Edel explains Henry's attraction all his life to women who were "strong, domineering and had in them also a streak of hardness, sometimes even of cruelty. These women probably appealed to him because such qualities were distinctly familiar: Mary James had been quite as hard, firm, sovereign, but more devious. Indeed during all the years of his childhood he had learned how to make himself agreeable to such a woman."¹¹¹ And Henry ran into trouble when he treated women close to his own age in the same way he did these older ones, for, as Edel says, he suffered "a psychological failure to recognize that his ways of placating the demanding older woman might be regarded as wooing by a younger one."¹¹²

In his mind, Henry associated himself with his mother and grew to be like her. Edel describes him as the devious one in the family, with William the forthright one.¹¹³ While she invariably called Henry "Angel," a nickname he kept within the family circle,¹¹⁴ he referred to her in a letter soon

after her death as "our protecting spirit, our household genius."¹¹⁵ Concisely, Mark Spilka puts James's personal experience within his family into a larger economic, social, and historical context:

Victorian middle-class homes were . . . domestic sanctuaries, sacred castles or fortified temples, protective bulwarks against an increasingly hostile world of ruthless commerce, poverty and industrial blight, child and sweatshop labor, prostitution and crime. But in the home adults might immerse themselves in family life and salvage some humanity. Unfortunately, their normal affections were intensified by close confinement and overstimulation. . . .

[Because of] a religious vacuum in society . . . in the home women assumed the moral and religious roles once held by churchly figures: mothers and sisters were seen as saints and angels, vessels of spiritual perfection, guardians of faith, virtue, and affection. . . .¹¹⁶

Edel sees Henry's inability to marry as based on his unconscious understanding of his parents' marriage as an example of how women always lead men to their doom:

Henry Junior saw his father as living only by his mother and what he observed as a small boy was borne out for him when fully grown. After his mother's death, the father was incapable of going on without her: "he passed away or went out, with entire simplicity, promptness and ease, for the definite reason that his support had failed."¹¹⁷

Edel reports an entry in James's notebooks, when he was fifty, in which he tries out names for a character: "Ledward--Bedward--Dedward--Deadward."¹¹⁸ Edel concludes: "This appeared to be a casual rhyming of led-bed-dead. It was, in effect, a highly-condensed statement springing from Henry's

mind of the theme, . . . To be led to the marriage bed was to be dead."

But perhaps a fuller explanation of James failure to marry was his inability to resolve old oedipal problems. Perhaps the famous "obscure hurt" can be explained in this same way. This was the youthful injury he reported so ambiguously and mysteriously in his autobiography that his castration promptly became a well-known "fact." Edel summarizes the reaction: Glenway Wescott wrote, "Henry James, expatriation and castration. . . . Henry James it is rumored, could not have had a child"; F. O. Matthiessen speculated that James was sexually impotent; R. P. Blackmur compared him to the emasculated Abelard, making "a sacred rage of his art as the only spirit he could fully serve"; and Lionel Trilling offered solemn praise: "only a man as devoted to the truth of the emotions as Henry James was, would have informed the world, despite his characteristic reticence, of an accident so intimate as his."¹¹⁹ After careful investigation of all the facts, Edel concludes that the physical injury James suffered in the confusion of putting out a stable fire was actually a back ailment.¹²⁰ But it is easy to understand the confusion when looking at James's words in describing the incident:

--entirely personal . . . private catastrophe . . .
 physical mishap . . . most unnatural . . . extraor-
 dinarily intimate . . . a lameness . . . a horrid
 even if an obscure hurt . . . what was interesting
 was from the first my not doubting its duration.
 . . .¹²¹

The emotional injury seems to have been deep. James reports that, after suffering in silence for months before admitting his injury to his family, he was taken to a famous Boston surgeon who merely treated him

. . . to a comparative pooh-pooh, an impression I long looked back to as a sharp parting of the ways, with an adoption of the wrong one distinctly determined. It was not simply small comfort, it was only a mystification the more, that the inconvenience of my state had to reckon with the strange fact of there being nothing to speak of the matter with me. The graceful course . . . was to behave . . . as if the assurance were true.¹²²

In telling of the incident, James weaves in a recital of the Civil War's opening, recreating all the excitement of the young men mustered in. Through the use of a word connected in his mind with his father, "visitation," he also associates the event with his father's injury at age thirteen in a similar fire and with his subsequent loss of a leg. As Edel explains, "Mentally prepared for some state of injury by his father's permanent hurt, and for a sense therefore of continuing physical inadequacy, Henry James found himself a prey to anxieties over the fact that he might be called a malingeringer . . . and had a feeling that he was deficient in the masculinity being displayed by others of his generation on the battlefield."¹²³ Saul Rosenzweig was the first to conjecture that Henry connected his injury emotionally with that of his father at a similar age so that the earlier sense of deep inferiority he had suffered at the hands of a gifted

father and older brother "crystallized into castration anxiety."¹²⁴ Robert Rogers, in a perceptive article based on Rosenzweig's hypothesis, analyzes "The Jolly Corner" and "The Beast in the Jungle" as examples of James's attempts through his writing to resolve a severe oedipal fixation.¹²⁵ As Edel sums it up:

There was, in the novelist, a compelling desire to masculinity which Miles [in "The Turn of the Screw"] expressed; but it has been driven underground. To be male was to risk (in the remote fantasy of childhood) such things as amputation like his father's; females seemed the most serious threat to his sense of himself, as a boy, and later--by the disguises of the imagination, by thinking himself a little girl and by being quiet and observant--he could escape "amputations" and punishments.¹²⁶

* * *

Throughout James's work, the oedipal association is apparent. The important emotional alliance, whether neurotic or loving, is between father and daughter, as in Washington Square and The Golden Bowl, or between a girl and her guardian, as in Watch and Ward, What Maisie Knew, and The Awkward Age. Traces of this father-daughter pairing can be seen in Strether and Madame Vionnet and even in Winterbourne and Daisy. Even in The American, Newman's passion is couched in the words of a father rather than a suitor: "'With me you will be as safe--as safe' and even in his ardor he hesitated a moment for a comparison--'as safe,' he said, with a kind of simple solemnity, 'as in your father's arms'" (ch. 14). And

James tells us in chapter 13 that "Newman's feeling for Claire had the quality of a young mother's eagerness to protect the sleep of her first-born child." In later work, the relationship is not always projected onto the opposite sex. Mary Garland is more of a mother figure to Roderick than a lover, and Robert Rogers believes that May Bartram in "The Beast in the Jungle" and Alice Staverton in "The Jolly Corner" are mother figures for John Marcher and Spencer Brydon, just as is Maria Gostrey for Lambert Strether.¹²⁷

"Master Eustace" is an example of the openness with which the relationship could be portrayed in the early work. Eustace Garnyer is indignant when his widowed mother remarries, saying of himself, "I am like Hamlet--I don't approve of mothers consoling themselves."¹²⁸ In the story's O. Henry-like ending, he discovers that the new husband, the interloper who has stolen the mother's affection, is actually his own father, Mrs. Garnyer's secret lover from the past. In another early story, "The Madonna of the Future," the theme is far more subtle and effective. Theobald worships an aging mother-figure, seeing her still as the young enchantress who captivated him with her beauty, intending always to capture it on canvas. But, secretly, during the twenty years of the artist's entirely spiritual adoration, the madonna has kept as actual lover an inferior craftsman who produces cheap statuettes. Thus the mother rejects the idealistic love of the son, who is a true artist, though

impotent. (He never succeeds in putting paint to canvas to capture her likeness.) She accepts instead a carnal relationship with a false artist who depicts always the same subject, some amorous pose of a monkey and a cat (notoriously concupiscent animals), which are "at once very dreadful little beasts and very natural men and women."

As in Mansfield Park, James's stories usually invert the Cinderella story. The break with the father is never accomplished; the charming suitor, like Henry Crawford in Austen's novel, is finally found unworthy. In Washington Square, Catherine remains unhappily with her real father, in Watch and Ward Nora marries her guardian, in The Awkward Age Nanda becomes the ward of the elderly Longdon. In other novels the heroine flees the too-urgent sexual demands of the Prince: Isabel from Caspar, Claire from Newman, Bessie from Lambert. Mark Spilka describes James's concern with this theme:

. . . he produced a body of fiction in which sex is often identified with evil and affection with the whole of love; . . . his nubile maidens and pubescent boys tend to die when faced with sexual evil; . . . his heroines often renounce marriage altogether or enter into sexless compacts. . . .¹²⁹

Only in The Golden Bowl does Maggie reject the father's blandishments and establish a permanent union with the Prince. Naomi Leibowitz sees it as James's most complete working out of "one of life's great metamorphoses: that of child to bride, the metamorphosis of marriage."¹³⁰ But even here, in

his last completed novel, when he finally resolves the oedipal crisis, James leaves his heroine in the old situation. Since Charlotte is simultaneously the Prince's lover and the wife of Maggie's father, in defeating her, Maggie routs both her competitors at the same time. She leaves her father for a new relationship but as a parting shot defeats her old enemy.¹³¹

Perhaps the most interesting permutation of the father-mother-son relationship in James is in "The Turn of the Screw." Together, Edel and Spilka explain the story in terms of James's life. Edel connects Miles' protests in the story, "When in the world, please, am I going back to school? I want my own sort. I want my own sort. I want to see more life. I'm a fellow, don't you see?" with Henry as a child:

William was masculine and active, and punished often for his excess of activity; and Henry his junior, as spectator and outsider, pushed away by his elder brother, discovered that it was dangerous to be like his brother; he was safest when he identified himself with his younger sister, and stayed at home with his mother and the vigorous Aunt Kate. "I play with boys who curse and swear," William James had said to him once, when Henry was about as old as little Miles. It was William's way of telling Henry that he wasn't fit for the company of older boys. The novelist, remembering this in the autobiographies of his old age, looked sadly upon his boyish self and agreed that he "simply wasn't qualified. . . ." ¹³²

Spilka recognizes the Freudian basis of "The Turn of the Screw." He cites as a clear example of infantile sexuality the incident related in the prologue: "an appearance, of a

dreadful kind, to a little boy sleeping in the room with his mother and waking her . . . to encounter . . . the same sight that had shaken him."¹³³ The incident's appearance in the very beginning, with its clear reference to the primal scene, alerts us to the major theme of the novel, the danger of trying to return, as the Victorians tried, to an Edenic childhood, where sex does not exist. For Spilka thinks the novel transcends the personal connection with James's own life, becoming an "impressive domestic parable," depicting the "impasse in Victorian attitudes toward sex and innocence."

"The Turn of the Screw" can be seen as a recognition of the impossibility of an adult life which excludes sexuality in the name of ideal innocence . . . The young woman proceeds to fight the invading evil in the name of hothouse purity and domestic sainthood. That she destroys the children in saving them is understandable: her contemporaries were doing so all around her, and would do so for the next six decades. That James valued her saintliness and recognized the reality of what she fought, yet foresaw her inevitable failure, is a tribute to his artistic grasp of his materials. It was a battle often fought and lost in his time; and, in the guise of a fable about ghosts and children and saintly saviors, he accurately caught the order and texture of the intense struggle. . . . reflections of the Victorian hothouse are rendered in the story; and all are nicely focussed by the device of ghosts who appear alike to children and adults: the sexual bogeys of Victorian childhood.¹³⁴

Spilka's interpretation makes it unnecessary for us to choose between the two schools of thought on the story, those who think the governess is innocent and those who think the

children are. In his view both are equally victims of society's refusal to face reality. Thus the novel is greater than any one meaning we may find for it, whether that be as simple ghost story, as complex psychological fable reverberating with the pain of James's own life, or as an adroit, if perhaps unconscious blend of the two.

* * *

As we have seen, both Henry James and Jane Austen turn repeatedly to the Cinderella story for their plots. Other writers use this story too. What is significant about James and Austen is their recurrent breaking off of the story, so that they do not bring it to the usual conclusion of marriage between the protagonist and another character who is strongly attractive, but substitute, instead, a father figure or other family member as a marriage partner.¹³⁵ Through this pattern, Austen in much of her work, and James in almost all of his, offer their protagonist a retreat into the solace and comfort of the family rather than pushing her out into the larger world which Elizabeth Bennet and Anne Elliot are allowed to enter.

In asserting that Austen takes this pattern for her plots, I am not unaware of her place in the eighteenth-century novelistic tradition. Marilyn Butler believes, for instance, that Austen is writing the anti-jacobin novel typical of much of the fiction of her time:

The heroine who is fallible and learns, and the heroine who is Christian and exemplary, are the standard heroine-types of reactionary novels of the 1790's. In Jane Austen's novels they confront, equally typically, the villains of the anti-jacobin period--plausible, attractive strangers, penetrating a community from abroad, or from dangerously up-to-date London, like wolves entering a sheepfold: and bent, especially, on winning the affections of the heroine. p. 294.

It might follow, then, that these anti-jacobin novels to which Butler refers are additional examples of the Cinderella story broken off, and thus Austen's use of the pattern is neither unusual nor significant. To this I would reply that Austen's novels do resemble these in using, and reversing, one part of the Cinderella story, the motif of the handsome prince. For, as I have stated, countless writers use "Cinderella," both in a straightforward manner and with various inversions.

What makes Austen somewhat different is her stronger use of the other element of the tale, the part of the story which, Bettelheim tells us, has been removed from modern versions of the fairy tale: the desire of the father to marry Cinderella and the consequent pressure on her to remain within her family rather than entering the larger world. If this element of the plot is present in earlier novelists to the same extent as in Austen, it does not emerge from plot summaries. Butler explains, for example, that women novelists of the period "stressed the importance of submitting to the guidance of a wise elderly mentor rather than to the example

of books. . . " (p. 95, italics mine). In The Advantages of Education by Jane West, this mentor is a mother. In West's A Gossip Story, both lovers are young, and the mentor is a father. But in Austen, family relationships play a different role. Especially in Sense and Sensibility, with the unconvincing marriage of Marianne with the much older Brandon, and in Mansfield Park with Fanny's marriage to a man who is seen by many as a brother figure, Austen offers her heroine a retreat into the solace and comfort of the family rather than pushing her out into a mature role in society. For some readers, Emma, too, presents this same feeling of uneasy retreat or isolation. It is also notable that the most memorable man in all of Austen is not a suitor but a father, Elizabeth Bennet's. In spite of his moral deficiencies as a father for her, he remains a charming companion, and their relationship seems filled with more warmth and love than that between any other man and woman in Austen.

This is not to say that the theme which I find in James and, to a lesser extent, in Austen, is unique to them. Its greater emphasis in James is, I believe, a result of the social confusion and disorientation that became progressively worse throughout the nineteenth century. I discuss this theme at some length in my introduction.

Austen and James were perhaps responding, through their development of this fairy tale, to conflicts in their personal lives. In A Psychiatric Study of Myths and Fairy

Tales, Julius Heuscher tells us that it is possible to use the fairy tale to discover individual problems. This is so, he believes, because distortions due to unresolved conflicts or forbidden urges are not likely to occur "in those folk narratives from which the overly personal and the neurotic elements have been painstakingly removed by the passage from one storyteller to another."¹³⁶ When a therapist asks patients to narrate some of the common fairy tales remembered from childhood, therefore, one finds in the distortions that these tales have undergone in the patient's mind, "an indication of the specific, individual shape of the general human problem portrayed by the tale."¹³⁷ Thus James's and Austen's preoccupation with the Cinderella story might reveal a personal conflict which concerns them strongly enough that they return again and again to the story, trying, by writing many versions, to experience the inherent consolation that psychiatrists have come to believe fairy tales provide. Then, if Heuscher is right, the authors' breaking off of the story could indicate an inability or reluctance to accept its traditional comfort. In the case of the Cinderella tale, this comfort is described by Bruno Bettelheim, in The Uses of Enchantment, as the need of every child to move from the emotional security of the all-protecting family toward an identification with the larger world, symbolized in the story by the marriage of Cinderella to a young man previously unknown. Although the Cinderella story

appealed to James and Austen both, she seemed more able to accept its lesson. James repeats over and over the version of the story that she told in Mansfield Park: there will be no final solution, only a compromise at best.

But what is important is not the part played by the story in their individual lives, but their use of it to address the problems we, as readers, have. For Austen and James have converted their private problem--their lack of commitment to a permanent relationship with the opposite sex--into a fable teaching us the need to shed one's innocence and advance into a painful maturity, as well as the regret that one suffers for failing to do so.

In Austen, writing at the beginning of a century of social conflict, the individual can still move out into the troubled new world. Elizabeth Bennet must still reject her first charming prince, Wickham. But she is successful in outgrowing her father, though he is the most charming in all of Austen. And her generous author offers her the compromise of Darcy, who unites the virtues of both Mr. Bennet and of Wickham. By the time James writes his early comedies in the 1870's, such integration is no longer possible. Newman and Claire can never marry, and Bessie in "An International Episode" must turn down Lord Lambeth; neither work presents a compromise. By the last years of the century, the turning inward toward family has proceeded at such a pace that we see its reflection in the intense, often morbid world of

James's novels in the nineties. As Edmund Wilson observed, "They are fairy-stories, but fairy-stories that trouble, that get a clear and luminous music out of chords queerly combined."¹³⁹ In late books, both Austen and James write of passion glorified and sanctified, but only in retrospect. Anne Elliot may marry her romantic love only when he has left behind the strong sexual energy of youth. Though Strether at last awakens to the urgency of the physical life, James denies him not only the sexual vitality of Madame de Vionnet but even the comfort of the narrow red ribbon encircling Miss Gostrey's chaste neck.

CHAPTER FOUR

MANSFIELD PARK AND THE SPOILS OF POYNTON:

RETREAT INTO THE FAMILY

Early in their careers, Austen and James depict the geographical separation of male and female as symbolic of an emotional estrangement harmful both to the individuals concerned and to their society. In "An International Episode," Kitty Westgate and her husband live much of the year miles apart, she literally "insulated" from the world on the island of Newport, he just as confined to the hive-like structures swarming with Wall Street money-makers. He relegates all their social life to her, allowing her several times to travel even to Europe without his companionship and protection, and assumes for himself the entire economic responsibility. She frequently apologizes for his absence with the explanation that in America "we haven't any leisure class," (p. 73) but it is clear that James sees his country's upper-class women as devoted solely to recreation and consumption, while its men are occupied with no higher ambition than to provide the means for these exclusively feminine activities. Thus men assume no worthwhile cultural responsibilities;

woman are divorced from meaningful work, one of the major human contacts with reality.

Elizabeth Janeway, Lawrence Stone, Ann Douglas and others¹ have written of the gradual removal of middle and upper-class women from the economic life of the nineteenth century. With production removed essentially from the home, and with factories providing goods at low cost, these women became predominantly consumers rather than the valued producers they had been in the past. In James's work we see the consequences of this change. He shows us that men make money; women spend it. To James, this separation of roles became a symbol of the unbridgeable chasm between the cultural and economic sides of life, the private and the public.

Three years before writing "Episode," James experienced himself the isolation felt by women in America when he lived in New York for a season:

Manhattan seemed to confine him in the world "uptown" while all its activities went on "downtown" in the world of business. Henry was to remember his isolation during this time. . . . Seated for several months "at the very moderate altitude of Twenty-Fifth Street" Henry felt himself alone with the French pastry-cooks, the ladies and the children. There was an "extraordinary absence of a serious male interest."²

Jane Austen had foreshadowed this harmful division of roles as early as Pride and Prejudice, with Mr. Bennet remaining secluded among his books while his frivolous wife chaperones their daughters to social occasions at which they meet

prospective husbands. It is no accident that after an argument with her, he has two requests:

First, that you will allow me the free use of my understanding on the present occasion; and secondly, of my room. I shall be glad to have the library to myself as soon as may be (p. 112).

The parallel construction is appropriate: to Mr. Bennet the two requests are of equal value.

In later novels, Austen and James continue to depict this separation of the sexes. At the beginning of Austen's Mansfield Park, for instance, Sir Thomas defaults on his responsibility, leaving control of his daughters' education in the vicious hands of Mrs. Norris. Later, it is during his prolonged absence in the colonies, exclusively preoccupied with economic concerns, that the seeds of his family's worst wrongdoing are sown. And Lady Bertram is an apathetic version of the self-centered Mrs. Bennet and Kitty Westgate, lost in her needlepoint, fussing with her pug, drowsily ignorant even of her own family's affairs. Early in the book we are told,

From about the time of her entering the family, Lady Bertram, in consequence of a little ill health, and a great deal of indolence, gave up the house in town, which she had been used to occupy every spring, and remained wholly in the country, leaving Sir Thomas to attend his duty in Parliament, with whatever increase or diminution of comfort might arise from her absence (p. 20).

In James's The Spoils of Poynton, Robert McLean

maintains Poynton becomes the center of female worship, its "ethic based on the domination of the female over the male, the mother over the son."³ She has converted the estate into a shrine, allotting only one room to Owen,

that was the one monstrosity of Poynton: all tobacco-pots and bootjacks, his mother had said--such an array of arms of aggression and castigation that he himself had confessed to eighteen rifles and forty whips (p. 59).

At Waterbath, explains McLean, "Owen finds a society dedicated to the comfort of men who find entertainment in billiards and hunting and pleasure in the women who serve them." Both houses are equally perverted, neither enjoying that integration of male and female, symbolizing public and private, which will make life whole. Through the geographical separation of the sexes, Austen and James depict a Victorian answer to the troubling nineteenth century: a cloistering of women and children in the home with men treating it as a sanctuary to which they might retire for brief periods.

* * *

Although Austen's novels present an unruffled surface of placid village life, we should remember, Tony Tanner reminds us, that hers was the age of

the French Revolution, the War of American Independence, the start of the Industrial Revolution, and the first generation of the Romantic poets.

. . . Jane Austen, then, was living in a diminishing enclave of traditional rural stability just prior to a period of convulsive, uncontrollable change. . . .⁴

Walter Houghton has written that the Victorians, responding to this "age of anxiety and isolation, longing for an earlier world," retreated into the home.⁵ Under such conditions, he says, "The lost world is 'placed' either in a previous period, in the childhood of the race, or in one's own childhood, where the early home can readily become the symbol of a companionship that was once both divine and human." The playwright Arthur Miller believes that a similar move took place at one period in Greek life, "for it is like a rule of society that, as its time of trouble arrives, its citizens revert to a kind of privacy of life that excludes society, as the man at such times would like to banish society from his mind."⁶ Lawrence Stone, in a massive study of the modern family's evolution, finds that during the eighteenth century a new nuclear family type emerged, emphasizing affective rather than economic ties,

a family serving rather fewer practical functions, but carrying a much greater load of emotional and sexual commitment. It was a family type which was more conjugal and less kin and community oriented, more bound by ties of affection or habit. . . . more private and less public.⁷

He believes this new family arose in part because of the dislocations caused by the Industrial Revolution. With the new "floating urban migrant mass" disconnected from the previous

ties of the community and the extended family, the nuclear family developed as a last provider of the old supports.⁸ Long ago Tocqueville perceived this shift in family relationships. He believed it was caused by the spread of self-government and its accompanying spirit of individualism:

Amongst democratic nations, new families are constantly springing up, others are constantly falling away, and all that remain change their condition; the woof of time is every instant broken, and the track of generations effaced. Those who went before are soon forgotten; of those who will come after, no one has any idea: the interest of man is confined to those in close propinquity to himself.⁹

Two problems result, however, from such a retreat. The first is that this emphasis on the family draws support away from the larger structures of human society. As Tocqueville explains,

Individualism . . . disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows, and to draw apart with his family and his friends; so that, after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself. . . .¹⁰

Lawrence Stone looks back at the unfortunate results of such a move:

The highly personalized, inward-looking family was achieved in part at the cost of, and perhaps in part because of, a withdrawal from the rich and integrated community life of the past, with its common rituals, festivals, fairs, feast days and traditions of charity and mutual aid. . . . Thus the middle and upper classes, where the affect-bonded

family developed most strongly, reduced their voluntary contributions to village charity and increased their physical, social and cultural isolation from the poor. They withdrew to their own world behind their park walls or inside the grounds of their Palladian villas.¹¹

The second problem that arises when people leave the larger society is that the small family can become what Stone describes it as being in the Victorian age, "a stifling fortress of emotional bonding," in which relationships between parents and children grow more and more intrusive:¹²

there developed a combination of repression of wives and children and an intense emotional and religious concern for their moral welfare. The subordination of women and the crushing of the sexual and autonomous drives of the children took place in a situation where the total emotional life of all members was almost entirely focused within the boundaries of the nuclear family.¹³

Even today, when this Victorian repressiveness has all but disappeared, Stone believes that

over-intense parent-child relationships have produced children who . . . have experienced great difficulty in cutting the umbilical cord at the period of adolescence and emergence into the world: they have found themselves still tied to their parents by strings of love and/or hate. Despite its many virtues, the rise in the West of the individualistic, nuclear, child-oriented family which is the sole outlet of both sexual and affective bonding is thus by no means always an unmixed blessing.¹⁴

In The Fall of Public Man, Richard Sennett has written an incisive study of the interdependence of our public and private lives, and the impossibility of maintaining the

strength and vigor of one without that of the other. He explains that in the eighteenth century these two sides of life were maintained in a balance ultimately destroyed by industrial capitalism. The new nuclear family which at that time replaced the older, extended one, is, he believes, detrimental, destroying many of the previous supports needed by human beings. This new family becomes, instead, "a place for removing women and their children from society, at once suppressing and sheltering them."¹⁵ Thus the unit which developed to protect individuals--especially its more helpless members, women and children--from a threatening society can, in its turn, repress them.

This retreat into the family is portrayed with special vividness in one Austen novel and in one by James, each written in mid-career after a period of personal suffering.

* * *

Austen had lost her childhood home of Steventon in 1801 and her father in 1805. Before her brother Edward finally granted them a permanent home in 1809, she, her mother, and sister lived an unsettled life first in Bath, then in Clifton and Southampton, enduring that shabby gentility which may sometimes cause even greater anguish than does true poverty. These same years saw the death of both Cassandra's fiancée and also, it is believed by some, of the one man whom Jane ever wished to marry.¹⁶ By the time she

settled at Chawton in more comfortable surroundings, the thirty-four-year-old Austen no doubt realized that her economic dependence was unlikely to be transformed by such a fortunate love affair as Elizabeth Bennet's. Austen the writer had suffered disappointment too: in 1803 an early version of Northanger Abbey was bought but never published; First Impressions, the original of Pride and Prejudice, had been rejected in 1797. At any rate, she completed no new novels until Mansfield Park in 1813. Lionel Trilling attributes the tone of that novel to personal unhappiness: "It is scarcely possible to observe how Mansfield Park differs from her work that had gone before and from her work that was to come after without supposing that the difficulty points to a crisis in the author's spiritual life."¹⁷ And Jane Hodge speculates that "she was going through a severe moral and religious crisis, during which the author of romantic comedy, of Susan and First Impressions, developed, painfully, into the grave moralist and extraordinary technician who could produce Mansfield Park."¹⁸

Similarly, The Spoils of Poynton is the first novel James wrote after the suicide of Constance Fenimore Woolson, with whom he may have come close to a love affair. It was also the first novel after "the black abyss,"¹⁹ the years during which he wrote for the theater. In January, 1895, at the opening of Guy Domville, during what he later described as "the most horrible hours of my life,"²⁰ an irate audience

booed him from the stage when he was brought forward to receive the customary plaudits as author. Contrary to general belief, he was never independently wealthy, but depended on his writing for support, and he had hoped the theater would bring him economic security. In acknowledging defeat in this arena, James effectively relinquished his hopes for the wide recognition that "Daisy Miller" had earlier brought him. He had turned to the theater in the first place because his sales to magazines were declining. He wrote Howells that "no sign, no symbol of any sort, has come to me from any periodical whatever--and many visible demonstrations of their having, on the contrary, no use for me."²¹ As for his books' popularity, that had steadily diminished after The Portrait of a Lady, with the three fine novels that followed --The Bostonians, The Princess Cassamassima and The Tragic Muse--all receiving a weak reception. In a tale written soon after the Guy Domville disaster, James converted his pain into comedy, saying of the author described in the story,

Several persons admired his books--nothing was less contestable, but they appeared to have a mortal objection to acquiring them by subscription or by purchase. They begged or borrowed or stole, they delegated one of the party perhaps to commit the volumes to memory and repeat them, like the bards of old, to listening multitudes. Some ingenious theory was required at any rate to account for the inexorable limits of his circulation.²²

Now fifty-two years old, James despaired of ever receiving

the popularity and wealth granted lesser writers. As he wrote Howells, "I have felt, for a long time, that I have fallen upon evil days--every sign or symbol of one's being in the least wanted anywhere or by any one, having so utterly failed."²³ Edel describes James's writing at the period The Spoils of Poynton was produced:

. . . the violence of the Guy Domville audience had revived the violences of his childhood It was as if the injuries of long ago had occurred all over again, within his adult consciousness, and he had to purge himself of them. He was doing this in the only way he knew--he relived them in his art.²⁴

* * *

Both Mansfield Park and The Spoils of Poynton trouble many readers. From these readers, two general concerns emerge. The first is a feeling that these two novels value passivity and encourage retreat from an active, vital life, an attitude that is embodied in the heroines. A second concern is for the novels' uncertainty of tone, reflected in the inconsistent comedy of Spoils and in the didacticism and censoriousness of Mansfield Park.

Norman Page points out the unique place of Austen's novel within her work: "Mansfield Park is generally agreed to possess fundamental and puzzling differences from the other novels, differences affecting both its individual elements and its general tone."²⁵ Trilling informs us that these differences make it

the novel that is least representative of Jane Austen's peculiar attractiveness. For those who admire her it is likely to make an occasion for embarrassment. By the same token, it is the novel which the depreciators of Jane Austen may cite most tellingly in justification of their antagonism.²⁶

Criticism ranges from "blatantly didactic,"²⁷ through "remarkable . . . for its cruelty, intolerance, and vindictiveness."²⁸ One reader pronounces it "a celebration of . . . sterility."²⁹

Fanny is the focus of many readers' dislike. Trilling decides, "Nobody, I believe, has ever found it possible to like the heroine of *Mansfield Park*."³⁰ Tanner agrees, ". . . nobody falls in love with Fanny Price."³¹ It is generally two areas that cause concern: Fanny's passivity and her strict adherence to a moral standard felt to be deficient. Ferrar initiated the latter charge, calling her "the most terrible incarnation we have of the female prig-Pharisee,"³² a term reinforced by several other readers. Marvin Mudrick believes she is complacent, envious and full of self-pity,³³ Frank O'Connor calls her a snob,³⁴ and Avrom Fleishman thinks her high moral standard is put directly "in the service of self-protection."³⁵

Though Tony Tanner is not critical of Fanny, he describes her other quality which provokes attack, explaining that she is not the traditional heroine. We expect vigor and vitality of a heroine, he tells us, but she is weak and sickly. We expect bravery and venturesomeness; she's "timid,

silent, unassertive, shrinking and excessively vulnerable. We expect her to be active, asserting energy, but she's almost totally passive."³⁶ Mudrick compares her "frailness" with Mary Crawford's health and energy: "Fanny overtakes her strength by cutting roses for an hour in the garden, she becomes faint from walking and has headaches easily . . . while Mary mounts a horse for the first time and rides tirelessly. . . ."³⁷ Thomas R. Edwards compares her to other Austen heroines: "Fanny gets the life Mary couldn't accept, and it seems pretty minimal when we think of what Elizabeth Bennet or Emma or even Anne Elliot get. Then too, there is Edmund!"³⁸ And Bernard Paris says Fanny is afraid of life, that she represents the person who "does not do, he suffers; and by his suffering he gets others to take responsibility for his well-being."³⁹

To some readers, Fanny's passivity results from sexual fear. Fleishman, for instance, thinks that

Fanny [does not] reject Henry . . . out of moral conviction. . . . Nor is it born of antipathy. . . . [but] to meet a situation to which she cannot adequately respond: her dominant mood is confusion at the evident passion of Henry's proposal and at the sudden necessity for her to take passion seriously. The appropriate reaction to such confusion is regression; once Fanny cannot subsume an event under the categories of her morality, she acts . . . like a child. In this way she avoids the challenge to become a woman that Henry has laid down.⁴⁰

And he interprets Fanny as representing the values of death rather than those of life:

Fanny Price . . . is the chief spokesman for life denial her typical response is to deny: the theatricals, the courtship of Henry, even her parents. . . . Edmund turns to her only after his love for a vivacious woman is blighted, and he does so resignedly, for one who can love Fanny is ready to embrace death, too.⁴¹

* * *

From the beginning The Spoils of Poynton offended many readers. Richard Burton wrote in 1898 that, in it, James substitutes "nice shades and fine feelings . . . for the elemental interests and passions of men and women." W. C. Brownell, a few years later, pronounced it "neither very lifelike nor very much alive." And Arthur Hobson Quinn thought that with it, James had begun "a series of novels in which a thin story was strung out to unnecessary lengths by a finely drawn analysis of motives not intrinsically worthy of the effort."⁴²

Readers disagree about whether the book is meant to be humorous. Mildred Hartsock, for example, thinks it is a mock epic which "might be subtitled 'The Rape of the Things,'" with Poynton burning like Ilium, Fleda a harmless wooden horse, and Helen of Troy's part assumed by the spoils.⁴³ But others believe the novel begins as comedy but changes part way through.⁴⁴ Such basic differences of opinion as to whether it is comedy or tragedy lead one to question the book's consistency and artistic integrity. Yvor Winters expresses many a reader's bafflement:

we have rather an intense situation, developed with the utmost care . . . but remaining at nearly all times and certainly at the end uncertain as to significance. . . . the experience has been intense, and as we have not understood it, we cannot but feel it to be essentially neurotic and somewhat beyond the margin of the intelligible.⁴⁵

In discussing James's work of this period, Edmund Wilson says, "there are stories which leave us in doubt as to whether or not the author could foresee how his heroes would strike the reader." Of The Sacred Fount, Wilson writes, "The truth is, I believe, that Henry James was not clear about the book in his own mind. Already, with The Turn of the Screw, he has carried his ambiguous procedure to a point where we almost feel that the author does not want the reader to get through to the hidden meaning."⁴⁶

The Spoils offers an unusual opportunity to determine authorial intention, since, as the editors of the Notebooks tell us, "James went into more thorough discussion of The Spoils of Poynton than of any other work recorded in his notebooks."⁴⁷ Nina Baym has compared the Notebooks with the novel and its preface and decides that the Fledas of the three are all different creations. She tells us that

James did not ever consider changing the manuscript he had so far produced. . . . he seems to have believed profoundly in the rightness of whatever form the novel had assumed at any stage of its composition. Though he refined his style incessantly, he did not touch structure.⁴⁸

He originally introduced Fleda as a minor character for

reasons of plot, but she gradually usurped the central position: "The character of Fleda is in flux up to the final chapter and seems to consist of a series of improvisations--most of great brilliance--to bring a runaway plot back onto the course."⁴⁹

Baym explains that confusion over Fleda's character arises because in his fourth notebook entry James paints Fleda as a heroic figure, and this is the entry which most critics use to determine how he felt about her. But then, as Baym reconstructs it, he must have seen that, because of changes in plot,

the projected Fleda would not have been heroic at all. . . . a Fleda who acted as decisively and singlemindedly as James had intended might well appear fanatic, not heroic--destructively rigid instead of poetically idealistic.⁵⁰

Thus, Baym points out, in the very scene projected in the fourth notebook entry, the "heroic Fleda" entry, James begins to treat the novel's Fleda ironically, although the notebooks "betray no awareness of this alteration in the author's attitude. In the Notebooks James continued to work on a romantic melodrama while in the novel he developed a far more subtle anti-romance, an ironic analysis of the motives of a romantic Victorian heroine."⁵¹ To Baym, a comparison of the novel, preface and notebooks proves that James is not the modern craftsman, dispassionate and businesslike, but "the nineteenth century romantic, involved,

vulnerable, and fallible, plunging into his work and trusting his genius to carry him through it."⁵²

During her analysis, Baym points out in the "anti-heroine," Fleda, the same two qualities which are attacked by critics of Fanny Price: passivity and a rigid adherence to the wrong moral standard. In regard to Fleda's moral stand, Leon Edel discusses critics' puzzlement over her "ill-motivated renunciation of Owen" and offers an explanation similar to Baym's, though more biographical in nature:

Her [Fleda's] reasons are noble; yet they have no relation to the realities James incorporated into his story. His scenario shows James at odds both with his characters and his plot. He seems to have fixed his mind on the ultimate destruction of Poynton; in the end no one is to have anything --as he had been left with nothing when his own artistic work went up in smoke at the St. James. The novelist beings, in effect, with the idea for one kind of novel, that of the dispossessed mother, and ends with another. . . . To read James's late preface and his description of his heroine is to recognize that he "thought" one character but another emerged.⁵³

Other critics find different phrases for this "ill-motivated renunciation." Edmond Volpe thinks she is a "moral prig," Baym refers to her "legalism," Winters to her "moral hysteria," and Samuels to her "moral somersaults." Lyall Powers notes her "hyper-scrupulosity, a kind of elephantiasis of the moral sense."⁵⁴ Patrick F. Quinn attacks her as neurotically and irrationally idealistic:

Fleda's is an extreme case of doing unto others as she would have them do unto her. This proves to

be unfortunate for the others because suffering and renunciation are the states of being that Fleda aspires to. Her conduct is based on the premise that the right way is always the hard way.⁵⁵

Yvor Winters sums up the main case against Fleda, that she sends Owen back to a Mona whom he does not love and who seems interested only in his property:

Fleda . . . constructs a moral obligation out of this situation, constructs it so deviously and subtly that it would be utterly lost in summary and is sufficiently elusive in the text, enforces the compliance, and assures the marriage, thereby, presumably, ruining her own life, her lover's and that of her lover's mother.⁵⁶

The other charge against Fleda, her passivity, becomes to some critics a rejection of life itself. Arnold Kettle classes Fleda with Isabel Archer as an example of those who "reject life in favour of death," and says that "James in his supreme concern for 'living' . . . ultimately, in effect, turns his back on life."⁵⁷ Other critics see Fleda's passivity as more specifically a rejection of sexuality itself. Although he does not mention Fleda herself, Edmund Wilson speaks of seeing such familiar themes in James as,

the thwarted Anglo-Saxon spinster, and we remember unmistakable cases of women in James's fiction who deceive themselves and others about the origins of their aims and emotions. . . . James's world is full of these women. They are not always emotionally perverted. Sometimes they are apathetic . . . or they are longing, these women, for affection, but too inhibited or passive to obtain it for themselves. . . .⁵⁸

Quinn observes that Fleda three times literally runs from Owen and believes that the description of her "one experience of a basic human passion" is significant:

. . . he clasped her and she gave herself--she poured out her tears on his breast; something prisoned and pent throbbed and gushed; something deep and sweet surged up. . . . [and yet] the strangest sense of all was the momentary sense of desolation.⁵⁹

Many critics see Fleda as "amazingly naive about and considerably repelled by sex."⁶⁰ Frederick Crews asserts, for example, that there is "abundant evidence that Fleda secretly wants to remain unfulfilled--that she is a spinster by temperament."⁶¹ And perhaps most interesting in comparison with *Mansfield Park* are those who think James uses Fleda and Mona as contrasting views of sexuality, just as Austen, some believe, contrasted Fanny and Mary Crawford. As Baym observes,

A vivid jealousy surfaces intermittently in Fleda's mind throughout the novel, leaving a vast residue of anger and discomfort, wherein "Mona's permissions and Mona's beauty figures powerfully as aids to reflection." This jealousy appears tied to a strong sense of inadequacy; Fleda seems to fear that, were she to descend to Mona's earthy level, Owen would choose Mona. Her solution is to keep their love unrealized, thereby keeping him in love with her.⁶²

Of these two general concerns voiced by dissatisfied readers, the first--passivity--is directly related to these novels' depiction of a retreat into the family. The second

concern--inconsistency of tone--is an outgrowth of this same theme.

* * *

The impression of passivity in Mansfield Park and Spoils becomes clearer if we compare Fanny and Fleda with the authors' earlier protagonists. Elizabeth Bennet is one of Austen's most forceful and energetic characters, but Catherine Morland also reaches out toward life rather than waiting passively for its approach. Even the reserved Elinor, who represents the passive side of the fragmented heroine in Sense and Sensibility, plays a vigorous role in social situations, and she exerts as much control in her relationship with Edward as her strong sense of social decorum will permit. Bessie Alden, unlike Fleda, belongs with those "passionate pilgrims" breathlessly seeking out new experience, Isabel Archer and Christopher Newman, whose names alone testify to their bold attack on life. Elinor Dashwood's counterpart in James, Rowland Mallet, who represents the passive side of the Roderick Hudson character, initiates such significant action as adopting Roderick for his protege and transporting him to Europe. Certainly we would never mistake Fanny or Fleda for either Marianne Dashwood or Daisy Miller.

Fanny and Fleda are alike in other ways. Both are poor, rejected by their natural parents. Fanny's, who must support on a small disability pension the nine offspring

they have produced in eleven years, are grateful to have a "delicate and puny" girl, out of their "superfluity of children," taken off their hands by wealthy relatives (ch. 1, MP). Fleda "hadn't a penny in the world nor anything nice at home." Indeed, "with her mother dead, [she] hadn't so much even as a home," since "her father paid some of her bills, but he didn't like her to live with him (ch. 2, SP). Like Fanny, she is adopted by a wealthy patron, whose condescension is made clear through the author's irony. James uses verbs of authority and possession to indicate Mrs. Gereth's attitude toward Fleda: "She was constantly summoned to Cadogan Place, and before the month was out was kept to stay. . ." (ch. 2, SP). And when we are told that Fanny's patrons think with great "satisfaction of their benevolent plan" (ch. 2, MP), the linking of Sir Thomas with the selfish Mrs. Norris makes us suspect Austen of irony toward both characters.

It is not surprising that neither girl has a strong sense of her own value. Mrs. Norris constantly reminds Fanny of the gratitude due Sir Thomas and his children and calls her "a very obstinate, ungrateful girl . . . considering who and what she is" (ch. 15, MP). From the beginning, her female cousins have held her cheap "on finding that she had but two sashes, and had never learnt French" (ch. 2, MP). Sir Thomas' farewell, before an absence of many months, is the unkind, "If William does come to Mansfield, . . . I

fear he must find his sister at sixteen in some respects too much like his sister at ten." In the same way, Fleda hears vicious gossip about herself from her sister Maggie: "people were saying that she fastened like a leech on other people-- people who had houses where something was to be picked up" (ch. 6, SP). Fleda's father looks at her "very hard" and makes her feel "by inimitable touches that the presence of his family compelled him to alter all his hours" (ch. 13, SP).

As might be expected from this inferior self image, neither girl is the rebel against society that Elizabeth and Bessie are. Fanny is always concerned not just with behaving as she ought but even with feeling so; she suffers guilt because she does not love Mrs. Norris and because she does not regret Sir Thomas' long absence. We cannot picture her hiking to visit an ill sister as Elizabeth Bennet does, arriving uninvited and mud-splattered in a young man's drawing room. When Bessie is told not to go out in a hansom with Willie since such is not the custom in London, her words, like the Johnsonian cadence of her sentence, remind us of Elizabeth: "I don't see why I should regard what is done here. . . . Why should I suffer the restriction of a society of which I enjoy none of the privileges?" (p. 338, IE). But we cannot imagine Fleda flouting the traditions of society in that way.

Elizabeth and Bessie live comfortably and are

surrounded by those who love and protect them, Elizabeth by her father, by Jane, and by the Gardiners; Bessie by her sister and brother-in-law. We picture Elizabeth radiant at the ball, secure enough in her popularity that she enjoys telling the story of Darcy's rude refusal to dance with her. We see Bessie on the Newport terrace, admired by "slim, bright youths" (p. 300, IE) and praised warmly by Kitty as "charming" and "a dear, good girl" (p. 318, IE). Our image of Fanny, however, is alone in her white attic or in the old schoolroom without a fire (ch. 16, MP); it is of Fleda solitary in the house while her father is off to his club from breakfast to midnight (ch. 13, SP). Thus the two latter girls are depicted not as functioning within society, even so faulty a one as Bessie confronts, but as estranged from those around them.

A sign of this estrangement is the difficulty they have communicating with others. As we saw in the last chapter, Pride and Prejudice reads like brilliant Restoration drama; 77 per cent of its pages contain dialogue.⁶³ The ratio in "An International Episode" is even higher: 87 per cent. Mansfield Park and The Spoils of Poynton retain some of this witty conversation, but it is no longer displayed by the heroines. Fanny and Fleda, in their use of speech, are much more like the characters in Persuasion, of which Marilyn Butler observes, "in this novel of little dialogue, hardly any of the protagonists' utterances are directed

openly to one another. . . . [This novel] puts a premium on expression of the self and avoids direct communication between the self and another."⁶⁴ Thus Fanny's "favourite indulgence" is that "of being suffered to sit silent and unattended to" (ch. 23, MP), while Fleda's "only plan was to be as quiet as a mouse" (ch. 13, SP).

Austen increases our impression of Fanny's silence through the technique of indirect discourse. Throughout the novel, we learn something like, "With the deepest blushes Fanny protested against such a thought" (ch. 26, MP) or, "She gave the history of her recent visit" (ch. 27, MP), rather than reading Fanny's actual speeches. When we do hear her talk, it is usually not in true conversation, which implies an exchange of ideas and feelings with someone else. Sometimes she merely muses aloud and seems to address herself rather than her companion:

How wonderful, how very wonderful the operations of time, and the changes of the human mind! If any one faculty of our nature may be called more wonderful than the rest, I do think it is memory. There seems something more speakingly incomprehensible in the powers, the failures, the inequality of memory, than in any other of our intelligences. The memory is sometimes so retentive, so serviceable, so obedient--at others, so bewildered and so weak--and at others again, so tyrannic, so beyond control! (ch. 22, MP).

Here, when Miss Crawford understandably remains "untouched and inattentive," Fanny tries to consider something of mutual interest, but within a line or so, she again sounds

like a rapturous prose poem rather than one human being talking to another:

The evergreen!--how beautiful, how welcome, how wonderful the evergreen!--When one thinks of it, how astonishing a variety of nature!--In some countries we know the tree that sheds its leaf is the variety, but that does not make it less amazing, that the same soil and the same sun should nurture plants differing in the first rule and law of their existence. You may think me rhapsodizing; but when I am out-of-doors, especially when I am sitting out-of-doors, I am very apt to get into this sort of wondering strain.

When Fanny does speak to others directly, it is often to rebuke them. Hearing Henry's wish that Sir Thomas' ship had been becalmed so as to permit the Mansfield theatricals, Fanny is finally provoked into speech and delivers a stern admonishment (ch. 23, MP). There is no receptiveness to another's opinion, no attempt to exchange ideas, and actually no belief that her words will influence her listener. Pronouncing such beliefs as this one to Henry seems instead to be a moral duty, like telling a rosary. The only important listeners are she and God.

Fleda also fails to communicate with others and keeps her own counsel. Joseph Warren Beach describes her as "perpetually sparring for position" and says she and Maggie Verver and Isabel Archer "can never give themselves away."⁶⁵ One of Fleda's sparring methods--consistent with her desire to experience or learn about the world rather than to act in or become a part of it--is her practice of asking questions

rather than making statements. In her long dialogue with Owen in chapter 8, she responds over twenty times with some form of question. Typical are these lines about Mrs. Gereth's theft of the spoils, lines which show Fleda responding even to questions with questions:

"You'll tell her what you think she ought to do? he asked with some eagerness.

"What she ought to do?"

"Don't you think it--I mean that she ought to give them up?"

"To give them up?" Fleda hesitated again.

"To send them back--to keep it quiet." The girl had not felt the impulse to ask him to sit down among the monuments of his wrong, so that, nervously, awkwardly, he fidgeted about the room with his hands in his pockets and an effect of returning a little into possession through the formulation of his view. "To have them packed and dispatched again, since she knows so well how. She does it beautifully"--he looked close at two or three precious pieces. "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander!"

He had laughed at his way of putting it, but Fleda remained grave. "Is that what you came to say to her?"

"Not exactly those words. But I did come to say"--he stammered, then brought it out--"I did come to say we must have them right back."

"And did you think your mother would see you?"

Another technique Fleda uses to avoid direct statements is to speak obliquely. When she is shocked and appalled by Mrs. Gereth's theft of the spoils, Fleda tells her,

"I take you simply for the greatest of all conjurers. You've operated with a quickness--and with a quietness!" Her voice trembled a little as she spoke, for the plain meaning of her words was that what her friend had achieved belonged to the class of operation essentially involving the protection of darkness (ch. 7, SP).

Since the "meaning" is "plain" here to no one but Fleda, she does not offend by judging her friend's removal of the Poynton furniture to be a criminal act. But Fleda's most extreme way of avoiding true communication is to lie, telling Mrs. Gereth, for instance, that losing the spoils has not made Mona less willing to marry Owen, when Fleda actually knows the wedding plans are at a standstill.

Considering Fleda's habits of speech, it is not surprising that she also interprets words in a less than direct manner. After Mrs. Gereth moves the spoils to Ricks, her own small house, Owen visits and tells Fleda, "I think it's awfully nice here. I assure you I could do with it myself." When Fleda answers, "I should think you might, with half your things here!" he explains that

"Oh, I don't mean with all the things. I mean I could put up with it just as it was; it had a lot of good things, don't you think? I mean if everything was back at Poynton, if everything was all right."

Fleda hears much more in his words than they seem to say:

He brought out these last words with a sort of smothered sigh. Fleda didn't understand his explanation unless it had reference to another and

more wonderful exchange--the restoration to the great house not only of its tables and chairs, but of its alienated mistress. This would imply the installation of his own life at Ricks, and obviously that of another person. Such another person could scarcely be Mona Brigstock. He put out his hand now; and once more she heard his unsounded words: "With everything patched up at the other place, I could live here with you. Don't you see what I mean?"

Since he has as yet given no objective evidence that he feels anything more than friendship for Fleda, Owen's words of love remain "unsounded" to most readers. This passage is as good an illustration as any of the difference between James's technique in The Ambassadors and in Spoils. Part of our delight in the former novel is the gap between Strether's perception of a situation and the understanding of that situation given us as readers. We are always slightly ahead of him, as we are of Austen's Emma. Fleda, however, perceives emotions and understands meanings which the novelist does not make clear to the reader until later. In regard to the passage above, for instance, James has Owen declare his love clearly and openly in a later chapter. Fleda was right all along, but her clairvoyance is surely the cause of many readers' distrust.

Fanny, in her way, shares this almost ruthless perception into the hearts of others. Austen does provide more support than James for such an ability. As Trilling says, ". . . although on a first reading of Mansfield Park Mary Crawford's speeches are all delightful, they diminish

in charm as we read the novel a second time."⁶⁶ Most of us come, if only grudgingly,⁶⁷ to share Fanny's insights. Still, she, like Fleda, is more nimble than her readers in the race to moral judgment, and her outdistancing of us must contribute to the dissatisfaction some feel with the novel. Just as Fleda immediately perceives Mona's ignorance and stubbornness, Mrs. Brigstock's determination to appear up-to-date, and Mrs. Gereth's "glaring civility" and "almost maniacal disposition to thrust in everywhere the question of 'things.'" (ch. 3, SP); so is Fanny the only one at Sotherton and at the theatricals who comprehends the true state of affairs among all the various sets of lovers.

Valuable as her awareness of others is, neither girl is able to share it with the world. Although she sees the moral emptiness in Maria, Fanny cannot prevent the adulterous union with Crawford. She suffers hourly from Mrs. Norris, yet cannot prevent her uncle's entrusting the young people of Mansfield Park to her selfish care. Fanny cannot even enlighten Edmund as to Mary's true self. The opening of others' eyes can be accomplished only by melodramatic events, often poorly integrated into the plot.⁶⁸

Fleda cannot make her perceptions useful to others because communication itself is tenuous at best. When Owen confides that Mona refuses to marry him unless the spoils are returned, he warns Fleda that this information is "a thing it won't do to tell her" and Fleda concludes that

The allusion was undoubtedly to his mother; and was not what he meant about the matter in question the opposite of what he said--that it just would do to tell her? It would have been the first time he had said the opposite of what he meant, and there was certainly a fascination in the phenomenon, as well as a challenge to suspense in the ambiguity.

In Fleda's world, words may thus mean the opposite of what they say. Yet they cannot be depended upon to do so. The challenge lies not in the words themselves, but in their ambiguity. To use them is no longer to convey a straightforward message, but to play a delicate and frightening game, to deal with "suspense."

In analyzing Austen's style, Howard Babb finds that she uses many passive verbs and many verbs of feeling or response rather than action, and that she relies heavily on impersonal constructions, which emphasize the static rather than the active, and on abstract nouns which concentrate on the general rather than the specific.⁶⁹ Ian Watt finds the same qualities in the prose of The Ambassadors: frequent verbs which describe states of being rather than action, many passives, and many abstract nouns, especially those which represent mental ideas.⁷⁰ These prose techniques all focus on reaction rather than action, on the internal rather than the external life. Fanny and Fleda are consistent with this approach, characters who are passive, solitary, quiet, observant of others--the onlookers from the shadows rather than the vivid heroine in the foreground.

In scenes strongly emblematic of this role as passive observer, both girls are shown peering through windows, longing to escape into the scene that lies on the other side. Fanny, having been deserted by Edmund for the gaiety of Mary and the other young people, gazes out at the night, at "all that was solemn and soothing, and lovely." She finds there the "harmony" and "repose" that carry people "out of themselves" and away from the "wickedness" and "sorrow in the world" (ch. 11, MP). Fleda, roaming the streets looking in shop-windows, "like a servant girl taking her 'afternoon,'" stares in at small pictures placed for sale by a young lady who is, like herself, "without fortune," but who, unlike herself, has talent (ch. 13, SP). Thus each girl dreams of a passive life, surrounded by nature or art, but without people. And each girl stands with her back to the vital physical life, which has become a mere reflection in the glass. Behind Fleda waits Owen, "delicately dressed, shining and splendid" with a "higher hat," and a "spear-like umbrella"⁷¹ (ch. 13, SP). At her back, Fanny hears Edmund, "close by the singers, among the most urgent in requesting to hear the glee again" (ch. 11, MP).

* * *

This passive solitary heroine, ruthlessly observant of society's flaws but committed to its values, unable to communicate her moral perceptions to others, is the child

who remains within the family, unable to fulfill the Cinderella role of growing up.

Avrom Fleishman compares Fanny Price to the child who appears in some of James's fiction.⁷² He is perhaps thinking of Maisie, but Fleda is also like the child in many ways. James has Mrs. Gereth think of her as "the poor child" and "the little girl" (pp. 5, 6, ch. 1, SP) and his description of her after she learns of Owen's marriage seems significant, "She had a pause, that of the child who takes time to know that he responds to an accident with pain; then dropping again on the sofa, she broke into tears" (p. 243, ch. 20). Mary Lascelles points out that with Fanny,

contrary to her author's general rule, we are allowed first to make her acquaintance when she is a child. . . . we are more than once reminded of her childhood afterwards. "We used to jump about together many a time, did not we?" William asks her, "when the hand-organ was in the street?" (p. 250, ch. 25). It is tenderness as towards a child that is implied in Jane Austen's use of a phrase exceptional with her--"my Fanny."⁷³

Bernard Paris observes that Fanny "matures physically, but she remains psychologically a very young child. . . . [She] does not grow up, but tries to cope with a frightening, rejecting world by being good, helpless, and unthreatening."⁷⁴ Fleda tries equally hard to avoid offense, behaving as intermediary in such a way that Mrs. Gereth believes the girl is on her side and Owen thinks she is on his. She even tries to help Mona, evading Mrs.

Gereth's questions so as to cover her rival's ignorance and poor taste. At home, planning Maggie's wedding, she tries to be perfect:

She had lavished herself, in act, on Maggie and the curate, and had opposed to her father's selfishness a sweetness quite ecstatic. . . . She had thought of everything, even to how the "quietness" of the wedding should be relieved by champagne and her father kept brilliant on a single bottle. Fleda knew, in short, and liked the knowledge, that for several weeks she had appeared exemplary in every relation of life (p. 70, ch. 7).

Both girls are childlike in their quiet observation of adults. Although they see and understand more than the people around them, neither entirely comprehends the adult world. As Lascelles says of Fanny,

Entering the story as a child, Fanny grows into her office of observer and interpreter of the action. . . . Yet to the end she is bewildered (as a child may be) by many of the actions which she observes so clearly--by what is irrational, for example, in the attachment of Edmund and Mary Crawford: "His objections, the scruples of his integrity" (she reflected), "seemed all done away --nobody could tell how: and the doubts and hesitations of her ambition were equally got over--and equally without apparent reason. It could only be imputed to increasing attachment." And against Maria's passion she closes her consciousness.⁷⁵

Fleda is James's last heroine before his sequence of books written from 1895 to 1900, whose protagonists are all children: The Other House, What Maisie Knew, The Turn of the Screw, "In the Cage," and The Awkward Age. Leon Edel traces the ages of these children as they progress from five to

sixteen,

in his imagination he moved from infancy to childhood, from childhood to adolescence and then to young adulthood. Taken as a whole, the series shows the curiosity of these children, their challenges, their questionings, in terms of the bewilderment, wonder, imagination, phantasmagoria of their years--and their drive to attain omniscience in a world of negligent and terrifying adults.⁷⁶

Fleda seems a forerunner of these children, baffled as she observes men and women,⁷⁷ her information about their intimate relationships seemingly drawn from the same inadequate sources as those upon which children must rely. Overhearing an adult's casual remark, she presumes a deeper implication: Mrs. Gereth describes Owen's and Mona's as "romping laughter," (p. 36, ch. 4) and Fleda is later anxious when she thinks he is inviting her for a similar "romp in a restaurant." Or she reads books and misapplies their situations to real life:

She had read in novels about gentlemen who on the eve of marriage, winding up the past, had surrendered themselves for the occasion to the influence of a former tie; and there was something in Owen's behavior now, something in his very face, that suggested a resemblance to one of those gentlemen. But whom and what, in that case, would Fleda herself resemble? She wasn't a former tie, she wasn't any tie at all. . . (p. 66, ch. 6).

* * *

The two girls not only play the role of child in the story, they also are the prototype of Cinderella, returning

to sit among the cinders after knowing the splendors at the prince's. Fanny's Portsmouth home is one of thin walls and tiny rooms, of incessant noise and complaint, where ragged and dirty little brothers slam the doors till her temples ache and a trollopy-looking maidservant answers the door.

The realistic detail is unusual for Austen:

She sat in a blaze of oppressive heat, in a cloud of moving dust; and her eyes could only wander from the walls marked by her father's head, to the table cut and knotted by her brothers, where stood the tea-board never thoroughly cleaned, the cups and saucers wiped in streaks, the milk a mixture of motes floating in thin blue, and the bread and butter growing every minute more greasy than even Rebecca's hands had first produced it (p. 439, ch. 46).

In West Kensington, Fleda's father lives among "objects," shabby and battered, of a sort that appealed little to his daughter: old brandy-flasks and match-boxes, old calendars and hand-books, intermixed with an assortment of pen-wipers and ash-trays, a harvest he had gathered in from penny bazaars" (p. 145, ch. 13). And Fleda's other home with her sister is "the mean little house in the stupid little town" where Fleda picks "her way with Maggie through the local puddles, diving with her into smelly cottages" while "at the evening meal, her brother-in-law invited her attention to a diagram, drawn with a fork on too soiled a tablecloth, of the scandalous drains of the Convalescent Home" (p. 180, ch. 16).

The high value of both girls has gone unrecognized

by their step-parent-like natural parents. Fanny's mother, we are told, "was a partial, ill-judging parent, a dawdle, a slattern, who neither taught nor restrained her children, whose house was the scene of mismanagement and discomfort from beginning to end. . . ." She "had neither leisure nor affection to bestow on Fanny. Her daughters never had been much to her. She was fond of her sons. . . ." (p. 389, ch. 39). Fanny's father, who drinks and is loud and vulgar, reads the newspaper in the first hour of her return home "without seeming to recollect her existence" (p. 382, ch. 38). Fleda's mother is dead, but we gather from the girl's efforts to arrange her sister's nuptials that Fleda has always had to be more motherly than mothered. Her father, like Fanny's, drinks excessively, and is unaware of his daughter's fastidious taste. He, the collector of penwipers and ashtrays, is

blandly unconscious of that side of Fleda's nature which had endeared her to Mrs. Gereth, and she had often heard him wish to goodness there was something striking she cared for. Why didn't she try collecting something?--it didn't matter what. She would find it gave an interest to life, and there was no end of little curiosities one could easily pick up. He was conscious of having a taste for fine things which his children had unfortunately not inherited. This indicated the limits of their acquaintance with him. . . (p. 145, ch. 13).

In each novel, after first knowing her in beautiful surroundings, the prince tracks Cinderella down to her unworthy home and, true to the romance, persists in his love.

But because of his visit, the heroine measures the gulf between his and her own experience. In Austen's book, when Mr. Crawford visits Fanny,

Her father asked him to do them the honour of taking his mutton with them, and Fanny had time for only one thrill of horror, before he declared himself prevented by a prior engagement. . . . To have had him join their family dinner-party and see all their deficiencies would have been dreadful! Rebecca's cookery and Rebecca's waiting, and Betsy's eating at table without restraint, and pulling everything about as she chose, were what Fanny herself was not yet enough inured to, for her often to make a tolerable meal. She was nice only from natural delicacy, but he had been brought up in a school of luxury and epicurism (pp. 406-407, ch. 41).

When Owen visits, Fleda is ashamed of her father's "coarse cups," "vulgar plates," and "stale biscuits" (pp. 156, 162, ch. 14), of how the "stunted slavey, gazing wide-eyed at the beautiful gentleman and either stupidly or cunningly bringing but one thing at a time, came and went between the tea-tray and the open door" (p. 155, ch. 14).

Fleda, with her hideous crockery and her father's collections, could conceive that these objects, to her visitor's perception even more strongly than to her own, measured the length of the swing from Ponyton and Ricks; she was aware too that her high standards figured vividly enough even to Owen's simplicity to make him reflect that West Kensington was a tremendous fall (p. 157, ch. 14).

Actually, each girl is more worthy of the earlier splendor than is the young man born into it, for she, rather than the natural son, is the true spiritual inheritor of the

guardian. Though Edmund betrays Sir Thomas's values to take part in the theatricals, Fanny refuses, telling Edmund she is "sorry to see you drawn in to do what you had resolved against, and what you are known to think will be disagreeable to my uncle" (p. 155, ch. 16). And Fleishman reminds us that when Sir Thomas returns from the colonies, "it is Fanny alone who is concerned about [his] experience of slavery."⁷⁸ She asks questions of his affairs there and refrains from asking more only because she fears "showing a curiosity and pleasure in his information which he must wish his own daughters to feel" (p. 198, ch. 21). "She is ready," Fleishman explains, "to identify herself with the fortunes of the family and the issues confronting its class, while his own children are not." At the end of the novel, we are told, "Fanny was indeed the daughter that he wanted" (p. 472, ch. 48). Similarly, Fleda realizes, "She was in her small way a spirit of the same family as Mrs. Gereth" (p. 11, ch. 1). The older woman recognizes the girl's unique response to Poynton, telling her, in front of Owen, "You would replace me, you would watch over them [the things], you would keep the place right, and with you here-- yes, with you, I believe I might rest, at last, in my grave!" (p. 32, ch. 3).

Thus both Fanny and Fleda are childlike in their ignorance of adult custom, in their strong desire to please adults around them, and in their quiet observation of adults.

They are like Cinderella in their humble background and lack of respect from natural parents, in the suitor who recognizes their true value, and in moral superiority to this young man, to whom they are socially inferior.

* * *

What both girls wish is a home where they can be loved and protected as children, watched over by kind parents. They seek to be not wives, but children. As Edmund tells Fanny,

the man who means to make you love him . . . must have very uphill work, for there are all your early attachments, and habits, in battle array; and before he can get your heart for his own use, he has to unfasten it from all the holds upon things animate and inanimate, which so many years growth have confirmed, and which are considerably tightened for the moment by the very idea of separation. I know that the apprehension of being forced to quit Mansfield will for a time be arming you against him (pp. 347-348, ch. 11).

Fleda, pitying Mrs. Gereth's being thrust out of Poynton, dreams of restoring her there: "Fleda lost herself in the rich fancy of how, if she were mistress of Poynton, a whole province, as an abode, should be assigned there to the august queen-mother" (p. 146, ch. 13).

This retreat into the family is encouraged by the guardian. In Mansfield Park, Sir Thomas, on his return, at first puts an end to the close friendship with the parsonage, "drawing back from intimacies in general" (p. 196, ch. 21).

When Edmund objects that his father would enjoy the Grants and Crawfords if he would only come to know them, Fanny corrects him. "In my opinion, my uncle would not like any addition. I think he values the very quietness you speak of, and that the repose of his own family circle is all he wants" (p. 196, ch. 21). In the same way, Mrs. Gereth passes on to Fleda the duty of preserving the home, transforming it, with pious images, into a sacred trust:

[T]here are things in this house that we almost starved for! They were our religion, they were our life, they were us! And now they're only me --except that they're also you, thank God, a little, you dear! . . . There isn't one of them I don't know and love--yes, as one remembers and cherishes the happiest moments of one's life. Blindfold, in the dark, with the brush of a finger, I could tell one from another. They're living things to me; they know me, they return the touch of my hand. But I could let them all go, since I have to, so strangely, to another affection, another conscience. . . . Who would save them for me--I ask you you would? . . . You would, of course--only you, in all the world, because you know, you feel, as I do myself, what's good and true and pure (pp. 30-32, ch. 3).

If we remember the confrontation scenes in Pride and Prejudice and "An International Episode," analyzed in the last chapter, we see that their counterparts in these two later novels are quite different. In the earlier scenes, the hero's relative argues with Bessie or Elizabeth, trying to prevent her from marrying the young man, the prince of the Cinderella story. We see symbolized there the traditional movement of comedy, with the younger generation

replacing the older, establishing a new community, continuing the old traditions but revitalizing them with youthful energy. Northrup Frye's description of the plot structure of Greek New Comedy is applicable:

What normally happens is that a young man wants a young woman, that his desire is resisted by some opposition, usually paternal, and that near the end of the play some twist in the plot enables the hero to have his will. In this simple pattern there are several complex elements. In the first place, the movement of comedy is usually a movement from one kind of society to another. At the beginning of the play the obstructing characters are in charge of the play's society, and the audience recognizes that they are usurpers. At the end of the play the device in the plot that brings hero and heroine together causes a new society to crystallize around the hero.⁷⁹

This plot also represents the Fortunate Fall, the expulsion from the Garden of the Divine Parent and the attempt of man to make a new life for himself outside. To Freud, the Oedipal situation is a reenactment of this age-old need to separate oneself from family in order to form a new community.⁸⁰

But in Mansfield Park and The Spoils of Poynton, the pivotal confrontation of the heroine with her lover's relative involves the parent urging marriage and the girl resisting, instead of the other way around. Thus the guardians become fairy godparents rather than evil step-parents or the traditional blocking characters of comedy, but they are godparents whose aid is rejected. In Spoils the confrontation scene recurs several times, in chapters 3, 4, and 11 and especially in chapter 17. In Mansfield Park Sir

Thomas visits Fanny in the fireless East Room to tell her of Henry's proposal (ch. 32). Earlier, both guardians have observed the young man's love for the girl and tried to encourage it, Mrs. Gereth by constantly putting Fleda in Owen's way, Sir Thomas by staging a ball so that Henry may see Fanny dance. Both, being conscientious fairy godparents, take care that their proteges look their best. Fleda "had the sense not only of being advertised and offered, but of being counseled and enlightened in ways that she scarcely understood--arts obscure even to a poor girl who had had, in good society and motherless poverty, to look straight at realities and fill out blanks" (p. 140, ch. 12). Sir Thomas looks closely to make sure Fanny is attractive for the ball, and he does not make her go down stairs to refuse Henry in person because "when he looked at his niece, and saw the state of feature and complexion which her crying had brought her into, he thought there might be as much lost as gained by an immediate interview" (p. 320, ch. 32).

Just as in the scenes compared earlier from Pride and Prejudice and "An International Episode," these two confrontations are alike in many ways, especially so in the guardians' tactics. Each professes bewilderment, with Mrs. Gereth's annoyed, "I don't understand you. I don't understand you at all, and it's as if you and Owen were of quite another race and flesh" (p. 222, ch. 18), and Sir Thomas's laborious, "There is something in this which my comprehension

does not reach" (p. 315, ch. 32). Both proclaim their disappointment in self-righteous tones: Mrs. Gereth pleads, "Don't you understand, Fleda, how immensely, how devotedly, I've trusted you?" (p. 207, ch. 17). And Sir Thomas announces to Fanny, "you have disappointed every expectation I have formed, and proved yourself of a character the very reverse of what I had supposed. For I had, Fanny, as I think my behaviour must have shown, formed a very favourable opinion of you. . . ." (p. 318, ch. 32). Both try to shame the girl, reminding her of her humble origins: Mrs. Gereth demands, "What are you, after all, my dear, I should like to know, that a gentleman who offers you what Owen offers should have to meet such wonderful exactions, to take such extraordinary precautions about your sweet little scruples?" (p. 219, ch. 18). And Sir Thomas reproaches Fanny,

The advantage or disadvantage of your family--of your parents--your brothers and sisters--never seems to have had a moment's share in your thoughts on this occasion. How they might be benefited, how they must rejoice in such an establishment for you--is nothing to you. You think only of yourself. . . (p. 318, ch. 32).

In James's novel, the young man urged upon the girl is the guardian's own son. In Austen's novel, the suitor is Henry, while it is Edmund, the guardian's son whom Fanny loves. But this splitting of the Owen role into two characters is not important, for even with Edmund Fanny does not wish the full relationship of wife, longing instead to live

with him as sister and brother under the care of a wise father. For Fanny wishes to be a child always. She loves not the adult William but the boy with whom she grew up. When he comes to visit, it is a moment before she can be happy, "before the disappointment inseparable from the alteration of person had vanished, and she could see in him the same William as before" (p. 234, ch. 24). Though they are both grown, she delights in hearing William describe "the little cottage in which he and Fanny were to pass all their middle and latter life together" (p. 375, ch. 38). The novel's narrator tells us that in love

even the conjugal tie is beneath the fraternal. Children of the same family, the same blood, with the same first associations and habits, have some means of enjoyment in their power, which no subsequent connexions can supply; and it must be by a long and unnatural estrangement, by a divorce which no subsequent connexion can justify, if such precious remains of the earliest attachments are ever entirely outlived (p. 235, ch. 24).⁸¹

The identification of Edmund with William is made clear early in the novel, when the cousin takes William's place as kind older brother, for he

recommended the books which charmed her leisure hours, he encouraged her taste, and corrected her judgment; he made reading useful by talking to her of what she read, and heightened its attraction by judicious praise. In return for such services she loved him better than anybody in the world except William; her heart was divided between the two. . . (p. 22, ch. 2).

At the ball she and Edmund do not dance together with the

excitement and tension of Darcy and Elizabeth or of Edmund and Mary. Instead Edmund tells Fanny,

"I am worn out with civility. I have been talking incessantly all night, and with nothing to say. But with you, Fanny, there may be peace. You will not want to be talked to. Let us have the luxury of silence." Fanny would hardly even speak her agreement. A weariness arising probably, in great measure, from the same feelings which he had acknowledged in the morning, was peculiarly to be respected, and they went down their two dances together with such sober tranquility as might satisfy any looker-on, that Sir Thomas had been bringing up no wife for his younger son (pp. 278-279, ch. 28).

Must as we relish the narrator's irony in the last sentence, knowing that Fanny and Edmund are destined to marry, we share the belief of the "looker-on" that love's fever has never touched these two grave, non-communicative young people and transformed them into appropriate marriage partners. Later, on greeting her in Portsmouth, Edmund cries out, "My Fanny--my only sister--my only comfort now" (p. 444, ch. 46). When they marry, Edmund hopes "that her warm and sisterly regard for him would be foundation enough for wedded love" (p. 470, ch. 48). And soon after their marriage they return as children together to the protection of Sir Thomas, having begun to "feel their distance from the paternal abode an inconvenience" (p. 473, ch. 48).

In Spoils, Fleda, though a child to Mrs. Gereth, is to be a mother, not a wife, to Owen. We see "his child's eyes in his man's face" (p. 20, ch. 2), and he speaks "in

the tone he so often had of a great boy at a great game" (p. 190, ch. 16). He "wished to obey her [Fleda] thoroughly" (p. 193, ch. 16), and wants her to "notice how awfully well he was behaving" (p. 136, ch. 12). Fleda feels maternally protective: "it was his weakness she loved in him" (p. 240, ch. 20). She knows from the beginning that "She herself was prepared, if she should ever marry, to contribute all the cleverness, and she liked to think that her husband would be a force grateful for direction" (p. 10-11, ch. 1). She tells Mrs. Gereth, "It's because he's weak that he needs me." And Mrs. Gereth supports her, "That was why his father, whom he exactly resembles, needed me. And I didn't fail his father" (p. 225, ch. 18). Owen tries to reassure Mona about his relationship with Fleda and is surprised that "she wouldn't take my solemn assurance that nothing was passing but what might have directly passed between me and old Mummy. She said a pretty girl like you was a nice old Mummy for me. . . ." (p. 167, ch. 14). When Owen asks Fleda, "you're surely able to guess the one person on earth I love?" Fleda is not just trying to avoid a declaration of his love for herself when she "jerks at him: 'Your mother!'" (p. 168, ch. 14). Owen himself is aware of problems in the relationship he has with Fleda. He tells her of Mrs. Brigstock's suspicion, "She said our relation, yours and mine, isn't innocent. . . . she said she meant that it's excessively unnatural," and protests when Fleda agrees with

this opinion, saying to her, "I mean you make it so by the way you keep me off" (p. 185, ch. 16).

Just as, in each novel the heroine seeks a relationship as a sister or mother instead of as a wife, so in both books, the young man, Owen or Edmund, must choose between the heroine, who represents the attraction of the traditional family, and another girl, Mary or Mona, who represents the desire to establish a new family. This is clearer in Austen's case if we compare Edmund's marriage to Fanny with that of Darcy to the daughter of his aunt, Lady Catherine. Both Fanny and Miss de Bourgh are cousins of the young man, both sickly and humorless, both lacking the strong sexual vitality and energy of Elizabeth Bennet or Mary Crawford. In Pride and Prejudice, this union was vigorously rejected; in Mansfield Park its acceptance represents a loss of optimism about the individual's ability to achieve complete happiness. Robert Garis seems right when he says,

Edmund's love for Mary stands for his longing for the qualities that are missing, or brutalized, at Mansfield. . . . [I]t is perfectly clear what Edmund longs for: a woman who shares his sisters' kind of physical energy and self-confidence without their mindless vanity and stolid insensitivity, and who shares something like Fanny's emotional sensitivity and clear mind without her poverty of body and spirit. . . . What his love for Mary meant at the beginning of the novel has been silently discarded as a major theme. . . . Having been led astray by the imagined charm of the world, Edmund returns enlightened but depressed, to the fold.⁸²

Mona in Spoils lacks Mary Crawford's charm, wit, and appeal-

ing kindness toward the heroine. But in her beauty and her "permissions," she provides a strong contrast to the "stony stares" (Spoils, pp. 107-108, ch. 9) with which Fleda responds to Owen's overtures. And Mona, like Mary Crawford, Elizabeth Bennet and Bessie Alden, is placed in strong opposition to the hero's parent or aunt.

Thus both books vividly portray the century's retreat into the home. The heroines seek to be children rather than wives, and are encouraged in this desire by their guardian, as we have seen in the pivotal confrontation scene. This guardian urges as a husband a man to whom the girl will not have a relationship as a wife, but as child or mother. The young man, in his turn, rejects the most sexually attractive woman in the book to choose instead a relationship as a child with the book's heroine.

* * *

The heroines' close relationship to the home is further suggested in Mansfield Park and The Spoils of Poynton by the titles, those of concrete places and their associations rather than of a person (Emma, Roderick Hudson) or of an abstract quality or symbol (Persuasion, The Wings of the Dove). "Throughout Jane Austen's fiction," Alistair Duckworth believes, "estates function not only as the settings of action but as indexes to the character and social responsibility of their owners."⁸³ Edwin T. Bowden discusses

James's similar practice of using houses to characterize their inhabitants.⁸⁴ In the two novels we are discussing, the guardian's home, as the bastion of traditional values, is opposed to another place which embodies the newer, debased society. Trilling points out the opposition in Mansfield Park of the two worlds of London and the Bertram estate:

the city bears the brunt of our modern uneasiness about our life. We think of it as being the scene and the cause of the loss of the simple integrity of the spirit--in our dreams of our right true selves we live in the country.⁸⁵

And Ward explains that in Spoils, "the grotesque Waterbath and the sublime Poynton embody the two standards of taste that are opposed throughout the novel."⁸⁶

Duckworth has persuasively demonstrated how Austen sets Fanny's and Edmund's concern for maintaining the best of the old at Sotherton or Thornton Lacey against the reckless "improving" of Henry Crawford, so that in Mansfield Park the estate becomes a metonym for society, with Humphrey Repton's fashionable eighteenth-century landscape reform practices threatening "dangerous consequences for the continuity of a culture."⁸⁷ In James's novel, which was originally entitled "The Old Things," a similar respect for tradition is associated with Poynton, which is, we are told,

the record of a life. It was written in great syllables of colour and form, the tongues of other countries and the hands of rare artists. It was all France and Italy with their ages composed to rest. For England you looked out of old

windows--it was England that was the wide embrace. While outside, on the low terraces, she contradicted gardeners and refined on nature, Mrs. Gereth left her guest to finger fondly the brasses that Louis Quinze might have thumbbed, to sit with Venetian velvets just held in a loving palm, to hang over cases of enamels and pass and repass before cabinets (Spoils, p. 22, ch. 3).

Mrs. Gereth agonizes that "the world is full of cheap gimcracks, in this awful age, and they're thrust in at one at every turn" (Spoils, p. 31, ch. 3). This false new taste is epitomized by the Brigstocks, whose house is filled with "trumpery ornament and scrapbook art, with strange excrescences and bunched draperies, with gimcracks that might have been keepsakes for maid-servants and nondescript conveniences that might have been prizes for the blind" (Spoils, p. 7, ch. 1). The shiny newness is most apparent of all in

the acres of varnish, something advertised and smelly, with which everything was smeared: it was Fleda Vetch's conviction that the application of it, by their own hands and hilariously shoving each other, was the amusement of the Brigstocks on rainy days (Spoils, p. 7, ch. 1).

Mrs. Gereth fears Mona in charge of Poynton: "I don't know what she'd do; she'd be sure to invent some deviltry, if it should be only to bring in her own little belongings and horrors" (Spoils, p. 31, ch. 3). The fear is justified: Mona asks Fleda at one point,

"Why has she never had a winter garden thrown out? If ever I have a place of my own I mean to have one." Fleda, dismayed, could see the thing--something glazed and piped, on iron pillars, with

untidy plants and cane sofas; a shiny excrescence on the noble face of Poynton (Spoils, pp. 33-34, ch. 4).

In the same way, Mary Crawford tells Fanny, "had I a place of my own in the country, I should be most thankful to any Mr. Repton who would undertake it, and give me as much beauty as he could for my money" (MP, p. 57, ch. 6). Thus, opposed values are symbolized by the conflict between the two young women in each novel and also by the contrast in the houses that they value.

In both novels, the guardian, who encourages the heroine's respect for tradition, betrays it and values, instead, the material objects which are only its symbol. For economic reasons, Sir Thomas tries to pressure Fanny into marrying Crawford. He also fails to prevent Maria's union with a man she obviously does not like, rationalizing that either Rushworth will improve, or Maria's coolness toward him will keep her closer to her parents:

Such and such-like were the reasonings of Sir Thomas--happy to escape the embarrassing evils of a rupture, the wonder, the reflections, the reproach that must attend it, happy to secure a marriage which would bring him such an addition of respectability and influence, and very happy to think anything of his daughter's disposition that was most favourable for the purpose (MP, p. 201, ch. 21).

Fanny sees this flaw clearly: "He who had married a daughter to Mr. Rushworth. Romantic delicacy was certainly not to be expected from him" (MP, p. 331, ch. 33). Similarly,

Fleda notices Mrs. Gereth's "strange, almost maniacal disposition to thrust in everywhere the question of 'things'" (Spoils, p. 24, ch. 3), and realizes that the older woman's "ruling passion had in a manner despoiled her of her humanity" (Spoils, p. 37, ch. 4). Most devastating of all, Fleda observes at her sister's that when Mrs. Gereth visits, "she looked at Maggie's possessions before looking at Maggie's sister" (Spoils, p. 237, ch. 20). To the owner of Poynton, things have become more interesting and important than people.

The way the novels open indicates their most significant relationship to be that of the guardian and the girl. In these opening scenes, the guardians reveal their materialistic values to us by the way in which they react to the girls, whom we have not yet met. Sir Thomas is pompously anxious that his daughters preserve "the consciousness of what they are" and that the niece "remember that she is not a Miss Bertram." Mrs. Gereth judges others only by their taste in homes and clothing and approves of Fleda because she is not frumpishly dressed. Both guardians immediately consider the likelihood of a marriage with their sons, ironically so in each case: Mrs. Gereth, who never gains Fleda as a daughter-in-law, encourages her marriage to Owen because it will prevent Mona's succeeding to Poynton; while Sir Thomas, whose son finally weds Fanny, begins by being suspicious and antagonistic, reassured into sending for Fanny

only by the meddlesome Mrs. Norris:

You are thinking of your sons--but do not you know that of all things upon earth that is the least likely to happen, brought up, as they would be, always together like brothers and sisters? It is morally impossible. . . . It is, in fact, the only sure way of providing against the connexion.

Both heroines rebel against their false societies not by trying to create a new world as Elizabeth does with Darcy at Pemberley, retaining the traditions of Darcy's life and revitalizing them with the strength of her own newer middle class; nor as Bessie might have done with Lord Lambeth, grafting the flower of English culture upon a tough new American root stock, but by retreating from the false, materialistic world into a place of peace and safety. For Bernard Paris, "Fanny is an example of a person who's afraid of life . . . [who] wants to escape into a womblike refuge."⁸⁸ Edward Duffy describes Mansfield Park as a "xenophobic domain" and says that Austen's "prescription might almost be reduced to that of retirement from the world. . . ."⁸⁹ Trilling believes that the novel's tendency is "to deal with the world by condemning it, by withdrawing from it and shutting it out, by making oneself and one's mode and principles of life the very center of existence and to live the round of one's days in the stasis and peace thus contrived. . . ."⁹⁰ The novel speaks, he says, "for social stasis." Julia Brown sees Fanny's conflict metaphorically as,

the eternal human conflict between family love and erotic love. Mansfield Park is par excellence a novel of the inexorable bonds of family love. . . . At the close of Mansfield Park, Fanny is as much married in mind to her surrogate father Sir Thomas as she is in fact to her substitute brother Edmund.⁹¹ Anticipating Freud, Austen implies that for the woman, the classic sex partners are father and daughter. Yet the incestuous tendency in fiction is conceived less as an infantile fantasy than as a fear of change or death. For if you marry your father, time and history are arrested. The sense of stasis in Mansfield Park and Emma is partially explained by the incestuous marriages with which they end. The natural order is violated; the father does not die and the son does not replace him. The father becomes the son, the husband, and time stops.⁹²

* * *

For Fanny and Fleda, coming from natural homes where they are undervalued, the only hope of happiness is in another family. But neither seeks to establish a new household, with herself as wife and mother. Instead, each searches for sanctuary in a new family, again as a child. They fly from the faulty natural family to the adopted home, the journey James himself made from a raw new America to the older and truer customs of England. Fanny finds comfort there. In Mansfield Park, this final sanctuary is symbolized in the brilliant garden episode at Sotherton, where, Brissenden thinks, Austen "sets the immediate problems that beset the Bertram family in the context of the Edenic myth--the locked gates, the garden, the wilderness, the innocent and helpless heroine."⁹³ But for Fleda, whose last shelter is threatened by Mona's rapacious new society, the final

retreat is into a further innocence, that of Ricks, the maiden aunt's home:

The house was crowded with objects of which the aggregation somehow made a thinness and the futility a grace; things that told her they had been gathered as slowly and as lovingly as the golden flowers of Poynton. She too, for a home, could have lived with them: they made her fond of the old maiden-aunt; they made her even wonder if it didn't work more for happiness not to have tasted, as she herself had done, of knowledge (Spoils, p. 55, ch. 5).

This glorification of innocence, this suspicion that happiness comes not from knowledge and awareness, but from its conscious avoidance, is at the heart of both Mansfield Park and The Spoils of Poynton. It is central, too, to that idealizing of women and sentimentalizing of childhood with which the Victorians immobilized half their population, rendering them helpless--even transforming them into adversaries--in the fight against the real social and economic injustices of their age.

This concern for the value of innocence is related to James's increasing use of feminine protagonists. F. W. Dupee believes this practice resulted from James's "own exceptional identification with the feminine mind, which had probably originated in his childhood relation to his mother."⁹⁴ In A Small Boy and Others, James provides an example of such a childhood influence, when he describes a visit made with his father to an aunt, "conveying me presumably for fond exhibition (since if my powers were not exhibitional

my appearance and my long fair curls, of which I distinctly remember the lachrymose sacrifice, suppositiously were)." ⁹⁵ Small boys commonly wore long curls in that day, and James treats their loss, this barberous rite of passage, with appropriately wry humor. Still, in the background there echoes a distinct note of regret over the "sacrifice." Certainly James's identification with women was finally close enough that Elizabeth Hardwick, the writer, when asked recently to name America's greatest female novelist, answered without hesitation, "Henry James." ⁹⁶ And Dupee styles James "the great feminine novelist of a feminine age of letters." ⁹⁷

James was attracted to the passive, the idealized side of womanhood. Edmund Wilson thinks that he "seems early to have 'polarized' with his brother William in an opposition of feminine and masculine." ⁹⁸ Edel supports this idea, demonstrating that Mary James encouraged his cultivation of a quiet, reserved exterior because she "openly avowed her preference for Henry, the quiet one, and not a little hostility toward William, the active and effervescent." ⁹⁹ Henry's nickname in the James family was "Angel," and the adult William, on a visit to Henry in Europe, wrote home, "The angel sleeps in number 39 hard by, all unwitting that I, the Demon . . . am here at last." ¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to compare this language with Walter Houghton's explanation of why "The Angel in the House" was widely popular. He identifies this poem by Coventry Patmore, which compared the domestic

woman to an angel, as the manifesto of the movement to shelter and confine in the home an idealized, sentimentalized womanhood.¹⁰¹

Judith Fryer writes in The Faces of Eve: Women in the Nineteenth-Century American Novel that in the new Eden symbolized by America, writers created women in the various images of Eve, both innocent and temptress.¹⁰² Certainly James divides his women into the two types: the worldly Madame Merle and Kate Croy, Charlotte and Mona; the naive and inexperienced Isabel and Millie, Maggie and Fleda. These latter James exalted as "frail vessels,"¹⁰³ telling us in the preface to What Maisie Knew that,

I at once recognised, that my light vessel of consciousness, swaying in such a draught, couldn't be with verisimilitude a rude little boy; since, beyond the fact that little boys are never so "present," the sensibility of the female young is indubitably, for early youth, the greater. . . .¹⁰⁴

* * *

James's sentiments about female sensibility bring us to the second general concern voiced by readers of Mansfield Park and Spoils, their inconsistency of tone. The problem is related to the value which James and Austen place on innocence and inexperience, qualities often exemplified in James's work by the heroine, his "light vessel of consciousness." A. W. Bellringer says of Spoils, "James has involved himself too intimately with his own invention. In eliminating

the role of the author as wire-pulling, omniscient sage, has he not merely disguised himself as one of his own puppets?"¹⁰⁵ James, writing the novel just after a traumatic period in his personal life, seems to have identified himself closely with Fleda and her suffering. Beginning the novel as ironic comedy, signalled by the opening's strong Austenian wit and the unflattering name of Vetch, he soon abandons humor to concentrate on the beauty of Fleda's sacrifice. The result is an inconsistent novel and character. The Fleda who tries valiantly to save everyone from hurt would be shocked by the Fleda of the first chapter, breaking out, to a woman she barely knows, in criticism of their hostess's taste. It is clear why various readers view Fleda as everything from the moral norm of the novel to a destructive and neurotic personality. As we have seen from Nina Baym's analysis, even when the plot gets so out of hand that, by any realistic standard, Fleda's sacrifice becomes meaningless--even, to some readers, immoral--James is unable to extricate himself enough for objectivity.

Charles Samuels sees James's work centering around "a fundamental opposition between innocence and worldliness":

James knew well enough that good and evil aren't absolutely discrete. He understood that innocence wasn't totally synonymous with virtue but might be quixotic, priggish, or even specious. Moreover, worldliness brought the benefits not only of elegance and charm but of a wisdom so important as to make innocence undesirable.¹⁰⁶

Samuels believes James's work can be evaluated as to how well it balances this fundamental opposition without oversimplifying either side. In The Ambassadors, for instance, James sympathizes with Strether, but also satirizes his wilful self-delusion. "Making Strether comic for exemplifying James's own reluctance to face life's limits, the author rids himself of additional sentimentality."¹⁰⁷ In Spoils, on the other hand, though innocence is finally overpowered, James awards it all the moral points. Appropriately, the gift she receives from Owen is a cross, the sign of suffering martyrdom.

To what extent Austen treats Mansfield Park and Fanny ironically, to what extent she is aware of their deficiencies, is a matter of critical debate. One group, which believes her totally unaware, comprises such antagonistic critics as Marvin Mudrick, and such thoughtful ones as Lionel Trilling, who says that this is Austen's one novel "in which the characteristic irony seems not to be at work."¹⁰⁸ He believes today's often unsympathetic reaction to the novel results from a change in attitude:

Fanny is one of the poor in spirit. It is not a condition of the soul to which we are nowadays sympathetic. We are likely to suppose that it masks hostility--many modern readers respond to Fanny by suspecting her. This is perhaps not unjustified, but as we try to understand what Jane Austen meant by the creation of such a heroine, we must have in mind the tradition which affirmed the peculiar sanctity of the sick, the weak, and the dying. The tradition perhaps came to an end

for literature with the death of Milly Theale,
the heroine of Henry James's *The Wings of the*
Dove. . . .¹⁰⁹

Two critics who qualify this view of an unironic Austen in Mansfield Park are Joseph Donohue, Jr. and Tony Tanner. Both agree that she treats Fanny without irony; as Tanner says, Fanny "is never, ever wrong. Jane Austen, usually so ironic about her heroines, in this instance vindicates Fanny Price without qualification."¹¹⁰ But, unlike the first group of critics, these two think Austen saw flaws in her society:

Jane Austen always accepted the fact that life has to be defined and lived within limits: she never canvassed the idea of a flight from society into non-social freedom. But she seems to have become increasingly aware of the pain and misery involved in what D. W. Harding calls "the impossibility of being cut off from objectionable people." Many of the characters in Jane Austen's late fictional world remind one of Sartre's notion--"hell is other people."¹¹¹

A third group believes that the depiction of a flawed society and an inadequate heroine was unconsciously produced in Mansfield Park, so that the irony which exists in the book is unintentional. Kroeber says, for instance, that, "with some justice, Fanny might be described as the first psychoneurotic heroine in British fiction."¹¹² And Bernard Paris thinks that as we examine the novel we see "a different Fanny from the one the author thinks she has portrayed."¹¹³

Still another group believes that Austen was fully

aware of the flaws in both society and characters. As Brissenden says,

Jane Austen is clearly aware of [Fanny's and Edmund's] limitations--yet just as clearly she intends them to be the moral centers of the novel. [Fanny] exemplifies both the belief that it is the right and the duty of the individual to follow freely the dictates of his or her own conscience and benevolent instincts, and the hope that in a properly ordered society it will be possible for the individual to do so. But. . . the values represented by Fanny and Edmund are under attack; and although Mansfield Park escapes improvement and the Bertram family is revitalized by its taking in Fanny as a member, these things happen in the midst of a restless, changing and threatening world.¹¹⁴

Perhaps Avrom Fleishman puts best the attitudes of this last group. Throughout the novel, he believes, "ambivalence or irony rules."¹¹⁵ Austen unveils "the hostility--indeed, the sadism--in most personal relations," and yet to her,

the amazing fact about this struggle is its constancy and continuity: society is permanent organized hostility, and for better or worse it is the only permanence we can attain. . . . What Austen critics have persistently spoken of as irony--both the satirical and revelatory sorts--is perhaps at bottom this mixed feeling about social life. Society is, for Jane Austen, both the horizon of our possibilities and the arena where we destroy each other.¹¹⁶

It seems pointless to argue about whether Austen depicted Mansfield's and Fanny's flaws consciously or merely intuitively. In the work of a great artist, these levels are so intertwined as to be inseparable, with the artist herself usually not able to trace the strands of thought. What

is important is that in this novel, as in Spoils, the author seems so closely identified with the heroine as to lose that ironic objectivity for which we value her. Surely Austen sees the humor when Fanny is concerned for the horse Mary Crawford rides under Edmund's tutelage: "She began to think it rather hard upon the mare to have such double duty; if she were forgotten the poor mare should be remembered" (MP, p. 68, ch. 7). Surely Austen is poking gentle fun when Fanny rhapsodizes in second-rate prose about the evergreen. But these episodes are few in Mansfield Park, and they are balanced by others in which we are not convinced that Austen sees Fanny clearly. When Fanny muses in the East Room, for example, does Austen see the depth of the girl's self-pity, or does she share in it: "though there had been sometimes much of suffering to her--though her motives had been often misunderstood, her feelings disregarded, and her comprehension undervalued; though she had known the pains of tyranny, of ridicule, and neglect, yet almost every recurrence of either had led to something consolatory. . . ." (MP, p. 152, ch. 16) Throughout the book, Fanny is innocence exalted. In a world too frightening to confront, the wisdom and awareness which only experience can bring must be rejected. And Fanny's rejection of the world is rigorously supported by the author's judgment and reinforced by her tone. As Frank O'Connor complains,

If one glances through the pages, the rancorous,

censorious tone becomes apparent in the words with which the author tries to batter our moral sense. "Disapprove," "censure," "corrupted," "evil," "wrong," "misconduct," "sin," "crime," "guilt," "fault," "offence," "abhorrence" are only a few of the words that shriek at the reader with a sort of moral hysteria that stuns and bewilders him.¹¹⁷

Like James, Austen seems to have been working out a personal crisis in this novel. As Mary Lascelles expresses it, "Jane Austen, when she returned to fiction, had to write herself into a good humour again."¹¹⁸ Or as Bernard Paris says, "For reasons of her own, Jane Austen needed to glorify suffering and to believe that struggle and privation make one a better person."¹¹⁹ We associate Fanny, like Fleda, with the cross she receives as a valued gift.

The loss of irony in these two novels is all the more regrettable because irony is the natural mode of both James and Austen. As they use it, it is not merely a way of stating one thing on the surface so that the perceptive reader may discern the true meaning underneath. Both are masterful at using irony in this way, but more often theirs expresses the doubleness of life. They do not believe one thing, seeming to say another. Instead, they believe both of the things they are saying.

Both have been claimed by almost every camp. To some, Austen is a conservative--though Persuasion does seem to be a radical book¹²⁰--and to others a subversive.¹²¹ Angus Wilson notices that she has been claimed in recent years by Anglicans, materialists, Marxists, vitalists,

quietists and sceptics."¹²² Edel chuckles that James

has been called a tragic visionary--and a melodramatist. A rootless expatriot, who came to write "more and more about less and less," he is also called the wisest man of his time. One critic says that he is a "magician"; but another that he was a soporific bore, enchanted with his own words. He has been a characteristic American intellectual; but he "turned his back" on America. Now he is a religious visionary and an allegorist; now a realist and a naturalist. A denizen of a "museum world," he has been described as churchless and godless; yet he is also seen as believing in the cult of the Virgin (has he not named two characters in one novel Maria and Marie?). He is an unabashed aesthete; art is his religion--he is a pragmatist. . . . He is passive and renunciatory, he is active and imaginative. . . . A Tory, he would seem to have had liberal leanings; politically naive, he was politically astute. But we must stop--the contradictions are everywhere, the images cancel each other, and James, like the proverbial politician seems to favor prohibition because whiskey promotes poverty and squalor, and to oppose it because whiskey promotes good cheer and good fellowship.¹²³

Much as they are oversimplified by critics with an interpretation to support (Harold C. Goddard once said, "A man with an hypothesis runs the risk of finding confirmation for it everywhere."), the contradictions do exist. As Angus Wilson says of Austen,

the best English and American scholars and critics have sought in her work the conscious moral unity . . . which modern criticism demands of the greatest novelists. I have no doubt that she, too, sought it both in her creative work and, more importantly to her, in her life, but I doubt if she attained it.¹²⁴

And Philip Rahv speaks of James's "doubleness":

The "great world" is corrupt, yet it represents an irresistible goal. Innocence points to all the wanted things one has been deprived of, yet it is profound in its good faith and not to be tampered with without loss. History and culture are the supreme ideal, but why not make of them a strictly private possession? Europe is romance and reality and civilization, but the spirit resides in America.¹²⁵

But this doubleness, this ability to see and understand and believe both sides simultaneously, is not a lack of feeling or commitment, it is not pure detachment. Instead, Greene believes,

much ironic feeling, both in literature and in day-to-day living stems . . . from a tendency to feel too deeply, to feel as it were on both sides of the question. It is a question of psychology, of course: is the person who avoids definite commitment and indulges in irony emotionally shallower than the person who commits himself wholeheartedly to a cause and expresses himself in positive assertions? Hamlet, I suppose, is the classic type of the former; King Henry the Fifth of the latter.¹²⁶

Like Austen, James believed firmly in the traditions he saw disappearing around him. At the same time, both see how traditions can be perverted, directed not at the protection of the individual, but toward her repression.

In Mansfield Park Austen still believed that her world could be preserved. Marriage is now less than the perfect union of Pride and Prejudice, but through it a compromise can be reached, and the flood held back a little longer. James saw by the 1890's that society's ills were incurable, its economic injustices a festering sore. He

foresaw the inevitable end of the society he admired and enjoyed. He wrote to C. E. Norton in 1886,

The position of that body [the English upper class] seems to me to be in many ways very much the same rotten and collapsible one as that of the French aristocracy before the revolution--minus cleverness and conversation; or perhaps it's more like the heavy, congested and depraved Roman world upon which the barbarians came down.¹²⁷

As Spender notes, the society depicted in James's novels is one of "vultures, wolves, tigers, and hogs," with its good people "passive" and "almost dead."¹²⁸

By James's time, it was no longer possible to retreat into the family and escape this nightmare. Fleda, unlike Fanny, cannot retire safely to the "paternal abode." Mansfield Park can be supported a while longer, but Poynton, and the traditions it represents, must burn to the ground. Left by its uncaring new owners in the hands of ignorant servants, it will perish in the dark and cold of the harsh new world. It is lost in a winter gale: "the green fields were black, the sky was all alive with the wind." As the station-master laments to Fleda,

a pack of servants in charge--not the old lady's lot, eh? A nice job for care-takers! Some rotten chimley or one of them portable lamps set down in the wrong place. What has done it is this cruel, cruel night. . . . And the want of right help--it maddened me to stand and see 'em muff it.

When Fleda asks, "Poynton's gone?! the reply is a sardonic, "What can you call it, miss, if it ain't really saved?"

Fleda has come only to retrieve the Maltese cross, the sign that her suffering has value. Fanny--in a symbol as strongly sexual as James's of the watch and key--could slip Edmond's chain into the loop of her cross and wear it proudly, but Fleda's must be consumed in the holocaust.

NOTES

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¹Sigmund Freud, "A Special Choice of Type of Object Made by Men," in The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957) XI, 172.

²Alistair M. Duckworth, The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), writes of Austen's debt to Richardson. Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), explains in detail Austen's relation to the anti-jacobin novel. Both believe that Austen viewed the retreat from the new society as wholly desirable, representing her conservative views. My opinion of Austen's work differs from that of these two writers, as I will explain in a moment.

³Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (London: Paladin, 1970), pp. 325 and 315.

⁴Judith Fryer, "The Problem of The Age of Innocence: Family in the Novels of Edith Wharton," in The Family and Literature, ed. Isiah Smithson and Robert Con Davis, unpublished manuscript.

⁵Duckworth, p. 15.

⁶Duckworth, p. 8.

⁷Butler, p. 194.

⁸Christopher Gillie, A Preface to Jane Austen (London: Longman, 1974), p. 95. Others who would take this view are Denis Donoghue, "A View of Mansfield Park," in Critical Essays on Jane Austen, ed. B. C. Southam (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 49, and Gilbert Ryle, "Jane Austen and the Moralists," pp. 107-8 of Southam.

⁹Stuart Tave, Some Words of Jane Austen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 30-31, and Lloyd W.

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Brown, Bits of Ivory: Narrative Techniques in Jane Austen's Fiction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), pp. 22-23.

¹⁰Tony Tanner, Introduction to Sense and Sensibility, (Penguin English Library, 1972), p. 32.

¹¹Joan Rees, Jane Austen: Woman and Writer (New York: St. Martins Press, 1976), p. 131.

¹²Andrew H. Wright, Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Structure (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 30. A. Walton Litz, Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 81-82, sees technical problems as the cause of Austen's failure to reconcile the opposing sides.

¹³See, for example, Laurence Lerner, The Truth-tellers: Jane Austen, George Eliot, D. H. Lawrence (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), pp. 160-161.

¹⁴Fiedler, p. 315.

¹⁵Edmund Wilson, "A Long Talk about Jane Austen," in Watt's anthology, p. 38. R. F. Brissenden, "Mansfield Park: Freedom and the Family," in Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 159-60, points out that Emma's marriage "like Fanny's, it is worth noting, is very much within the family-- Knightley is Emma's brother-in-law; and their relationship for much of the novel is more like that of brother and sister than that of lovers." Bernard Paris, Character and Conflict in Jane Austen's Novels (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978), p. 65, says "When Emma is understood psychologically, . . . it is evident that her change is neither complete nor entirely for the better, and that her marriage to Knightley signifies not so much an entrance into maturity as a regression to childish dependency."

¹⁶Angus Wilson, "The Neighbourhood of Tombuctoo: Conflicts in Jane Austen's Novels," in Southam's anthology, p. 199.

¹⁷Schorer, p. 109.

¹⁸Lionel Trilling, "Emma and the Legend of Jane Austen," in Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning (New York: Viking Press, 1965), p. 51.

¹⁹Julia Brown, p. 129.

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²⁰Margaret Walters, "Keeping the Place Tidy for the Young Female Mind: The Awkward Age," in The Air of Reality: New Essays on Henry James, ed. John Goode (London: Methuen and Co., 1972), p. 218.

²¹F. W. Dupee, Henry James (New York: William Morrow: 1974), p. 227.

²²Dupee, p. 232.

²³Stephen Spender, The Destructive Element: A Study of Modern Writers and Beliefs (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936), p. 194.

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¹All quotations are from Leon Edel's introductions to The Complete Tales of Henry James, ed. Leon Edel (New York: Lippincott, 1962-1965). The first twelve are from vol. 1 (1962), the page references as follows: no. 1, p. 21; no. 2, p. 11; no. 3, p. 10; no. 4, p. 11; no. 5, p. 12; no. 6, p. 10; nos. 7, 8, 9, p. 12; no. 10, p. 14; no. 11, p. 15; no. 12, p. 11. No. 13 is from vol. 5 (1963), p. 7; no. 14 from vol. 4 (1962), p. 8; no. 15 from vol. 5 (1963), p. 7.

²Cornelia Kelley, The Early Development of Henry James (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1930).

³William Veeder, Henry James: The Lessons of the Master: Popular Fiction and Personal Style in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 1.

⁴Veeder, p. 55.

⁵Richard Poirier, The Comic Sense of Henry James: A Study of the Early Novels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 19.

⁶Letter to George Pellew, June 23, 1883, in Letters of Henry James, ed. Leon Edel, II (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard, 1975), 422.

⁷Quoted by Kelley, p. 248, from review of George Sand, Galaxy (July, 1877), p. 55.

⁸"Emerson," in Partial Portraits (London: Macmillan and Company, 1911), p. 30.

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⁹"The New Novel," 1914, collected in Notes on Novelists (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 256.

¹⁰"The Lesson of Balzac," in The House of Fiction, ed. Leon Edel (London: R. Hart Davis, 1957), p. 63, originally in The Question of our Speech, The Lesson of Balzac: Two Lectures (Boston: Houghton, 1905)

¹¹"Miss Braddon," in Notes and Reviews (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Dunster House, 1921), p. 112.

¹²Cheri Register, Bibliographical Introduction to Feminist Literary Criticism: Explorations in Theory, ed. Josephine Donovan (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), p. 8. The Ellmann quote is from Thinking about Women.

¹³"The Lesson of Balzac," p. 62.

¹⁴"Gustave Flaubert," collected in Notes on Novelists, p. 71.

¹⁵Irene Simon, "Jane Austen and The Art of the Novel," English Studies, XLIII (1962), pp. 226-7.

¹⁶"Felix Holt, the Radical," in Notes and Reviews, p. 207.

¹⁷"The Art of Fiction," in The House of Fiction, p. 45.

¹⁸"Flaubert," p. 71.

¹⁹"Balzac," p. 71.

²⁰Veeder, p. 54.

²¹The Diary of Alice James, ed. Leon Edel (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1965), p. 25.

²²The Novels and Tales (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), XIII, 365.

²³"Emily Chester: A Novel," in Notes and Reviews, p. 38.

²⁴"Miss Braddon," p. 112.

²⁵Preface to The Princess Casamassima, New York Edition, 1907, collected in The Art of the Novel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 67.

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²⁶"Emerson," p. 29.

²⁷"Balzac," p. 62.

²⁸Virginia Woolf, "Jane Austen," in The Common Reader (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1925), pp. 191-206.

²⁹F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), pp. 7, 10, 124.

³⁰Simon, pp. 225-239.

³¹John Halperin, The Language of Meditation: Four Studies in Nineteenth Century Fiction (Elms Court: Arthur H. Stockwell, Ltd., 1973), pp. 16, 117.

³²Norman Page, "The Great Tradition Revisited," in Jane Austen's Achievement: Papers Delivered at the Bicentennial Conference at the University of Alberta, ed. Juliet McMaster (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976), pp. 48, 54.

³³F. R. Leavis, "The Novel as Dramatic Poem (III): The Europeans," Scrutiny, XV, 221; Poirier, p. 8; Henry Seidel Canby, Turn West, Turn East: Mark Twain and Henry James (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), p. 67; Peter Buitenhuis, The Grasping Imagination: The American Writings of Henry James (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 90.

³⁴Buitenhuis, p. 86.

³⁵Richard Chase, "James' Ambassadors," in Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels, ed. Charles Shapiro (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1958), p. 129.

³⁶Page, "Tradition," p. 55.

³⁷Womble Quay Grigg, "The Molds of Form: Comedy and Conscience in the Novels of Henry James 1895-1901." Diss. University of Pennsylvania 1961, p. 86.

³⁸Q. D. Leavis, Introduction to Mansfield Park (London: Macdonald Illustrated Classics, 1957), p. xiv.

³⁹Oscar Cargill, The Novels of Henry James (New York: Macmillan Co., 1961), p. 37.

⁴⁰Poirier, p. 120.

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⁴¹Page, "Tradition," p. 55.

⁴²Elizabeth Drew, The Novel (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1963), pp. 229-230.

⁴³Page, "Tradition," p. 53; R. W. Chapman had noticed earlier that in Emma Austen uses the dramatic method that James advocates for The Awkward Age, "Jane Austen's Methods," Times Literary Supplement, Feb. 9, 1922, p. 82.

⁴⁴Halperin, p. 16; V. S. Pritchett, The Living Novel (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947), pp. 5-6.

⁴⁵Simon, p. 235.

⁴⁶Simon, p. 234.

⁴⁷Philip Grover, Henry James and the French Novel: A Study in Inspiration (London: Barnes and Noble, 1973), pp. 86-7.

⁴⁸Norman Page, The Language of Jane Austen (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1972) is a fine book on Austen's style.

⁴⁹Page, "Tradition," p. 56.

⁵⁰Katherine Tweedy, "Jane Austen's Novel and the Novel of Henry James," Vassar Journal of Undergraduate Studies, 11 (1938), 76.

⁵¹Simon, p. 230. Others to comment similarly are John Halperin, p. 16, and F. R. Leavis, p. 7.

⁵²Edgar Pelham, Henry James: Man and Author (Toronto: MacMillan Co., 1927), p. 258.

⁵³Buitenheis, p. 108.

⁵⁴Page, "Tradition," p. 54.

⁵⁵Halperin, p. 116.

⁵⁶Poirier, p. 18.

⁵⁷Grigg, p. 128.

⁵⁸Chase, p. 130.

⁵⁹Grigg, pp. 100-101.

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⁶⁰Wylie Sypher, "The Meanings of Comedy," in Comedy: "An Essay on Comedy" by George Meredith, "Laughter" by Henri Bergson (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1956), p. 212. In his book on James's humor, Ronald Wallace, Henry James and the Comic Form (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1975), puts some of James's work in the broad tradition of Austen.

⁶¹Tweedy, p. 76.

⁶²Page, "Tradition," pp. 55-6. Laurence Bedwell Holland, The Expense of Vision: Essays on the Craft of Henry James (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1964), p. 69 says much the same thing.

⁶³F. R. Leavis, Tradition, p. 129; also Page, "Tradition," p. 55.

⁶⁴Naomi Lebowitz, The Imagination of Loving: Henry James' Legacy to the Novel (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1965), p. 13.

⁶⁵Wallace, pp. 154-5. Others who see this same pattern are Richard Poirier, p. 36, 19; F. R. Leavis, Tradition, p. 127; Joseph Wiesenfarth, "Henry James: Action and the Art of Life," Four Quarters, XV (Jan., 1966), 23.

⁶⁶Tweedy, pp. 78-9.

⁶⁷Page, "Tradition," p. 54.

⁶⁸Halperin, p. 15; Page, "Tradition," p. 56.

⁶⁹Bradford Booth, "Form and Technique in the Novel," in The Reinterpretation of Victorian Literature, ed. J. E. Baker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), quoted by Veeder, p. 4.

⁷⁰Charles Thomas Samuels, The Ambiguity of Henry James (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Ill. Press, 1971), p. 131.

⁷¹Edel, Review of The Comic Sense of Henry James: A Study of the Early Novels, by Richard Poirier, American Literature 33 (March, 1961), 87-88. Others who have emphasized this side of James are Constance Rourke, American Humor: A Study of the National Character (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931); Poirier; Wallace; Samuels.

⁷²Letter of Jan. 4, 1879, Letters of Henry James, ed. Edel, vol. II.

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⁷³Letter to Mrs. F. H. Hill, March 21, 1879, Letters, ed. Edel, II, 103-108.

⁷⁴Letter to William Dean Howells, June 17, 1879, Letters, ed. Edel, vol. II.

⁷⁵"The Art of Fiction," p. 92.

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All page numbers of "An International Episode" refer to the original 1878 version, as reprinted in Eight Great American Short Novels, ed. Philip Rahv (New York: Berkley Publishing, 1963). James revised this novel extensively for the New York edition, and made the diction less crisp and succinct, less Austenian.

¹Rudyard Kipling, "The Janeites," Debits and Credits, vol. 31 of The Writings in Prose and Verse of Rudyard Kipling (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897, p. 159.

²Introduction to Eight Great American Short Novels, p. 11.

³Jane Austen's Letters, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), No. 77, Feb. 4, 1813.

⁴A. Walton Litz, Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 102. In this regard, Clifton Fadiman has said of James, "He thought about writing as Mozart must have thought about music . . ." Short Stories of Henry James, ed. Clifton Fadiman (New York: Modern Library, 1945), p. xvii.

⁵Lyon R. Richardson, Introduction to Henry James: Representative Selections (Urbana and London: Univ. of Ill. Press, 1966), p. xlix.

⁶Charles Hoffman, The Short Novels of Henry James, (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957), p. 17.

⁷Norman Page, The Language of Jane Austen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 93.

⁸Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), pp. 65-88.

⁹Sennett, pp. 161-174. His explanation for this

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revolution in attitudes is that capitalism broke down the strong public life of the eighteenth century.

¹⁰"The Art of Fiction," in Henry James, Representative Selections, p. 93.

¹¹August 10, 1814, Letter 98, Jane Austen's Letters, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932).

¹²Lloyd Brown, "The Business of Marrying and Mothering," in Jane Austen's Achievement: Papers Delivered at the Jane Austen Bicentennial Conference at the University of Alberta, ed. Juliet McMaster (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976), p. 28.

¹³Litz, p. 101.

¹⁴Henrietta ten Harmsel, Jane Austen: A Study in Fictional Conventions (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1964), p. 62.

¹⁵Victor A. Elconin believes that James's friend, William Dean Howells, who was an outspoken admirer of Austen, was consciously influenced by her famous scene. In The Rise of Silas Lapham seven years after James's "An International Episode," Howells describes a similar confrontation between Mrs. Corey and Penelope, whose sister Irene is on the verge of marrying the son, Tom Corey.

¹⁶Howard Babb, Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue (Ohio State University Press, 1963), has brilliantly analyzed Austen's antithetical structure, especially in Sense and Sensibility. I adopt a similar typographical arrangement to his in order to make clear this fundamental structure of opposition.

¹⁷Litz, p. 74.

¹⁸Leon Edel, The Conquest of London, 1870-1881, Vol. II of Henry James (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), pp. 247-8.

¹⁹Richard Poirier, The Comic Sense of Henry James: A Study of the Early Novels (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960), p. 183; Rahv, p. 11, Peter Buitenhuis, The Grasping Imagination: The American Writings of Henry James (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 105; Paul John Eakin, The New England Girl: Cultural Ideals in Hawthorne, Stowe, Howells and James (Athens, Georgia: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1976), pp. 21-23.

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²⁰Darrel Mansell, in his fine book, The Novels of Jane Austen: An Interpretation (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1973), says, "Anyone who systematically reads the [Austen] criticism knows that there are many episodes in the novels, such as . . . the accidental meeting of Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy at Pemberley, . . . episodes that are puzzling because they seem so utterly artificial, so contrived. They seem not quite an integral part of the plot, but rather to have been imposed on it from outside. Here are the cruxes in Jane Austen's novels, toward which her critics are irresistibly attracted. . . ." P. xi.

²¹Litz, pp. 102-3.

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¹Ian Watt, Introduction to Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Ian Watt (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 7, for both Twain remarks on Austen.

²Leon Edel, The Master, Vol. V of Henry James (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972), p. 38.

³Watt, p. 7.

⁴H. W. Garrod, "Jane Austen: A Depreciation," in Harcourt Brace critical edition of Pride and Prejudice, ed. Bradford A. Booth (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 193.

⁵E. M. Forster, "The Ambassadors," in Henry James, ed. Leon Edel (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

⁶Frank Moore Colby, "In Darkest James," Bookman, Nov., 1902, quoted by Tony Tanner in Introduction to Henry James: Modern Judgments (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 15.

⁷Frank O'Connor, The Mirror in the Roadway: A Study of the Modern Novel (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 25.

⁸George Moore, Avowals (London, 1924), pp. 57-8, quoted by Marvin Mudrick in "Jane Austen's Drawing Room," Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975).

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- ⁹Leon Edel, Introduction to Roderick Hudson by Henry James (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. vii.
- ¹⁰Henry James, Roderick Hudson, p. 81
- ¹¹Roderick, p. 109.
- ¹²Edel, Introduction to Roderick, pp. vii-viii.
- ¹³Letter to George Pellew, June 23, 1883, The Letters of Henry James, ed. Leon Edel (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975), p. 422.
- ¹⁴Jane Austen, Letter 36, May 12, 1801, Letters to Her Sister Cassandra and Others, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932).
- ¹⁵Austen, Letter 49, Feb. 8, 1807 and Letter 30, Jan. 8, 1801, Letters.
- ¹⁶Austen, Letter 29, Jan. 3, 1801, Letters.
- ¹⁷Henry James, Letter to William Dean Howells, Feb. 3, 1876, Selected Letters, ed. Leon Edel (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956), p. 96.
- ¹⁸The Notebooks of Henry James, ed. F. W. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1947), p. 170.
- ¹⁹Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage: 1500-1800 (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 674.
- ²⁰Ernest Earnest, The American Eve in Fact and Fiction: 1775-1914 (Urbana: Univ. of Ill. Press, 1974), p. 265.
- ²¹Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in Henry James: Representative Selections, ed. Lyon N. Richardson (Urbana: Univ. of Ill. Press, 1966), p. 90.
- ²²Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Jane Austen and Heroism," New York Review of Books, Feb. 8, 1979, p. 37.
- ²³Dorothy Van Ghent, "On Pride and Prejudice," in Harcourt Brace critical edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), p. 215.
- ²⁴Clifton Fadiman, Introduction to Short Stories of Henry James (New York: Modern Library, 1945), p. xv.

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²⁵Robert B. Heilman, "E. Pluribus Unum: Parts and Whole in *Pride and Prejudice*," in Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975), p. 142.

²⁶Edel, The Master, Vol. V of Henry James (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972), p. 119.

²⁷Alistair M. Duckworth comments on this in The Improvement of the Estate (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 110, crediting Edmund Wilson with first noticing it in "A Long Talk about Jane Austen," Classics and Commercials: A Literary Chronicle of the Forties (New York: Farrer, Straus and Cudahy, 1950), p. 203.

²⁸David Cecil, Jane Austen (Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Press, 1935), pp. 12-13.

²⁹Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 243-266.

³⁰Though this practice presents him with the problem Wayne Booth describes: the reader's tendency to identify with the observer/narrator, who thus becomes a participant in the story.

³¹Fleishman, A Reading of Mansfield Park: An Essay in Critical Synthesis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 57-81; D. W. Harding, "Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen," in Watt's collection, pp. 166-179.

³²David Paul, "The Gay Apprentice," The Twentieth Century CLVI, Dec., 1954, 549.

³³Mary Lascelles, Jane Austen and Her Art (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1939), p. 150, says "There is indeed (I suspect) more than one Mrs. Jennings. . . . There is the grossly good-humoured vulgarian. . . . And there is the staunch friend. . . ."

³⁴Harding, p. 176.

³⁵John Halperin, The Language of Meditation: Four Studies in Nineteenth Century Fiction (Elms Court: Arthur H. Stockwell, Ltd., 1973), p. 15.

³⁶Naomi Lebowitz, "Magic and Metamorphosis in The Golden Bowl," in Tanner's Henry James, p. 327.

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³⁷Appignanesi, Femininity and the Creative Imagination: A Study of Henry James, Robert Musil and Marcel Proust (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1973), p. 27.

³⁸Appignanesi, pp. 33 ff.

³⁹Appignanesi, p. 23.

⁴⁰Earnest, p. 188. Probably involved here is what Freud first described as the "family romance," the substitution in fantasies of one or both parents. Otto Rank says that "these new and highborn parents are invested throughout with the qualities which are derived from real memories of the true lowly parents. . . . The entire endeavor . . . is merely the expression of the child's longing for the vanished happy time, when his father still appeared to be the strongest and greatest man, and the mother seemed the dearest and most beautiful woman." p. 68, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, trans. F. Robbins and Smith Ely Jelliffe (New York: Robert Brunner, 1952).

⁴¹Elizabeth Stevenson, The Crooked Corridor: A Study of Henry James (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), pp. 136-7.

⁴²Lebowitz, p. 328.

⁴³Ten Harmsel, Jane Austen: A Study in Fictional Conventions (London: Mouton and Co., 1964), pp. 62-3, 72, 94-99, 105, 121, 161-2.

⁴⁴Wiesenfarth, "Austen and Apollo," in Jane Austen Today, ed. Joel Weinsheimer (Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Ga. Press, 1975), pp. 49-50.

⁴⁵Laurence Lerner, The Truth-tellers: Jane Austen, George Eliot, D. H. Lawrence (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), pp. 160-161.

⁴⁶Marvin Mudrick, Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952), p. 90; Robert Garis, "Learning, Experience and Change," Critical Essays on Jane Austen, ed. B. C. Southam (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 74. In "On Sense and Sensibility," in his own collection of essays, Ian Watt says, "there is certainly an unconvincing quality about Brandon, especially when he tells all to Elinor; and the final marriage to Marianne is hurriedly presented and psychologically unconvincing." A. Walton Litz, Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 82; Howard

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Babb, Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue (Ohio State Univ. Press, 1962), p. 84; and B. C. Southam, Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 56, all point out the weakness of Austen's writing at this point. Even Marilyn Butler, who believes Austen was entirely on the side of "sense," is concerned: "What, innumerable critics have asked, if Marianne never brought herself to love Colonel Brandon? The fact that the question still occurs shows that in this most conscientiously didactic of all the novels the moral case remains unmade," Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 196. Other readers dissatisfied with Marianne's marriage are G. B. Stern and Sheila Kaye-Smith in Talking of Jane Austen (New York: Harper, 1944), pp. 159 and 256; Laurence Lerner, p. 161; and Julia Prewitt Brown, Jane Austen's Novels: Social Change and Literary Form (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 91-92.

⁴⁷Mudrick calls Edward "damp company," p. 86. Ian Watt believes Elinor "only intermittently interesting," p. 48, and Edward a "dull fellow," p. 49. G. B. Stern expresses the wish to "see Elinor, not Marianne, soberly mated with Colonel Brandon," p. 92.

⁴⁸Stern, pp. 81, 90; Duckworth, p. 36; Lionel Trilling, "Mansfield Park," in The Opposing Self: Nine Essays in Criticism (New York: Viking Press, 1955), p. 127. Other unhappy readers are Sheila Kaye-Smith, Robert Garis, Laurence Lerner, Marvin Mudrick, Julia Brown, Frank O'Connor, Kingsley Amis, C. S. Lewis and Leonie Villard. These opinions will be discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

⁴⁹Villard, Jane Austen: A French Appreciation (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1924), pp. 245-6; Drabble (N.Y.: Knopf, 1969), p. 66; Kaye-Smith, p. 77.

⁵⁰Edmund Wilson, "The Ambiguity of Henry James," The Triple Thinkers: Twelve Essays on Literary Subjects (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 106-108.

⁵¹Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Vintage Books, 1977). Freud discusses the psychological importance of fairy tales especially in "The Theme of the Three Caskets" and "The Occurrence in Dreams of Material from Fairy Tales," both collected in On Creativity and the Unconscious, ed. Benjamin Nelson (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), as well as in numerous places in The Interpretation of Dreams, trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon, 1965). Jung does so

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most specifically in "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales," in Psyche and Symbol, ed. Violet S. de Laszlo (New York: Anchor Books, 1958).

⁵²Bettelheim, pp. 6-7.

⁵³Bettelheim, note. 73: "For the fact that 'Cinderella' is the best known of all fairy tales, see Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary of Folklore (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1950). Also Iona and Peter Opie, The Classic Fairy Tales (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974). For its being the best loved of fairy stories, see Mary J. Collier and Eugene L. Gaier, 'Adult Reactions to Preferred Childhood Stories,' Child Development, vol. 29 (1958)."

⁵⁴Bettelheim, p. 237.

⁵⁵Bettelheim, p. 239.

⁵⁶Henry James, "A Small Boy and Others," in Henry James: Autobiography, ed. Frederick W. Dupee (New York: Criterion Books, 1956), p. 7.

⁵⁷James, "A Small Boy," p. 8.

⁵⁸Leon Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years, Vol. I of Henry James (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1953), p. 58.

⁵⁹Joan Rees, Jane Austen: Woman and Writer (New York: St. Martins Press, 1976), p. 196.

⁶⁰Douglas Bush, Jane Austen (New York: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 17-18. David Cecil, A Portrait of Jane Austen (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 42-43, says that Jane "accepted Cassandra's right to a superior position" and believes Cassandra was the high tempered sister, Jane the docile, the same relationship that existed between William and Henry.

⁶¹Brigid Brophy, "Jane Austen and the Stuarts," in Southam's collection, p. 33.

⁶²Bettelheim, pp. 245-8.

⁶³Bettelheim, p. 238.

⁶⁴Bettelheim, p. 12. Otto Rank sees the same underlying cause of sibling rivalry, p. 74.

⁶⁵Bettelheim, pp. 241-50.

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⁶⁶Bettelheim, p. 19.

⁶⁷Austen, Letters, for example, Letter 18, Jan. 21, 1799:

It began to occur to me before you mentioned it that I had been somewhat silent as to my mother's health for some time, but I thought you could have no difficulty in divining its exact state--you, who have guessed so much stranger things. She is tolerably well--better upon the whole than she was some weeks ago. She would tell you herself that she has a very dreadful cold in her head at present; but I have not much compassion for colds in the head without fever or sore throat.

(See also Letters 14, 55 and 64.)

⁶⁸J. E. Austen-Leigh, A Memoir of Jane Austen (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 17.

⁶⁹Rees, pp. 184-5, quoting Caroline Austen, My Aunt Jane Austen, Jane Austen Society, 1952.

⁷⁰Geoffrey Gorer, "Poor Honey: Some Notes on Jane Austen and Her Mother," The London Magazine IV (Aug., 1957), 46.

⁷¹Gorer, p. 46.

⁷²Gorer, p. 44.

⁷³Stone, pp. 99-101. The Cobbett remark is quoted there.

⁷⁴E. Margaret Moore, "Emma and Miss Bates: Early Experiences of Separation and the Theme of Dependency in Jane Austen's Novels," Studies in English Literature, IX Autumn, 1969, No. 4, pp. 573-85.

⁷⁵Cecil, A Portrait, p. 46.

⁷⁶Cecil, A Portrait, p. 46.

⁷⁷Cecil, A Portrait, p. 80.

⁷⁸Cecil, A Portrait, pp. 50-51.

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⁷⁹Thomas Lefroy (See Rees, p. 56) in 1796, an anonymous suitor in 1801 or 1802 (Rees, p. 88), Samuel Blackall in 1798 (Rees, p. 63), Edward Bridges in 1808 (Rees, pp. 110-111), Mr. Papillon in 1813 (Rees, p. 133), Mr. Seymour in 1815 (Rees, p. 165).

⁸⁰Rees, p. 54. David Cecil, A Portrait, p. 28, supports this idea of men's frequent remarriage late in life: "people, especially women, died much younger than now."

⁸¹Villard, p. 82.

⁸²Stuart M. Tave, Some Words of Jane Austen (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 131-141, argues convincingly that Austen condemned Charlotte's decision. The strongest evidence he offers is perhaps Austen's letter to her niece, Fanny Knight, in 1814: "Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection; and if his [Fanny's suitor, Mr. Pluntre] deficiencies of Manner etc. etc. strike you more than all his good qualities, if you continue to think strongly of them, give him up at once." Letters, pp. 409-410.

⁸³Cecil, A Portrait, p. 98.

⁸⁴Gorer, p. 36. Brigid Brophy, pp. 21-38, writes of Austen's feeling of social degradation because of her poverty. Alistair Duckworth, "Prospects and Retrospects," Weinsheimer's collection, p. 26, objects only that Brophy does not carry this idea far enough.

⁸⁵Rees, pp. 97-98, quoting Austen Papers, 1704-1856, ed. R. A. Austen-Leigh (Spottiswoode Ballantyne and Co., Ltd., 1942), p. 235. I am unable to explain the inconsistency between Gorer's figure of 460 and that of 450 in Frank Austen's letter.

⁸⁶Letters 11, 55, 140, 141, 142.

⁸⁷Harding, p. 177.

⁸⁸"The Myth in Jane Austen," in Five Approaches of Literary Criticism, ed. Wilbur Scott (New York: Collier Macmillan Books, 1962), p. 94, reprinted from The American Imago, 1941.

⁸⁹Angus Wilson, "The Neighbourhood of Tombuctoo: Conflicts in Jane Austen's Novels," in Southam's collection, p. 198.

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- ⁹⁰Paul, p. 550.
- ⁹¹Gorer, "Myth," p. 94.
- ⁹²Gorer, "Myth," p. 98.
- ⁹³Wiesenfarth, p. 53.
- ⁹⁴Paul, p. 549.
- ⁹⁵A. Walton Litz, p. 129.
- ⁹⁶Gorer, "Myth," p. 96.
- ⁹⁷Gorer, "Myth," p. 98.
- ⁹⁸Edel, Untried Years, p. 46.
- ⁹⁹Edel, The Conquest of London, Vol. II of Henry James (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1962), p. 206.
- ¹⁰⁰Edel, Untried Years, p. 298.
- ¹⁰¹Edel, Untried Years, p. 248.
- ¹⁰²Edel, Untried Years, p. 47.
- ¹⁰³Edel, Untried Years, p. 47; Conquest, p. 114.
- ¹⁰⁴Edel, Untried Years, p. 297; Conquest, p. 98.
- ¹⁰⁵Edel, Untried Years, p. 47.
- ¹⁰⁶Edel, Untried Years, p. 48.
- ¹⁰⁷"Notes of a Son and Brother," in Autobiography, p. 342.
- ¹⁰⁸NSb, p. 333.
- ¹⁰⁹Edel, Untried Years, p. 50.
- ¹¹⁰Edel, Untried Years, p. 235.
- ¹¹¹Edel, Conquest, p. 356.
- ¹¹²Edel, Conquest, p. 357.
- ¹¹³Edel, Conquest, p. 137.

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¹¹⁴Edel, Conquest, 136. William seems to have resented the nickname, using it ironically from time to time. Visiting Henry abroad in 1873, he wrote Alice: "The Angel sleeps in number 39 hard by, all unwitting that I, the Demon (or perhaps you have already begun in your talks to distinguish me from his as the Archangel), am here at last. I wouldn't for worlds disturb this his last independent slumber." Quoted by Edel, Conquest, p. 144.

¹¹⁵Letter to Edwin L. Godkin, Feb. 3, 1882, Letters, vol. 2.

¹¹⁶Mark Spilka, "Turning the Freudian Screw: How Not to Do It," in Norton Critical Edition of The Turn of the Screw, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), pp. 245-253, originally in Literature and Psychology XIII (Fall, 1963), 105-111.

¹¹⁷Edel, Henry James: The Treacherous Years, Vol. IV of Henry James (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1969), p. 210.

¹¹⁸Edel, Untried Years, p. 55.

¹¹⁹Edel, Untried Years, p. 176, citing Wescott from April-June, 1934, Hound and Horn; Matthiessen, The James Family, p. 247; Blackmur in his essay in the Literary History of the United States, Spiller, Thorp, Johnson, Canby, eds. (New York: 1948), II, 1040; Trilling in The Liberal Imagination (New York: 1950), p. 169.

¹²⁰Edel, Untried Years, pp. 181-3.

¹²¹NSB, pp. 414-15.

¹²²NSB, p. 416.

¹²³Edel, Untried Years, p. 183.

¹²⁴Saul Rosensweig, "The Ghost of Henry James," Partisan Review XI (Fall, 1944).

¹²⁵Robert Rogers, "The Beast in Henry James," The American Imago XIII (Winter, 1956), 427-453.

¹²⁶Edel, Treacherous Years, p. 210.

¹²⁷Rogers, p. 432.

¹²⁸James, "Master Eustace," in The Complete Tales of

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Henry James, ed. Leon Edel (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1963), II, 343-376.

¹²⁹Spilka, p. 251.

¹³⁰Lebowitz, p. 329.

¹³¹The intricacies of The Golden Bowl produce peculiar interpretations. Jane M. Ford at the State University of New York, in a 1975 dissertation: "The Father/Daughter/Suitor Triangle in Shakespeare, Dickens, James, Conrad, and Joyce," sees "actual incest" within the novel, so that "The final separation is precipitated by Maggie's pregnancy by her own father, and her ultimate sense of 'her wrong.'"

¹³²Edel, Treacherous Years, p. 209.

¹³³Spilka, p. 248. Otto Fenichel defines the primal scene as the observation of sexual scenes between adults, especially the parents, by a child, who often misinterprets them as meaning sexuality is sadistic or dangerous. The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1945), p. 92.

¹³⁴Spilka, pp. 252-3.

¹³⁵Julius E. Heuscher, A Psychiatric Study of Myths and Fairy Tales (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1974), p. 365.

¹³⁶Huescher, p. 364.

¹³⁷E. Wilson, p. 129.

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¹Janeway, Man's World, Woman's Place (New York: Dell Publishing, 1971); Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Avon Books, 1977); Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (New York: Harper and Row, vol. II, 1977).

²Leon Edel, The Conquest of London, Vol. II of Henry James (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962).

³Robert C. McLean, "The Subjective Adventure of Fleda Vetch," American Literature, XXXVI (March 1964), 15.

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Other treatments of the symbolic use of place are: for Austen, Tony Tanner on the Sotherton episode in Mansfield Park, "Jane Austen and 'The Quiet Thing': A Study of Mansfield Park" in Critical Essays on Jane Austen, ed. B. C. Southam (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968); for James, Robert Rogers, "The Beast in Henry James," The American Imago, XIII (Winter, 1956), 427-453.

⁴Tanner, p. 139.

⁵Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 85.

⁶Miller, "The Family in Modern Drama," Atlantic Monthly, 197 (April, 1956).

⁷Lawrence Stone, p. 657.

⁸Stone, pp. 659-660.

⁹Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. Andrew Hacker, trans. Henry Reeve, rev. Francis Bowen (New York: Washington Square Press, 1964), p. 174.

¹⁰Tocqueville, p. 173.

¹¹Stone, p. 684.

¹²Stone, p. 669.

¹³Stone, p. 679.

¹⁴Stone, p. 685.

¹⁵Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 178.

¹⁶R. W. Chapman, Jane Austen: Facts and Problems (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), pp. 63-9.

¹⁷Lionel Trilling, "Mansfield Park," in The Opposing Self: Nine Essays in Criticism (New York: Viking Press, 1955), p. 227.

¹⁸Jane Aiken Hodge, The Double Life of Jane Austen (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), p. 115.

¹⁹Leon Edel, The Treacherous Years, Vol. IV of Henry James (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1969), p. 90.

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- ²⁰Edel, I, 84.
- ²¹Letter of Jan. 22, 1895, quoted in Edel, I, 94-5.
- ²²"The Next Time," in The Novels and Tales of Henry James (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), XV, 261.
- ²³Letter of Jan. 22, 1895.
- ²⁴Edel, I, 164.
- ²⁵Norman Page, The Language of Jane Austen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 34.
- ²⁶Trilling, p. 208.
- ²⁷Chapman, p. 194.
- ²⁸Joseph M. Duffy, Jr., "Moral Integrity and Moral Anarchy in Mansfield Park," ELH, 32 (June 1965), 90.
- ²⁹Bernard Paris, Character and Conflict in Jane Austen's Novels (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978), p. 38. Other attackers are: Reginald Farrer, "Jane Austen," Quarterly Review, 228 (July 1917), 20-23, quoted by Alistair M. Duckworth in The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 36; Duffy, pp. 71-72; Marvin Mudrick, Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 154; Laurence Lerner, The Truth-tellers: Jane Austen, George Eliot, D. H. Lawrence (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), p. 157; Frank O'Connor, The Mirror in the Roadway: A Study of the Modern Novel (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 30.
- ³⁰Trilling, p. 128.
- ³¹Tanner, p. 137.
- ³²Quoted by Alistair M. Duckworth, The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 36. Others who use this term are G. B. Stern, Talking of Jane Austen (New York: Harper, 1944), p. 85; Lord David Cecil, "Jane Austen, the Leslie Stephen Lecture" (Cambridge, 1936), p. 12; Chapman, p. 194; R. F. Brissenden, "Mansfield Park: Freedom and the Family," in Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 168.

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³³Mudrick, p. 161.

³⁴O'Connor, p. 31.

³⁵Avrom Fleishman, A Reading of Mansfield Park: An Essay in Critical Synthesis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), p. 64. Similar opinions come from Howard Babb, Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue (Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 146; Andrew H. Wright, Jane Austen's Novels: A Study in Structure (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 124; Kingsley Amis, "What Became of Jane Austen?" in Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Ian Watt (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 142.

³⁶Tanner, pp. 137, 148.

³⁷Mudrick, p. 162.

³⁸Thomas R. Edwards, Jr., "The Difficult Beauty of Mansfield Park," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 20 (June 1965), 67.

³⁹Paris, p. 23. Similar ideas are expressed by C. S. Lewis, "Two Solitary Heroines: Anne and Fanny," in Critics on Jane Austen: Readings in Literary Criticism, ed. Judith O'Neill (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1970), p. 75; Mudrick, p. 156.

⁴⁰Fleishman, p. 54. Two others with the same opinion are Mudrick, p. 164 and Stern, p. 89.

⁴¹Fleishman, p. 54.

⁴²Richard Burton, Literary Likings (Boston, 1898), pp. 122-123; W. C. Brownell, American Prose Masters (New York: 1909), p. 346; Arthur Hobson Quinn, American Fiction (New York: 1936), p. 295; all quoted by Oscar Cargill, The Novels of Henry James (New York: Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 240.

⁴³Mildred Hartsock, "A Light Lamp: The Spoils of Poynton as Comedy," English Studies, 50 (1969), xxxix-xxxvii. Another reader who sees the book as comedy is Ronald Wallace, Henry James and the Comic Form (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), pp. 80-88.

⁴⁴J. A. Ward, The Search for Form: Studies in the Structure of James's Fiction (Chapel Hill, University of

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North Carolina Press, 1967), p. 112. Other James books also fit Ward's category, according to one reader or another. Carol Ohman sees "Daisy Miller" begun as a comedy of manners but completed as symbolic presentation of a metaphysical ideal: "'Daisy Miller': A Study of Changing Intentions," American Literature, XXXVI (1964-5), 3-11. Arnold H. Chadderton thinks that, "Roderick Hudson is . . . a comic novel with a tragic denouement." Comic Method in Henry James's Fiction, unpublished dissertation, Yale University, 1965, p. 12. And Mildred Hartsock thinks such late novels as The Ambassadors and The Wings of the Dove contain much comedy in the first parts of the novels, but that "comedy disappears . . . and the final books are wholly serious in tone. . . ." "Time for Comedy: The Late Novels of Henry James," English Studies, 56, 128. Such a gradual removal of the comic perspective and profound deepening of tone remind one of Austen's Sense and Sensibility. Others who see Spoils beginning as comedy but changing in tone are R. P. Blackmur, introduction to The Aspern Papers and The Spoils of Poynton, Laurel ed. (New York: Dell, 1959), pp. 12-13, and Charles Thomas Samuels, The Ambiguity of Henry James (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 76.

⁴⁵Yvor Winters, In Defense of Reason (New York: Swallow Press and William Morrow, 1947), p. 319.

⁴⁶Edmund Wilson, "The Ambiguity of Henry James," in The Triple Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 97 and 99. Others who see this are A. W. Bellringer, "The Spoils of Poynton: James's Unintended Involvement," Essays in Criticism, 16 (1966), 185, and Cargill, pp. 223-4.

⁴⁷F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock, ed. The Notebooks of Henry James (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 137.

⁴⁸Nina Baym, "Fleda Vetch and the Plot of The Spoils of Poynton," Modern Language Association of America Publications, 84 (1969), 102.

⁴⁹Baym, p. 103.

⁵⁰Baym, p. 106.

⁵¹Baym, p. 107.

⁵²Baym, p. 103. It is interesting to compare this with Austen's description of Mansfield Park as being about

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"ordination." (Letter of Jan. 29, 1813, Jane Austen: Letters to Her Sister Cassandra and Others, ed. R. W. Chapman, II, 297.) As Duffy comments, "The wideness of this description from the mark merely indicates how remote the germ of a novel may be from the completed work," p. 73.

⁵³Edel, pp. 163-4.

⁵⁴Edmond L. Volpe, "The Spoils of Art," Modern Language Notes LXXIV (Nov., 1959), 603 and 607. Other critical readers are Baym, p. 108, Winters, pp. 319, 335, Samuels, p. 83, and Lyall H. Powers, Henry James: An Introduction and Interpretation (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 123.

⁵⁵Patrick F. Quinn, Morals and Motives in The Spoils of Poynton, Sewanee Review, lxii (1954), 563.

⁵⁶Winters, p. 319. Similar opinions are expressed by Samuels, pp. 84-5, and Wallace, pp. 82 and 85.

⁵⁷Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to The English Novel, vol. II (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 32, first published in London by Hutchinson and Company, 1951.

⁵⁸Wilson, p. 96.

⁵⁹Quinn, p. 575.

⁶⁰McLean, p. 15.

⁶¹Frederick Crews, "Book Reviews," The New England Quarterly, 37 (1964), 534. Others with this feeling are Samuels, pp. 86 and 82; Baym, p. 108, and Arnold Edelstein, "The Tangle of Life: Levels of Meaning in The Spoils of Poynton," Hartford Studies in Literature, 2, abstract in MLA.

⁶²Baym, p. 108. This same comparison is seen by Cargill, p. 237 and McLean, p. 15.

⁶³Karl Kroeber, Styles in Fictional Structure: The Art of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 144. The figure for "An International Episode" is based on a rough calculation of my own.

⁶⁴Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 283.

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⁶⁵Beach, pp. 88-89.

⁶⁶Trilling, p. 220.

⁶⁷But many readers are unregenerate, especially in regard to Fanny's preference for Edmund rather than Henry Crawford. Laurence Lerner thinks Edmund is "worthy and dreary." Leonie Villard, in Jane Austen: A French Appreciation (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1924), p. 245, admits that Edmund has many good qualities, but decides they "become intolerable to us, for they positively exhale a killing tedium." Frank O'Connor asserts that Mansfield Park

could almost be described as an artistic comedy of errors, all of them the author's, for here we find in perfection that weakness of hers I have already referred to or producing precisely the opposite effect from that she sets out to produce. What she tries to do is to make us respect Fanny Price and Edmund Bertram and dislike Henry and Mary Crawford. Edmund is in love with Mary, which is natural enough, as she is the only woman in the book whom any sensible man could be in love with. . . . The result is that we detest Fanny Price and Edmund Bertram and give our affections entirely to the Crawfords (pp. 29-30).

Sheila Kaye-Smith doesn't think Mary would have improved, but she believes Henry is "infinitely preferable to Edmund" (p. 263), and thinks, "His faults are all superficial, and would have probably disappeared on his marriage to a girl like Fanny." G. B. Stern is convinced that Austen originally intended Crawford to marry Fanny: "Henry Crawford needed only one instant of acknowledgement from his creator, and we would have had him where I truly believe most of us desire him: as the hero of Mansfield Park, instead of its attractive villain" (p. 81).

⁶⁸Lord David Cecil thinks that Henry was designed to be a villain but came to life as a sympathetic character, the author forcing him back into the original pattern, so that he acts "in a manner wholly inconsistent with the rest of his character." (Jane Austen: The Leslie Stephen Lecture, Folcroft, Pennsylvania, Folcroft Press, 1935) Laurence Lerner thinks that Crawford, like Wickham, is not convincing: "[B]oth Crawford and Wickham elope for the same reason, that they have to prove their villainy" (pp. 149-50). And Joan Rees says that "for most readers" Austen

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· fails to give conviction to the elopement with Maria: "The only motive . . . would have been overwhelming passion on both sides. To some extent, this may be discerned in Maria, but not in Henry, who, as he has been presented, would surely have found some means of slithering gracefully out of the entanglement" (p. 155). Mary Crawford's inconsistencies cause just as many objections: C. S. Lewis says, "the gap between Mary at her best and Mary in her last interview with Edmund is probably too wide; too wide, for fiction, I mean, not for possibility" (p. 76), Alistair Duckworth points to "a certain lack of aesthetic tact that is to be marked in the concluding chapters, with Mary's viciousness "too crudely brought to the surface" (p. 37). Laurence Lerner, after describing "the Mary who is kind to Fanny, who is discerning, witty, gracious," finds himself unable to accept this as the same Mary "who tempts Edmund from the love he ought to feel for Fanny, who is wicked because selfish, and dangerous because charming; and who is finally exposed. . ." (p. 157). And Brissenden believes, "Mary's character in particular seems to have been distorted by the pressures of the plot in the concluding section: she has, after all, shown considerable sensitivity and kindness to Fanny, in particular earlier in the novel. It is perhaps significant of Jane Austen's uneasiness here that we are no longer permitted to see Mary directly at this point" (p. 171).

⁶⁹Babb, p. 9.

⁷⁰Ian Watt, "The First Paragraph of The Ambassadors: An Explication," in Norton Critical Edition of the novel, ed. S. P. Rosenbaum (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), pp. 470-471.

⁷¹Robert Rogers, in "The Beast in Henry James," The American Imago, XIII (Winter, 1956), 427-453, points out that a hat is a Freudian phallic symbol which James uses frequently. The spear-like umbrella needs no explanation.

⁷²Fleishman, p. 69.

⁷³Lascelles, p. 215.

⁷⁴Paris, p. 39.

⁷⁵Lascelles, p. 201.

⁷⁶Edel, IV, 261-262.

⁷⁷Even when not children physically, most of James's protagonists behave as children in their wondering observa-

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tion of adult sexuality. In his essay on The Princess Cassamassima (The Liberal Imagination, Secker and Warburg: London, 1951), Trilling notices this in Hyacinth Robinson:

Paul Muniment and the Princess push him aside, not unkindly, only condescendingly, only as one tells a nice boy that there are certain things he cannot understand, such things as power and love and justification. . . . Millicent enfolds Hyacinth in an undemanding, protective love that is not fine or delicate but for that reason so much the more useful; but when in his last hunt for connection Hyacinth seeks out Millicent in her shop, he sees her standing "still as a lay-figure" under Captain Sholto's gaze, exhibiting "the long grand lines" of her body under pretense of "modeling" a dress. And as Hyacinth sees the Captain's eyes "travel up and down the front of Millicent's person," he knows that he has been betrayed.

In other James books, the governess observes the strongly sexed ghosts, Millie watches Densher and Kate, Maggie sees the Prince and Charlotte, and the naive Strether watches the mature, worldly Chad with Madame de Vionnet. Isabel wanders unexpectedly into the parents' room and, seeing Osmond sitting down in Madame Merle's presence, is stunned to realize their intimate relationship. Even Verena Tarrant is fought over and dominated by the equally powerful mother and father figures, Olive and Ransom.

⁷⁸Fleishmen, p. 39.

⁷⁹The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1957), p. 163.

⁸⁰In Civilization and Its Discontents, James Strachey, trans. (W. W. Norton, 1962), p. 7, Freud says,

One of the main endeavors of civilization is to bring people together into large unities. But the family will not give the individual up. The more closely the members of a family are attached to one another, the more often do they tend to cut themselves off from others, and the more difficult is it for them to enter into the wider circle of life. Detaching himself from his family becomes a task that faces every young person. . . .

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⁸¹It is interesting that Austen and James use the same unexpected word to describe the separation from a brother or sister. On pages 384, 385 of The Conquest of London, Edel tells us that William's marriage

represented, in Henry's long and close attachment to his brother, a distinct and quite sudden alteration of an old relationship, the oldest and closest of Henry's life. Their fraternal alliance of affection and competition, of joint discovery of the world, had been formed in the nursery and during their childhood companionship abroad. Their rivalry was strong; their love for each other was also strong. The burden of Henry's early tales, in which he and William's figure, had been always that however much they were unlike in taste and temperament, they were united by invisible bonds. The combined effect on Henry of William's marriage and his critical outburst [attacking The Europeans and "Daisy Miller"] seems to have been more powerful than might be imagined. The language in which Henry congratulated William is in itself suggestive. "I have just heard from Mother that you had decided to be married on the 10th ult.; and as I was divorced from you by an untimely fate on this occasion, let me at least repair the injury by giving you, in the most earnest words that my clumsy pen can shape, a tender bridal benediction." Even if we regard this as a slightly awkward attempt at humor, we must recognize that the pen raised in blessing has set down the words "I was divorced from you by an untimely fate on this occasion." In a certain sense there had been--on the grounds of their old attachment for each other--a kind of "divorce."

⁸²Robert Garis, "Learning, Experience and Change," in Critical Essays on Jane Austen, ed. B. C. Southam, pp. 68-69. Many readers object to the final pairings in Mansfield Park. Marvin Mudrick says that Mary is in love with all of Edmund "as Fanny could never bring herself to think about the range of her own feelings" and asserts that Mary "is the only woman in the novel whose gaiety, conversation, intelligence, kindness, and beauty can elevate Edmund to a level of responsiveness beyond Sir Thomas's killing principles. When Edmund turns to Fanny, the principles voluminously reclaim him." And in the same way, Mudrick thinks, Henry could be saved by Fanny: "she is for him the complete woman who will

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help him to deliver himself from his own triviality" (Afterword to New American Library ed. of Mansfield Park, 1964, p. 379). G. B. Stern laments, "If Miss Austen had chosen to work out the story to show the final triumph of good over worldliness in two marriages, instead of good pairing off with good and leaving worldliness to get on as best it might, it could hardly have made a better book . . . but she might have led, by such a solution, to the establishment of a more subtle and a more satisfactory theme. For it reads at present, we are bidden contemplate, not the triumph of evil, but certainly what is not far removed from it, the failure of goodness. . . ." (p. 90). Julia Brown thinks the true hope for renewal of the Mansfield Park society is found, not in the marriage of Fanny and Edmund, but in those of Edmund and Mary, Fanny and Henry. "As critics have pointed out, the dialectic of Pride and Prejudice (or more emphatically, the dialectic of Sense and Sensibility) is realized in these pairs: the classical values of character and reason and the romantic values of personality and emotion are set off against one another. Yet the synthesis is thwarted; and its failure is often identified as the most uncharacteristic thing about Mansfield Park in the Austen canon" (p. 91-2).

⁸³Duckworth, p. 38. A perceptive earlier article on the subject is Charles J. McCann's "Setting and Character in Pride and Prejudice," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XIX (1964), 65-75.

⁸⁴Edwin T. Bowden, The Themes of Henry James: A System of Visual Observation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956).

⁸⁵Trilling, pp. 224-5.

⁸⁶J. A. Ward, The Search for Form: Studies in the Structure of James's Fiction (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), p. 148.

⁸⁷Duckworth, p. 45.

⁸⁸Paris, p. 38.

⁸⁹Duffy, p. 74.

⁹⁰Trilling, p. 211.

⁹¹Fleishman declares, "Fanny wants, it appears, not the prince but the surrogate fairy godfather, Sir Thomas, or his younger reflection in Edmund," p. 59.

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- ⁹²Julia Brown, 98-99.
- ⁹³Brissenden, p. 163.
- ⁹⁴Dupee, p. 96.
- ⁹⁵Autobiography, p. 9.
- ⁹⁶Dick Cavett Show, television interview, Fall, 1979.
- ⁹⁷Dupee, p. 97.
- ⁹⁸Edmund Wilson, "The Ambiguity of Henry James," in The Triple Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 128.
- ⁹⁹Edel, I, p. 244.
- ¹⁰⁰Quoted by Edel, I, 244.
- ¹⁰¹Houghton, p. 375.
- ¹⁰²Judith Fryer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). Some of these same ideas were earlier expressed by Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).
- ¹⁰³The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 49.
- ¹⁰⁴Art of the Novel, pp. 143-4.
- ¹⁰⁵Bellringer, p. 200.
- ¹⁰⁶Charles Thomas Samuels, The Ambiguity of Henry James (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1971), pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁰⁷Samuels, pp. 205-207.
- ¹⁰⁸Trilling, p. 127. Others who share this view are Darell Mansell, Joseph M. Duffy, Jr., Frank O'Connor and Sheila Kaye-Smith.
- ¹⁰⁹Trilling, pp. 213-4. Another strong similarity between Wings and Mansfield Park is their point of view, providing a possible explanation for our attitude toward both books' heroines. In one important respect Sir Thomas is unlike James's Mrs. Gereth: while she never reforms, he

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recognizes his flaw, convicting himself of having "sacrificed the right to the expedient, and been governed by motives of selfishness and worldly wisdom" (pp. 461-2, ch. 48). So when Robert Heilman says of the novel,

What is missing is the earning of a better self and life that is at the dramatic center of Pride and Prejudice. . . . We wait, not for the ironic graduation toward rectitude of perception, but for people and circumstances to catch up with a rectitude which is a given ("Parts and Whole in Pride and Prejudice," in Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 142-3).

what Heilman says is true because it is Fanny's story, as Pride and Prejudice is Elizabeth Bennet's. If viewed as a novel of education, Mansfield Park is Sir Thomas's story, and this positioning of the point of view away from the center of irony and decision is perhaps one reason the novel does not satisfy us in the same way as Pride and Prejudice or Emma. Something of the same situation occurs in The Wings of the Dove, where the tragic flaw is Merton Densher's but the central consciousness, much of the time, is Millie's, so that we are given pathos rather than tragedy.

¹¹⁰Tanner, p. 137, Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., "Ordination and the Divided House at Mansfield Park," Journal of English History (June, 1965).

¹¹¹Tanner, p. 158.

¹¹²Kroeber, p. 73.

¹¹³Paris, p. 23.

¹¹⁴Brissenden, p. 169. Others are Julia Brown, p. 83, Edwards, pp. 63-4.

¹¹⁵Fleishman, p. 78.

¹¹⁶Fleishman, pp. 80-1.

¹¹⁷O'Connor, p. 30.

¹¹⁸Lascelles, p. 22.

¹¹⁹Paris, p. 32.

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¹²⁰Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975) thinks "Jane Austen's novels belong decisively to one class of partisan novels, the conservative" (p. 3). Butler is able to integrate Persuasion into her thesis only by explaining that it is actually Wentworth's novel.

¹²¹Duckworth lists the important critics of the "subversive school of Austen criticism," including Richard Simpson, D. W. Harding, Mudrick, Mark Schorer, David Daiches, Geoffrey Gorger, and Kingsley Amis (n., p. 6).

¹²²Angus Wilson, "The Neighborhood of Tombuctoo: Conflicts in Jane Austen's Novels," in Critical Essays on Jane Austen, ed. B. C. Southam, p. 184.

¹²³Edel, Introduction to Henry James: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 1.

¹²⁴Angus Wilson, p. 186.

¹²⁵Philip Rahv, "Attitudes to Henry James," New Republic, 108 (Feb. 15, 1943), 224.

¹²⁶Donald J. Greene, "Jane Austen and the Peerage," in Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Ian Watt (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

¹²⁷Quoted by Stephen Spender in The Destructive Element: A Study of Modern Writers and Beliefs (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1936), pp. 31-2.

¹²⁸Spender, p. 71, p. 63.

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