

A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF
JANE AUSTEN'S PERSUASION

by

Carroll Ann Goon

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There are many judgments that can be made on any artwork, many things that can be said about it. There are even many kinds of aesthetic judgments which can be made. I have tried in this paper to make three aesthetic determinations on a certain novel:

- 1) its over-all meaning, the way in which the parts contribute to the whole meaning;
- 2) its relative depth and significance;
- 3) its contribution to the developing task or calling of the novel.

These, although by no means the only ones possible, are the aesthetic judgments I have attempted to make. I have chosen in this paper to work with Jane Austen's last novel, Persuasion, because it seems complex and interesting in several respects. Published in 1818, it shares as much with the earlier Neoclassical period as it does with its contemporary, the Romantic period. It is similar to, but also different from, Jane Austen's previous novels, and seems to move in a somewhat new direction. Finally, although in general it has not fared well in the literature--unlike Pride and Prejudice or Emma, it is often dismissed as a failure--several important modern critics and writers have pointed out its depth and significance.

In making these judgments on Persuasion, I would agree with the New Critical emphasis on looking at the artwork itself in its integrity. Aesthetic judgments are impossible unless we understand the work itself, in itself. In Chapter 2, I attempt a close reading of the text of Persuasion. I believe this is possibly a helpful contribution, because Persuasion has not been treated well in the literature. The few articles explore a single theme, character, or event, without exploring its relation to other parts and the relation of all these parts to the whole. In larger critical works, the chapters on Persuasion usually examine one dimension of the work, like a specific theme or the quality of its diction. One of the few works that does try to grasp the whole seems to misconstrue Persuasion so seriously that it demands a thorough-going new reading of the work. I have tried to make what I believe are necessary judgments about the central meaning of Persuasion, and I have tried to support this with reference to the cumulative direction of individual parts and dimensions. In doing so, I have tried to draw together as many aspects of the work as were possible and relevant in the

context of this paper. This kind of close reading, I believe, must form the basis for any judgments we make on Persuasion.

However, it is impossible adequately to treat any artwork simply in itself; we inevitably see it within a certain context or framework which affects the kinds of judgments we are likely to make. For example, if we look at Persuasion in the context of modern novels, we may see it as moralizing and stiff; but if we look at it in the context of 18th-19th century novels, we may see it as precisely the opposite. I have chosen to view Persuasion in its timed cultural context of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, because I believe that the actual context of the writing is very important to any artwork. I am working with the suggestion that there is at a certain time a cultural homogeneity, driven by a cultural spirit, which gives a certain time a definite character. I also work with the suggestion that there is another kind of continuity--of tradition or outlook. In Chapter 1 I try to map out some of the basic coordinates--for example, Rococo, Neoclassical and Romantic. I use the areas of philosophy, art theory, and the novel simply to provide a broader spectrum of different cultural responses that nevertheless manifest the same driving spirit. In Chapter 3 I have tried to locate Persuasion more specifically by examining its kinships--whether closer or more distant--with Richardson's Clarissa and other works. This kind of comparison forces me to be more precise in my judgments of Jane Austen's novel.

The final aesthetic judgment I make on Persuasion concerns its contribution to the developing task or calling of the novel. Although several critics have interested themselves in this general issue, my formulation of it reflects my own larger perspective and assumptions. I assume that the novel, as one part of our God-given task, is called to praise God and serve our neighbor in its own distinctive way. I suggest that the novel has a peculiar ability to present a fictional story modified by many different perspectives and attitudes; in fact, the attitudes of the characters and the narrator may be as important to the total effect as the story itself. In Chapter 4 I have tried to make a preliminary judgment on Persuasion that is specific and relative rather than sweeping and absolute.

I have chosen to surround a close reading of the work itself

with these timed cultural contexts because I believe they are central to the aesthetic judgments I am trying to make on Persuasion. However, they are not the only ways; many more comparisons are helpful in illuminating a work. For example, I think it would be very interesting to compare Persuasion with Jane Eyre and The Portrait of a Lady. This paper is only a starting-point; I hope it will be provocative in its methodology and its conclusions, and possibly suggestive of other interesting lines of investigation.

Carroll Ann Goon
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CHAPTER I

THE CONTEXTS OF PERSUASION

Any assessment of the character of Jane Austen's Persuasion and of its contribution to the development of the novel requires at least some general understanding of the historical background and context. Primarily, of course, this context is the development of the novel from mid-century to Jane Austen. But also relevant are the broader contexts of art theory and general philosophy. These contexts provide a multifaceted background against which to understand and evaluate Persuasion. They may be viewed as concentric circles, and I shall work from the outside in, sketching briefly a few of the relevant aspects of general philosophy, art theory, and positions taken by writers of the novel in the eighteenth century.

1.1 The Philosophy Context

English philosophy of the eighteenth century has its roots in the late seventeenth century, particularly in the philosophy of John Locke. Harald Høffding says that it is Locke who initiates, or at least prepares the way for, "critical" philosophy:

If (following Kant) we understand by dogmatism a movement which, without sufficient examination of the conditions and limits of our knowledge, uses our concepts to investigate the nature of things, while critical philosophy investigates the faculty of knowledge itself, before it proceeds to speculate concerning existence, then critical philosophy definitely begins with John Locke.¹

Locke wants to investigate the limits and processes of knowledge before concerning himself with the things to be known. In An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), the result of this beginning of "critical" philosophy is a fundamental empiricism; ideas exist not as innate concepts, but primarily as simple ideas arising from immediate sensations, either external (sensation) or internal (reflection). Knowledge consists of

immediate intuition which perceives fundamental relations between these simple ideas, thus resulting in complex ideas, ideas of relation, and abstract ideas. And a series of intuitively-combined ideas is a "demonstration." For Locke, only intuition and demonstration have absolute validity, as Höffding says:

Just as Locke's doctrine of the origin of ideas contains a sharp contrast between the passivity in the reception of simple ideas and the activity in the formation of secondary ideas so, in his doctrine of the validity of knowledge, we find a no less sharp contrast between "sensitive" knowledge, which can only give us probability, and intuitive and demonstrative knowledge, which afford complete certainty and necessity. (H, I:387)

In this way Locke is "an empiricist respecting the origin of ideas, and ...a rationalist with regard to their application." (H, I:387) For Locke, empiricism may be the epistemological format, but it is still subordinate to a rationalistic certainty.

Despite this emphasis, however, Locke's empiricism is a very important development, as becomes even more evident when viewed in its wider scientific context. As G. S. Rousseau points out, Locke originally studied medicine at Oxford and read physiology with Thomas Willis, whose Cerebri Anatome (1664) and Pathologiae Cerebri (1667) made "an imaginative leap of the first order" by theorizing that the soul was located in and limited to the brain, and thus linking sensitivity with the working of the soul.² That this theory had great imaginative value is evident in the work of Albrecht von Haller's Über den Ursprung des Übels (1734). According to R. F. Brissenden, von Haller is exploring the implications of Willis's theory when he says that (in Brissenden's words) "...feeling is the divine spark in man, planted in him to provide a link with the deity, and to alert the body and the soul to the presence of evil."³ Likewise Robert Whytt, in his Essay on the Vital and Other Involuntary Motions of Animals (1751), according to Brissenden:

...advances the theory that every part of the body is sensible, or has feeling, and that this 'sentient principle' is the basis of all animate motion, voluntary or involuntary, and that it can therefore be equated with the mind or soul....And this one principle, in its most basic aspect, is sensibility. Moreover it quite clearly has a moral dimension. Although most of Whytt's writings are taken up with strictly medical matters he makes it plain that man's physiological sensibility and his moral sensibility are different but intimately related facets of the same process.⁴

This physiological theory of sensibility may indeed provide a helpful con-

text for understanding how Locke's empiricism later becomes an important emphasis on sensation as the source of reliable knowledge, including moral knowledge, in English philosophy of the 1700s.

Locke's emphasis on the empiricist foundation of ideas and principles brings to his rationalistic philosophy a relativist toleration.

As Susan G. Auty says,

The revolutionary denial of innate ideas and immutable moral truths contained... [in the Essay] carried with it a plea for open-mindedness and generosity towards men of differing opinions....The apparent offender against order and reason was not to be condemned out of hand nor his ideas ridiculed simply on the grounds of their being contrary to one's own. Indeed, in his famous chapter on the association of ideas included in the fourth edition of the Essay, published in 1700, Locke virtually absolved rational man of most of the responsibility for his perverseness, that is, his individual variations in thought and action that naturally appear perverse to all those who have not been exposed to the same impressions and thus have not formed the same ideas. His suggestion that the mind was inevitably influenced by "gangs" of ideas which quite involuntarily fixed themselves to other ideas in the shadowy regions of the consciousness implied that the most contemptible actions were committed in extenuating circumstances.⁵

In this way, says Auty, Locke's Essay "...contributed forcefully, especially through the persuasive medium of the Spectator papers, to the climate of toleration that pervaded the early eighteenth century."⁶

What Ernst Cassirer calls Enlightenment philosophy in general takes Locke's philosophy a step further. Like Locke, most philosophy of the eighteenth century begins with an investigation of the limits and validity of knowledge; however, early Enlightenment philosophy does not go on to produce a finished system of knowledge of the external world. It concentrates on the subject's process of reasoning rather than on unquestioned systems of reasoning. Enlightenment philosophy also develops Locke's theory of knowledge with its relation between empirically-founded simple ideas and secondary principles derived from these ideas. And feeling, as an aspect of empiricist contact with reality, becomes very important to the derivation of principles and the acquisition of knowledge. Cassirer says:

The psychology and ethics of the seventeenth century are in the main based on this conception of the affects as 'perturbations of the mind' (perturbationes animi). Only that action has ethical value which overcomes these disturbances, which illustrates the triumph of the active over the passive part of the soul,

of reason over the passions....The eighteenth century advances beyond this negative characterization and evaluation of the affects. It looks upon the affects not as a mere obstacle, but seeks to show that they are the original and indispensable impulse of all the operations of the mind.⁷

These, then, are some general characteristics of Enlightenment philosophy as a whole. But there are two major groups--early Enlightenment and later "neoclassical" Enlightenment--which manifest, I think, these general characteristics with different emphases, driven by radically different spirits.

A figure like Shaftesbury modifies the empiricism of Locke. Shaftesbury maintains Locke's distinction between outer experience (sensation) and inner experience (reflection); indeed, the "moral sense" arises from reflection on inner sensations. (H, I:394-5) As R. L. Brett notes, the phrase "moral sense" does not designate a separate faculty, but rather a direct and intuitive apprehension.⁸ In this way Shaftesbury gives moral judgments an immediate, intuitive empirical foundation; thus moral perceptions are simple ideas which result directly and immediately from sensory experience and have unquestionable validity.

Hume collapses Locke's realm of inner experience (reflection) into that of outer experience (sensation), forming thereby one category, "perception."⁹ Thus all simple ideas arise through outer experience or sensation. Hume goes further with his radical empiricism with respect to knowledge. As Höffding says, he "...distinguishes between the knowledge which consists only in the explication of the mutual relations of our ideas (the formal sciences, logic and mathematics) and the knowledge which leads us beyond the given impressions and convinces us of the existence of a something which is not given." (H, I:429) The latter rests upon the concepts of substance and causality, which according to Hume cannot be proven empirically, but are rather matters of belief. And he goes on to suggest that belief itself is explainable in terms of a particularly lively sensation. In these ways, early Enlightenment figures like Shaftesbury and Hume give empirical sensation a much more important place in the dynamics of thought, moral judgment, and belief.

In addition, feeling is of central importance to these processes. Höffding says that Shaftesbury is "...the first philosopher of feeling. The importance of immediate feeling is defended in opposition to discursive reason, calculating egoism, and external sense-impressions." (H,

I:393) For Shaftesbury, virtue involves harmony and order within the individual's feeling life, and correspondingly between individuals in society. Höffding, paraphrasing Shaftesbury, says:

What we have to do is to bring into harmony the different impulses which stir the heart. He is the architect of his own happiness who has laid for himself an inner foundation of order, peace, and harmony. Happiness is within, not without us. The harmony and beauty of the feelings mould the forms and customs of the true social life; that which satisfies the claims of the life of the community brings harmony also into the souls of individuals. (H, I:395)

Thus, as Höffding says, Shaftesbury "...asserts the union of the beautiful with the good under a revival of the antique conception of virtue as a harmony between the parts of the individual man and between men among each other." (H, I:393) And the "moral sense" is not only a natural sense of order and harmony, but also specifically a moral feeling for this kind of order and harmony which impels the individual to moral action.

For Hume, feeling is, as Höffding says, "an original and immediate state," whereas "reason expresses itself through reflection and comparison" and "ascertains relations or matters of fact only." (H, I:434-5) Feeling is particularly central to moral action and moral judgments. The natural moral feeling is a feeling of approbation which is excited by actions or qualities which are perceived as tending to our own profit and advantage. But because of our natural feeling for others, morality involves not just our own advantage, but also that of others.

For both Shaftesbury and Hume, "fellow-feeling" is a particular kind of empirical sensitivity which can be assumed as the basis for moral principles and action. This feeling is also directly congruent with sensation, and it is a very tenuous, somewhat superficial matter. Shaftesbury is content to assume that the happiness and harmony of the individual correspond to the happiness and harmony of his fellow men. And Hume's "fellow-feeling" is remarkably tenuous; it is based, not on an essential inner bond, but on a kind of emotional associationism based on simple contiguity. But the point is that early Enlightenment philosophy in both Shaftesbury and Hume views feeling in empirical terms, reducing it to its externally-directed and social dimensions in which it has breadth but not depth.

Early Enlightenment philosophy rejects simple, original moral

principles that are, so to speak, handed down from above. Moral principles are composites, derived from empiricistic simple ideas, and thus reflect what is rather than what ought to be. With its emphasis on empiricism, early Enlightenment philosophy values the diversity of experience and accepts all conclusions, even contradictory ones, that are based on experience. A wide diversity of results does not disturb the inner unity of the structured process of empiricism. This results in an attitude of broad toleration toward different moral principles, as, according to Höffding, is evident in Hume:

He devotes a special investigation to the discussion of the objections based on the mutual contradiction existing between the moral ideas, manners, and customs of different peoples and times; we might just as well, he says, find a difficulty in the fact that the Rhine flows northwards and the Rhone southwards! Both rivers run according to the same law--the law of gravity--in opposite directions, because of the different slope of the ground. The fact that, under different circumstances, men arrive at different results, is no reason for supposing they could not have started from the same principle. Everything which men have called good or evil has been something which has been regarded as either directly or indirectly profitable or injurious. Differences, then, do not shake the principle. (H, I:436)

This broad toleration also has an air of lighthearted perversity, as if relativizing and equalizing good and evil is an enlightened way of asserting independence from the oppressive strictures of dogmatic philosophy. Toleration extends to different results derived from the accepted empirical method, but not to different methods.

In a general sense, early Enlightenment philosophy has a spirit of easy, unruffled affability. It tends to assume that "Whatever is, is right," and with its broad toleration it says "Live and let live," or "You go your way, I'll go mine." Fellow-feeling as the basis of morality is built into the structure and corresponds to the individual's feeling for his own interests. This sunny optimism is, I believe, characteristic of early Enlightenment philosophy, as in, according to Höffding, Shaftesbury's understanding of evil: "Mischief and evil exist only in our limited view: our finite thought must often regard that as imperfect which would appear perfect if we could view it from the point of view of the totality." (H, I:395) Shaftesbury is not, as might appear, recognizing in a traditional sense the reality of evil but also the overruling providence of God; rather, he is optimistically denying to evil

any real existence or power. And Höffding says of Hume that "...we must not look to him for explanation of deep-lying ethical crises and oppositions." (H, I:436) Early Enlightenment philosophy has breadth but not depth, a good-natured and optimistic toleration which precludes a deep understanding of good and evil.

Later Enlightenment philosophy continues to develop a "critical" philosophy and to take its own stand on empiricism as these matters come through Shaftesbury and Hume. But here the emphasis is different. In contrast to the self-conscious innovation of early Enlightenment philosophy, this later philosophy seeks to integrate and consolidate the gains that have been made. Thus Adam Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759), provides a summary and critique of previous theories. (H, I:444) Smith follows Shaftesbury and Hume in "a conviction that moral judgments are initially as immediate as sensory perceptions, that their basis is feeling rather than reason" and in "the notion of sympathy conceived as the fundamental medium or process of human communication."¹⁰ Likewise, Kant proceeds to cull the best from previous philosophers: from Rousseau the idea of the dignity of man as a personal and feeling being; from Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume the concept of the ethical feeling. (H, II:72-4) This integration and consolidation take a specific form--distilling or concentrating its essence into generally-applicable principles.

Later Enlightenment philosophy emphasizes those universal structural principles which provide unity and directedness in the processes of perception, knowledge, and moral judgment. Adam Smith, in his critique of previous theories, is uncomfortable with the complete relativism of the empirically-based moral judgment. R. F. Brissenden says that "...the need to invest moral judgments based on feeling with what could appear to be genuine authority, and the problem of doing so, are expressed far more forcefully and baldly in his work than in the work of any of his predecessors."¹¹ Says Adam Smith himself:

The general maxims of morality are formed, like all other general maxims, from experience and induction. We observe in a great variety of particular cases what pleases or displeases our moral faculties, what these approve or disapprove of, and, by induction from this experience, we establish those general rules....It is by these...that we regulate the greater part of our moral judgments, which would be extremely uncertain and

precarious if they depended altogether upon what is liable to so many variations as immediate sentiment and feeling, which the different states of health and humour are capable of altering so essentially....¹²

The empirical basis is still there, but the notable difference from Shaftesbury and Hume is the discomfort over "uncertain and precarious" diversity in moral judgments, and the need to "regulate" moral judgments with "general rules." Furthermore, Adam Smith, although he would admit differences in morality according to particular circumstances, is horrified at the infanticide practiced by the civilized ancient Greeks. As R. F. Brissenden says, "What is interesting is not Smith's failure to produce a satisfactory explanation, but the fact that he felt impelled to draw attention to the difficulty."¹³ Smith, although very much an empiricist, nevertheless evinces a certain uneasiness with the implications of radical empiricism. His emphasis on regulation according to general rules differs from earlier philosophy and moves in the direction of Kant's more fully articulated position.

Kant sets up a duality of theoretical reason and practical reason, which corresponds to that of the sensible world and the supersensible world, of what is and what ought to be, of nature and morality. Theoretical reason deals with the sensible natural world. Objects in this sphere can be known only by a knowing subject who "prescribes to nature its laws." This, then, is theoretical knowledge--finding the logical forms, the mathematical laws, that inform the natural world. In this way, says Richard Kroner,

...nature is rationalized by the knowing subject and thus elevated to its true essence or to its essential truth....It is the intellectual dignity of man...which enables the scientist to purify the sensible world so that it can be interpreted in mathematical symbols.¹⁴

But even when this is done, theoretical reason cannot grasp ultimate truth, the thing-in-itself, which exists not in nature but in the supersensible world. As Richard Kroner says, "The thing-in-itself symbolizes ultimate truth, forever attracting the searching mind from a distance never to be spanned. Every truth actually reached is really penultimate, finite and therefore not satisfying." (K, 94) At this point, only the willing subject, and not the knowing subject, can strive for the ultimate truth of things-in-themselves, things as they ought to be. In this realm, as Heidegger says, practical reason declares the law for the willing subject:

...Kant's first ethical formula [runs] as follows: "Act so that the maxim of this action may serve as a general rule," his second formula is: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only." (H, II:86)

Thus practical reason posits universal, formal laws for the will, just as theoretical reason posits universal, formal laws for nature.

But this is more than just a simple duality; even the lower sphere of nature and theoretical reason is caught up in the ethical striving toward truth. The link between these two spheres is man himself:

...man is a point in which the two different world spheres of nature and morality meet. Man is a biological organism developed from the brutes, yet he is also much more than an animal. This temporally and spatially insignificant natural creature is, nevertheless, a citizen of the supersensible world; man is able by the power of his moral reason to establish for both himself and his actions a value which transcends all time and all space and puts him in touch with an eternal being. (K, 32-3)

Because man is characterized by practical or moral reason, even his theoretical reason is deeply ethical, as Kroner says:

Even the expression "the intellect prescribes to nature its laws" has a "practical" connotation, for prescribing is a kind of practical action. Kant interprets the relation between theoretical reason (or understanding) and nature by analogy to the relation between practical reason and will. The logical forms, i.e., the highest principles of the natural order, are conceived as norms, rules, regulative concepts--all these terms play a decisive role in the Critique of Pure Reason. And all these terms indicate that Kant interprets the operation and function of reason, even in the theoretical field, along the lines of ethical legislation.... (K, 67)

Moreover, Kroner says that "From the practical perspective theoretical knowledge itself is determined by the will--the will to know the truth." (K, 83) Thus,

...the transcendent Ideas assume the significance of intellectual tasks never completely fulfilled and forever standing at the horizon of human science, while science itself takes on significance as an approach toward the solution of these tasks.... Science is basically an ethical undertaking; this is its ultimate and most exalted conception. The ethical ideal thus penetrates the theoretical sphere itself and appears within it as its supreme master and interpreter. (K, 84)

In this way, practical reason catches up all of life--including the sensible world by way of the laws of theoretical reason--and makes it part of the striving toward the transcendent ultimate truth.

An important point here is that Kant's subjectivity differs greatly from earlier notions of subjectivity in Shaftesbury and Hume. Richard Kroner comments very perceptively that:

Subjective knowledge is not the opposite of objective knowledge, rather knowledge as knowledge is always an operation or an activity of the thinking subject, and the subjectivity of knowledge does not preclude it from being objective, but, on the contrary, it makes its objectivity possible and meaningful. Objectivity means rationality and thus subjectivity. This subjectivity should not be confused with the so-called "subjectivity" of the human senses or indeed with any psychological or physiological theory whatsoever. In Kant's epistemology, the term "subjectivism" always points exclusively to the thinking subject, to the "transcendental," i.e. the "ruling" or "commanding" understanding, to sovereign reason. (K, -68-9)

For Kant, the knowing subject rules the phenomenal world by positing universal laws that express the very essence of that world, its informing principle. This is very different from, say, Hume's empiricism, which subordinates reason to the passive perception of the external world. In addition, the strong ethical and teleological thrust in Kant has a centripetal effect which is directly opposed to what I might call the more centrifugal effect in Hume. Hume's subjectivity is rather horizontal, in that it is exclusively this-worldly and emphasizes the validity of individual perceptions, regardless of how different they are. Kant's subjectivity has a vertical thrust; subjectivity is other-worldly in origin, and catches up all this-worldly phenomena into its own absolute, ultimate reality.

Later Enlightenment philosophy also conceives of the moral sense in a way very different from that of earlier Enlightenment philosophy. The moral sense in Adam Smith and Kant is progressively less directly empirical; that is, it focuses not on what is, but on what ought to be. Of Adam Smith, for example, R. F. Brissenden says that:

He clearly would not question the basic assumption of the age, so neatly summarized by Pope in The Essay on Man, that whatever is is right:

All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good.

But he was aware that partial evils are often hard to bear, and that discords can grate uncomfortably on the ear. He uses this as an argument in favor of the existence of God: if things do not come up to our ideal in this life there must be some redress

in the next: "When we thus despair of finding any force on earth which can check the triumph of injustice, we naturally appeal to heaven...And thus we are led to the belief of a future state."¹⁵

And "...while his theories appear to demonstrate in the economic sphere that 'whatever is, is right' (or that it can be, if economic processes are allowed to function 'naturally')," says R. F. Brissenden, "in the sphere of morality their final result is to assert that whatever is ought to be right, but in fact often is not and perhaps, in the nature of things, never can be."¹⁶

Smith follows Hume in basing the moral sense not on "a priori reasoning, but on immediate feeling,"¹⁷ and on sympathy. But for Smith, instinctive and involuntary sympathy is itself sufficient for this, and thus becomes the sole basis for the moral life. (H, I:443-4) This is not simply Hume's passive emotional associationism that's "catching" if you get too close, but ultimately a more intentional, reasoned process. As Höffding says,

This instinctive sympathy acquires its more definite character through the ideas which arise of the causes and effects of other men's feelings and actions. We approve the feelings of another when we are conscious that, under similar circumstances, we should have feelings of the same kind and strength. The feeling must stand in a certain proportion to the cause which evoked it if we are to be able to sympathise with it. (H, I:443)

Furthermore, by induction from these experiences, the individual derives what Brissenden calls "general rules or laws of morality"¹⁸ or what Höffding calls "general moral principles of reason." (H, I:444) In this way Smith moves away from the individualism, relativism, and passivity of radical empiricism, toward reasoned, general rules which regulate the moral life.

For Kant, the moral sense is "practical reason," which originates in the supersensible world of ideal forms, the realm of what ought to be in contrast to what is. Thus moral judgments are not based on empirical sensations of pain and pleasure; rather they arise from ethical reason which is teleologically directed toward the ideal form of human life. Thus Höffding says that:

...what Kant, from his definitive ethical standpoint, regards as the content of the moral law or of duty is an anticipation of the goal of historical development--just as, in the theoretical sphere, a priori principles anticipate, by means of the concepts of cause and quantity, the course of experience. The

ideal, derived from human experience and the needs of humanity, of a free society of human personalities...denotes at one and the same time the final goal of history...and the content of the moral law, which declares itself within the breast of individuals. (H, II:79)

Moreover, this ideal is unattainable, and necessarily so. Man must keep striving. In this connection, Richard Kroner comments that:

In order to understand the deep roots of Kant's moral Weltanschauung, we must bear in mind the words of Goethe: "Es irrt der Mensch, solang er strebt." One could render this in the spirit of Kant as: "Man strives only as long as he errs." If a man ceases to err, he ceases to strive; he who pretends to ultimate truth would surely relax in the unending moral struggle. Failing this, he would become indifferent to whether the world is essentially good and divine or whether it simply has no regard for moral and religious value. (K, 24-5)

Striving and struggling toward the unattainable ideal are quite essential to Kant's moral sense. It is evident that a sensation of immediate pleasure, pain, or profit would be contrary to this process and is, indeed, a distraction and a temptation to be overcome. It is a very different feeling which turns the moral law into a motive for action: a feeling of esteem and veneration effected by the law itself. As Höffding says, this esteem is "...a feeling which cannot be explained through experience; it is neither pleasure nor pain, but pure interest excited in our breasts by the sublimity of the law...." (H, II:87) Thus Kant's "moral sense" is in no way empirical or phenomenal, but purely noumenal; it is beyond the sensible world, within the world of ideal form.

In accordance with this emphasis, the moral sense is not an individual but a communal matter. And unlike Shaftesbury and Hume, one might say that the moral sense is not genially "social" so much as it is responsibly "civic." For Smith this communal or societal orientation concerns primarily not the content of the moral law, but the development of the moral sense itself. Höffding explains how societal relations function in the development of the moral sense:

Our first ethical judgments are passed on other men, whose behaviour we observe as impartial spectators. We soon discover, however, that other men observe and judge our behaviour in the same manner, and we then learn to judge of this ourselves--at first from the standpoint of others. Only when we live together with others do we thus learn constantly to hold a mirror before our own actions. We are split up into two persons--one acting and the other looking on. And this inner spectator does not remain a mere representative of outer censors; we naturally

attribute to him a greater knowledge of ourselves than that which others can have of us, and we involuntarily set up this inner spectator as a judge, to whose superior wisdom and justice we appeal from the short-sighted and unjust sentences of those around us. On the other hand, remorse may arise when our will conflicts with that which the inner impartial spectator is able to approve, even when no man knows what is going on in our hearts. (H, I:444)

Thus the collective judgments of others in society are hypostatized and idealized into the mature moral sense. As R. F. Brissenden puts it, "The 'fair and impartial spectator' becomes built permanently into the structure of the personality. It becomes 'the man within' and eventually 'this demigod within the breast...the abstract and ideal spectator of our sentiments and conduct.'" ¹⁹ Brissenden likens this to Freud's conception of the development of the superego; ²⁰ for Adam Smith, indeed, this "civic" moral sense seems to be imposed on the individual at great cost to him.

For Kant, the societal orientation is central to the formal structure of the moral law: "Act so that the maxim of thy act may serve as a general rule," and "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only." (H, II:86) By its very structure, then, the moral law forces the individual to think of his actions in terms of the good of society as a whole. While it remains a very personal law, its import is to draw the individual into conformity not with the status quo, but with the ideal condition of human life. The moral law is clearly centripetal; but it arises in the individual and thus represents the intention and highest goal for the individual. Thus the idealizing slant insures that what is in the best interests of mankind as a civic whole is also in the best interests of the individual.

The moral law also carries with it a strong sense of obligation or duty. Adam Smith gives general moral rules special authority; he

...wants to maintain that moral laws, despite the fact that they are inductively derived, like all other laws, from experience, have a special status. They represent the will of the Deity, and we are therefore obliged to obey them in any case. Moreover our moral faculties--by which he means both the capacity to respond emotionally to particular situations, and conscience, the man within--have a similarly unique authority. ²¹

If Smith emphasizes the obligation attaching to moral law, he is also aware of the difficulties entailed by that obligation. R. F. Brissenden

says that Smith does not present an altogether sunny view of the operations of conscience, but has a strong awareness of the guilt which attends the conflict between duty required by conscience and the falling-short of human actions.²² Smith emphasizes the difficulty of doing moral duty; in addition, he is aware of the results of following the dictates of idealized moral duty when it goes against the status quo. Says R. F. Brissenden:

...he pays far more attention than does...anyone else among his contemporaries, to the powerful and ambiguous manner in which guilt can function within the personality....If moral attitudes are formed out of the relationship between the individual and his society, then the man who finds himself out of step with his fellows may be subjected to unbearable pressure--both from within and without.²³

This awareness distinguishes the Theory of Moral Sentiments from the works of earlier Enlightenment philosophers. By comparison with Shaftesbury and Hume, Smith has a "preoccupation with guilt and remorse, and with the sense of moral compulsion and obligation" and a "remarkable sense of the anguish and psychological distress occasioned by remorse, 'of all the sentiments which can enter the human breast the most dreadful.'" ²⁴ Smith is basically an Enlightenment optimist who has become aware of elements that threaten his optimism, and these things make him unhappy.

For Kant, on the other hand, with his background in German pietism, duty is even more important and necessarily involves striving against obstacles within and without. His moral laws are categorical or unconditional imperatives; they spur on the will to strive continually for an unattainable ideal. In this striving, great obstacles to be overcome are natural impulses and inclinations which, as Kroner points out, "continually tempt us in the direction of evil." (K, 58) Thus for Kant moral duty is against desire and inclination, often the narrow, difficult path of sheer willpower. Duty for Kant is never easy; according to Höffding, Kant asks that "in questions of duty men should abstract from all self-interest and from all immediate allurements." (H, II:84) I think it is fair to say that this emphasis on duty is very different from the earlier optimism that when individuals act for their own pleasure and profit, the ultimate good of mankind is thereby assured.

In my judgment, the cultural spirit ruling late Enlightenment philosophy is quite distinct from that which rules earlier Enlightenment

philosophy. In its commitment to stern and severe moral Duty, it is very different from the easygoing tolerance of individual moral eccentricity and the moral complacency that "Whatever is, is right," attitudes which characterize the earlier philosophy. The later period seeks to focus all of life and experience in the ethical striving for the ideal. It seeks, not to exalt individuality, but to draw the individual into conformity with the ultimate goal of all humanity. The quality of fellow-feeling is not empirical but idealized; nevertheless it includes some of the darker sides of the moral life. R. F. Brissenden says that "His awareness of the possible social dislocation of the individual, of psychic terror, and loneliness...places Adam Smith among those who saw the shadows lurking in the dark corners of the bright world of the enlightenment."²⁵ And Richard Kroner says that Kant's Weltanschauung "...does not veil or mitigate the dreadful fact that in God's world evil exists and that the good man no less than the wicked must suffer. It is this fact above all which makes our existence, as well as the existence and the very nature of God, an impenetrable mystery." (K, 59) Indeed, Höffding's statement, with reference to Smith's "deepening and idealisation of the ethical feeling," (H, I:444) holds in general for the whole later period. It does not lack depth; but it ontologizes unsatisfied striving and hunger so that there can be no rest or satisfaction. And by emphasizing an ideal, supersensible world, it loses contact with the richness and complexity of everyday life in this world.

1.2 The Art-Theory Context

A second context relevant to Jane Austen's novels is that of contemporary art theory as exemplified in two great treatises of the period: Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty (1753) and Reynolds's Discourses on Art (1769-90). These two writings represent radically different cultural spirits. Although they deal specifically with painting, the theoretical nature of these treatises is relevant, in a more general way, to the emerging novel genre.

Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty is consciously and rather provocatively innovative. Hogarth rejects the *je ne sçai quoi*, the "fashionable phrase for grace (vii)²⁶ which sums up the accumulated knowledge of this quality which has been discussed by everyone from the Greeks up to

his own English contemporaries. And now, with a certain puckishness, Hogarth says:

Nor have the painters of the present times been less uncertain and contradictory to each other, than the masters already mentioned, whatever they may pretend to the contrary: of this I had a mind to be certain, and therefore, in the year 1745, published a frontispiece to my engraved works, in which I drew a serpentine line lying on a painter's pallet, with these words under it, THE LINE OF BEAUTY. The bait soon took; and no Egyptian hieroglyphic ever amused more than it did for a time, painters and sculptors came to me to know the meaning of it, being as much puzzled with it as other people, till it came to have some explanation.... (x-xi)

The problem, according to Hogarth, is a kind of artistic scholasticism; he himself proposes a different method:

...I shall endeavour to shew what the principles are in nature, by which we are directed to call the forms of some bodies beautiful, others ugly; some graceful, and others the reverse; by considering more minutely than has hitherto been done, the nature of those lines, and their different combinations, which serve to raise in the mind the ideas of all the variety of forms imaginable. (1)

Hogarth's thesis is that "...the triangular form of the glass, and the serpentine line itself, are the two most expressive figures that can be thought of to signify not only beauty and grace, but the whole order of form." (xvii) Likewise, he points to Egyptian, Greek, and Roman deities, with their "twisted serpent, twisted cornucopia, or some symbol winding in this manner." (xviii) He bases his thesis on the natural expressiveness inherent in lines themselves; as Ronald Paulson says:

The possibilities of relating form to aesthetic and moral, even verbal structures of meaning is the subject of the illustrative plates Hogarth made for his Analysis of Beauty (1753)....In Hogarth's brand of formalism, the line is always expressive of something, always a representation....The plain curve of Sancho's 'comic posture of astonishment', Hogarth continues, is contrasted to 'the serpentine line [of Beauty] in the fine turn of the Samaritan woman...'²⁷

In this way Hogarth tries to renew art tradition by a sharp break with traditional ex cathedra statements about beauty and by an acknowledgment of the natural line that is inherently expressive of beauty. Like Shaftesbury and Hume, his appeal is to empiricism as a corrective of muddled dogmatic pronouncements; Hogarth insists that we look at the evidence and see for ourselves that the line itself is expressive of beauty.

Hogarth's emphasis on the serpentine line is consistent with his emphasis on variety and intricacy as the constituent elements of beauty and thus the most important elements of art. He says:

How great a share variety has in producing beauty may be seen in the ornamental part of nature. The shapes and colours of plants, flowers, leaves, the paintings in butterflies wings, shells, &c. seem of little other intended use, than that of entertaining the eye with the pleasure of variety. All the senses delight in it, and equally are averse to sameness. The ear is as much offended with one even continued note, as the eye is with being fix'd to a point, or to the view of a dead wall. (16)

He says that "...the eye is always better pleased on the account of variety" (20) and that "...odd numbers have the advantage over the even ones, as variety is more pleasing than uniformity, where the same end is answer'd by both." (22) He even goes so far as to say that "It is a constant rule in composition in painting to avoid regularity," (19) and maintains that

The eye hath this sort of enjoyment in winding walks, and serpentine rivers, and all sorts of objects, whose forms...are composed principally of what, I call, the waving and serpentine lines. Intricacy in form, therefore, I shall define to be that peculiarity in the lines, which compose it, that leads the eye a wanton kind of chace, and from the pleasure that gives the mind, intitles it to the name of beautiful: and it may be justly said, that the cause of the idea of grace more immediately resides in this principle, than in the other five, except variety; which indeed includes this, and all the others. (25)

It is important that variety and intricacy are not just chaos; Hogarth has reference to "the beauty of a composed intricacy of form," (28) and even the serpentine line is "proportion'd" and "precise": "...that sort of proportion'd, winding line, which will hereafter be call'd the precise serpentine line, or line of grace, is represented by a fine wire, properly twisted round the elegant and varied figure of a cone." (39) And again Hogarth goes so far as to say that "...the art of composing well is the art of varying well." (40) In this way Hogarth expands the conventional notion of beauty to include all kinds of irregularity. Irregularity is itself regular. This is the art-theory counterpart of Pope's view that "all discord [is] harmony not understood," and, consequently, of the provocative stance of enlightened toleration.

I think it is fair to say that Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty is rococo in spirit. This spirit is evident in the emphasis on grace and

elegance, and in his idea of beauty as constituted by variety and intricacy. Hogarth's epithets and examples have what I consider to be a typically rococo kind of provocative, amoral unconventionality. The line of beauty is "serpentine," like a "twisted serpent"; it "leads the eye a wanton kind of chace"; and its exemplar is the Samaritan woman. In the same vein is Cleopatra, in whose "INFINITE VARIETY" Shakespeare "... has sum'd up all the charms of beauty." (xvi-xvii) Irregular variety in design, and also in morality, is thus for Hogarth the essence of beauty. This is comparable, in my judgment, to the spirit of early Enlightenment philosophy.

Reynolds's Discourses on Art differs greatly from Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty. As a series of lectures delivered to students at the newly-formed Royal Academy, the Discourses on Art is inherently more traditional and conservative. The lectures are intended to consolidate tradition and pass the torch to another generation of artists. But aside from this basic difference, Reynolds differs radically from Hogarth in his programme for the renewal of art, his conception of the essence of art, and his cultural spirit.

Whereas Hogarth wants to renew art tradition by a radical turning to naturally expressive line, Reynolds wants to renew art tradition from within the tradition and by means of the tradition itself. For Reynolds, this relation to art tradition has the dimensions of moral duty, of keeping to the narrow way of stern virtue and avoiding the broad path of popularity. Art tradition has this authority because an art work is purified, winnowed, or sanctified by the passage of time. Thus, says Reynolds, "...those ideas of excellence which lay in embryo, feeble, ill-shaped, and confused...are finished and put in order by the authority and practice of those, whose works may be said to have been consecrated by having stood the test of ages." (VI:227-30)²⁸ Because tradition is "consecrated" in this way, the artist must submit to its authority. Thus Reynolds says, "I would chiefly recommend, that an implicit obedience to the Rules of Art, as established by the practice of the great MASTERS, should be exacted from the young Students. That those models, which have passed through the approbation of ages, should be considered by them as perfect and infallible guides; as subjects for their imitation, not their criticism." (I:92-97) This admonition has the flavor of stern moral duty,

of following in the footsteps of those who have gone before and whose work has passed through the fire of judgment.

Moreover, art tradition represents a vital continuity, that "accumulated experience of past ages." (I:51-2) Thus the artist's task is "...to learn all that has been known and done before his own time," (II:34-5) on the theory that "A mind enriched by an assemblage of all the treasures of ancient and modern art, will be more elevated and fruitful in resources in proportion to the number of ideas which have been carefully collected and thoroughly digested." (VI:217-20) The idea is that an artist is part of the continuity of the human spirit and must be thoroughly acquainted with art tradition (actually, then, his own past) if he is to build on this solid foundation and find his own place in the continuity.

In addition, art tradition for Reynolds represents the oneness of humankind, and its judgments the authoritative judgments of all men. To disregard these judgments is not merely unreasonable, but even heretical. Reynolds says that "common sense" and "common feelings" have "authority" and are "conclusive"; and he goes on to say:

There being this argument, it follows, that in all cases, in our lightest amusements, as well as in our most serious actions and engagements of life, we must regulate our affections of every kind by that of others. The well-disciplined mind acknowledges this authority, and submits its own opinion to the publick voice.... The same habit of mind which is acquired by our search after truth in the more serious duties of life, is only transferred to the pursuit of lighter amusements. The same disposition, the same desire to find something steady, substantial, and durable, on which the mind can lean as it were, and rest with safety, actuates us in both cases. The subject only is changed. We pursue the same method in our search after the idea of beauty and perfection in each; of virtue, by looking forwards beyond ourselves to society, and to the whole; of arts, by extending our views in the same manner to all ages and all times. (VII:482-87, 547-556)

Thus art tradition represents the authoritative judgment of all men and is to be respected and acknowledged as such. The societal aspect of moral duty is comparable to Kant's categorical imperative, but construed somewhat differently, with the individual, instead of positing the law himself, submitting to the authority of cumulative tradition.

Reynolds asks the student to cut his artistic teeth on art tradition. He is to form his mind, imagination, feelings, taste, judgment, and technique on great works of the past; only on that basis can he safely let go his invention and his imagination. Reynolds says that

"Having well established his judgment, and stored his memory, he may now without fear try the power of his imagination. The mind that has been thus disciplined, may be indulged in the warmest enthusiasm, and venture to play on the borders of the wildest extravagance." (II:65-9) Likewise, he says that "...when an Artist is sure that he is upon firm ground, supported by the authority and practice of his predecessors of the greatest reputation, he may then assume the boldness and intrepidity of genius..." (V:413-16)

First, then, the student must follow the example of past masters and practice life drawing. (I:191-201) The ultimate test, a kind of religious rite of passage, involves copying a masterpiece:

This method of comparing your own efforts with those of some great master, is indeed a severe and mortifying task, to which none will submit, but such as have great views, with fortitude sufficient to forego the gratifications of present vanity for future honour. When the Student has succeeded in some measure to his own satisfaction, and has felicitated himself on his success, to go voluntarily to a tribunal where he knows his vanity must be humbled, and all self-approbation must vanish, requires not only great resolution, but great humility. To him, however, who has the ambition to be a real master, the solid satisfaction which proceeds from a consciousness of his advancement (of which seeing his faults is the first step,) will very abundantly compensate for the mortification of present disappointment. (II:207-18)

The strong religious language here shows very powerfully that past art is the measure of good art, and, further, the refining fire that burns away impurities and eventually leaves solid gold, both in the finished art work, and in the artist who submits to such discipline.

Thus it is indeed Reynolds's intention to renew art tradition from within that tradition and by means of that tradition itself. He says, "From the remains of the works of the antients the modern arts were revived, and it is by their means that they must be restored a second time." (VI:426-28) To that end, "The daily food and nourishment of the mind of an Artist is found in the great works of his predecessors. There is no other way for him to become great himself." (XII:321-23) This religious devotion is evident in Reynolds's homage to Michelangelo: "...were I now to begin the world again, I would tread in the steps of that great master: to kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections, would be glory and distinction enough for an ambitious man." (XV:550-4) This is what art tradition finally means for

Reynolds: being a disciple, following in the steps of the Master.

If Reynolds's programme for renewing art tradition is radically different than Hogarth's, his notion of the essentials of good art is likewise different. To begin with, Reynolds emphasizes that "I have endeavoured to reduce the idea of beauty to general principles..."

(III:362-3) The qualities he requires of good art have the status not only of general principles, but of universal rules. And the content, the force of each individual principle, and of all of them together, is a concentration of or a tight focus on essentials.

Firstly, as opposed to Hogarth's "intricacy," Reynolds wants clarity; Ronald Paulson sets it up as difficultas versus claritas or simpli-citas. (P, 53-5) Whereas Hogarth finds intricacy pleasurable to the mind, for Reynolds "...where all is novelty, the attention, the exercise of the mind is too violent." (VIII:54-7) Reynolds insists that, by its very nature, "What is done by Painting, must be done at one blow; curiosity has received at once all the satisfaction it can ever have"; (VIII:29-31) thus "It is a general rule...that the form and the attitude of the figure should be seen clearly, and without any ambiguity, at the first glance of the eye." (X:269-71) Furthermore, claritas also has reference to the quality of thought and execution:

We cannot...recommend an undeterminate manner, or vague ideas of any kind, in a complete and finished picture. This notion, therefore, of leaving any thing to the imagination, opposes a very fixed and indispensable rule in our art,--that every thing shall be carefully and distinctly expressed, as if the painter knew, with correctness and precision, the exact form and character of whatever is introduced into the picture. (VIII:609-15)

Conducive to claritas are generality and unity. For instance, Reynolds says, "The general idea constitutes real excellence. All smaller things, however perfect in their way, are to be sacrificed without mercy to the greater." (IV:56-8) The artist's eye "...being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original..." (III:117-19) Reynolds wants "...that central form...from which every deviation is deformity." (III:136-7) As Paulson says, "The Reynolds gestalt...is essentially a matter of concentration..." (P, 90)

In addition, this single gestalt, which is to be grasped "at

one blow," is to unite many elements into a single unambiguous whole.

For example, Reynolds says:

To find excellencies, however dispersed, to discover beauties, however concealed by the multitude of defects with which they are surrounded, can be the work only of him, who having a mind always alive to his art, has extended his views to all ages and to all schools; and has acquired from that comprehensive mass which he has thus gathered to himself, a well-digested and perfect idea of his art, to which every thing is referred. Like a sovereign judge and arbiter of art, he is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school; selects both from what is great and what is little; brings home knowledge from the East and from the West; making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind and enriching his works with originality, and variety of inventions. (VI:551-62)

And further, "Those perfections which lie scattered among various masters, are now united in one general idea..." (II:38-40) Paulson speaks of "...his search for unity of all sorts of iconography and form within a picture and of response without" and of "...his attempts to find ways to express the universal--by simplifying drapery and expression, as in his final reliance on children as the very essence of the grown man; and his simplification of history to a single agonizing woman, of sitter, pose, and costume to a single gestalt. This," he says, "is what it means to bring everything together from diverse sources into a tight unity that can be seized at once, 'at one blow.'" (P, 92) I think it is fair to say that, for Reynolds, every picture must unite and concentrate the best of art tradition, and must in addition have that invention and imagination which renew the tradition and carry it forward.

Simplicity is another quality of art which is important to Reynolds. This is not an ahistorical "primitivism," a going back to earlier art. Indeed, Reynolds says that:

The Art in its infancy, like the first work of a Student, was dry, hard, and simple. But this kind of barbarous simplicity, would be better named Penury, as it proceeds from mere want; from want of knowledge, want of resources, want of abilities to be otherwise: their simplicity was the offspring not of choice, but necessity. (VIII:250-4)

In the second stage, he says, some painters "...emerged from poverty without falling into luxury," but others went to extremes. (VIII:257-9) But Reynolds says, "...however they may have strayed, we cannot recommend to them to return to that simplicity which they have justly quitted; but to deal out their abundance with a more sparing hand, with that dignity which

makes no parade, either of its riches, or of its art." (VIII:261-5) Thus simplicity denotes not "primitivism," but rather dignity and grandeur. He says, "There is a simplicity, and I may add, severity, in the great manner, which is, I am afraid, almost incompatible with this comparatively sensual style." (IV:208-10) Reynolds is comparing "simplicity" to "elegance," possibly with reference to Hogarth's "intricacy"; at any rate, the stern dignity and virtue of Reynolds's "simplicity" is diametrically opposed to the elegant moral equivocation of Hogarth's "intricacy" and "variety."

Reynolds, I think, exemplifies the neoclassical cultural spirit.²⁹ The focus is on the moral duty of art, particularly its societal dimension. For Reynolds, good art is that which "...excites ideas of grandeur, or raises and dignifies humanity; or, in the words of a late poet, which makes the beholder learn to venerate himself as man." (VII:415-17) And art, "...if it does not lead directly to purity of manners, obviates at least their greatest depravation, by disentangling the mind from appetite, and conducting the thoughts through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony which began by Taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in Virtue." (IX:81-6) This is similar to the strong vertical thrust of Kantian idealism, with virtue meaning for Reynolds the uncluttered life of the refined and cultured mind. Reynolds's desire to gather up all of art history into universal principles or rules and to embody this in a single painting is also a neoclassical trait. Such an epitome of art history would encompass the best that has been done, and thus would express the essential unity of all humankind, past and present.

A brief excursion into Dr. Johnson's prose style is, I think, in order here. This is relevant because it is a critical commonplace, in some circles, to apply the vague epithet "Johnsonian" to Jane Austen's own prose style and, by extension, to her outlook as a whole. Johnson's style has much in common with that of Reynolds, the differences being of degree rather than kind. Frederick W. Hilles notes Reynolds's tendency to wordiness which is controlled and kept from diffuseness by antithesis and parallelism.³⁰ Reynolds tends to use "impressive-sounding phrases," and to this end he consciously borrows Johnson's aphorisms and diction.³¹ He uses abstractions and, almost exclusively, the passive voice, which

gives an air of general authority.³² "The prevailing tone," says Hilles, "...is dignified, deliberate, urbane"--and remarkably bland; it avoids the extreme or the over-emphatic. Hilles says, "He expresses himself in a style which admits of no eccentricities, no mannerisms. I have tried without success to discover the distinctive quality of his style. It is that of the cultured gentleman of his day."³³ And he concludes, "I should say that Sir Joshua's style is basically Addisonian with Johnsonian overtones. It is the middle style, 'exact without apparent elaboration... elegant but not ostentatious.'"³⁴ Reynolds's style exemplifies most of his own neoclassical ideals--it is dignified and not idiosyncratic, uniformly a "middle style." It provides an excellent foil to Johnson's version of neoclassical prose. Like Reynolds's, Johnson's prose style uses parallelism, antithesis, word order, and diction for the purposes of generalization. However, as Wimsatt says, Johnson's style is a much more extreme attempt "to put into artistic practice the neoclassic uniformitarian ideal."³⁵ Interestingly enough, in the very earnestness of its commitment to the "uniformitarian ideal," it becomes distinctive, colorful, and highly idiosyncratic.

A notable characteristic of Johnson's prose style is parallelism (as in "the constituent and fundamental principle" or "a prompt and intuitive perception") of elements in an enumeration (or, technically, a "multiplication"). As Wimsatt explains, "By multiplication a writer enforces what he means, or what he affirms," (W, 38) and thus involves two aspects--similarity and variety. Wimsatt says:

In a given multiplication in a given writing there must always be a specific demand for a degree of parallel and for an inverse degree of variety. Either a greater parallel or a greater variety will be the detail of meaning that better completes the whole intended meaning of the composition, fills it out to the greater relevancy and satisfaction. When Hazlitt says of Johnson, "All his periods are cast in the same mould, are of the same size and shape, and consequently have little fitness to the variety of things he professes to treat of," he accuses Johnson of preferring the meaning of parallel to a more relevant meaning of variety. (W, 32)

Thus Johnson's use of parallelism is somewhat overdone and is not always relevant to his intended meaning. Moreover, says Wimsatt, the two parallel terms are often so close in meaning that the "multiplied similar meaning" has no range and becomes virtually an over-emphatic saying of the same thing over and over again. (W, 26) In this way the stylistic choice be-

comes irrelevant to the inner meaning and even misleading: stylistically, amplification is expressed, but in reality "amplification shades into decoration, or rectification into refinement." (W, 34) What is apparently a fullness of vision is actually the same thing again and again, giving a false impression of fullness.

Also prominent is Johnson's use of antithesis. This is a formal device which parallels two contrasting ideas; it serves to make an affirmation more precise by making distinctions between what is meant and what is not meant. (W, 38) An example is "If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant" or "He did not court the candour, but dared the judgement of his reader." (W, 44) Johnson's use of antithesis is distinctive in that "...each member and each element is emphatic; it seems special and striven for. He is saying: Mark this difference and mark this. Hazlitt and Addison are more likely to be casual, irregular, or dealing with the unavoidable antitheses of their subject (an aspect of range as opposed to emphasis)." (W, 44) This emphatic antithesis flavors his whole style and meaning. Wimsatt says that:

An important relation of antithesis to whole meaning is the degree to which antithesis breaks or turns the direction of discourse. This of course is determined in part by the number of antitheses. The more antitheses, major or minor, the more turns, great or small. But it is mostly determined by the number of major antitheses, those rooted directly in the central meaning. ...To Johnson's frequent use of major antitheses, and to his incessant scoring of paragraphs with all kinds of minor and implied antitheses, is due the abrupt, sectional character of his writing. It is put together with tight logic, it is eminently coherent and articulate, but it does not flow. Or, Johnson is like a man who marches a short length in one direction, hitting to right and left as he goes, hammers three times at the end, then turns at right angles or back again and repeats. Logical progression is of that sort; it moves by distinctions, which are antitheses, which may be jerks. (W, 45-7)

As in the matter of parallelism, Wimsatt faults Johnson in his use of antithesis "...because it arises from a habit of meaning. It may be called an exploitation of medium. It is cultivating expressive forms for their own sake." (W, 49)

There is a similar problem with Johnson's use of inverted word order. Normal English word order is subject-verb-object, and inversion is used infrequently, for clarity or for special emphasis. Wimsatt says

that Johnson often uses latinate word order because it suits the logical structure of his thought. This makes his prose very economical and logically coherent; but it is unidiomatic English. Wimsatt says that "...very often what he gains in coherence is more than offset by the intrusion of irrelevant meaning which is concomitant with the unidiomatic." (W, 71) The problem is that, on a very basic level, thought-meaning refuses to adapt itself to the characteristic nature of the language. It is perhaps one manifestation of a preference for the ideal over the limitations of the actual.

Johnson's diction is another noticeable aspect of his prose style. His diction is usually described in terms of the general, the abstract, and the non-sensory in contrast to the specific, the concrete, or the sensory. However, as Wimsatt quite correctly points out, "...as no single class word can be called absolutely specific or absolutely general, so no word can be called absolutely sensory or absolutely non-sensory. The terms are contraries rather than contradictories." (W, 54) And because no word is absolutely general or specific in itself, these qualities can be judged only on the basis of what Wimsatt calls "general meaning." (W, 54) On this basis, then, Wimsatt acknowledges that "Johnson's bent for generality cannot be denied. It is part of his moral purpose. It is derived from the very subjects of his essays and suggested in their titles. It is apparent as a character of his general meaning on almost any page." (W, 55) From this perspective, both parallelism and antithesis can be understood as "...ways of attaining generalization, of referring to their relevant classifications the concrete or specific objects employed as the texture, really only illustrative, of thoughtful discourse. They are ways of insisting on the formal over the material." (W, 50)

Related to generality is Johnson's use of abstractions, his practice of viewing aspects "as things in themselves, as metaphysical realities," and then "[erecting] the metaphysicalities or abstractions into the substantives of his discourse." (W, 56) This abstraction effectively reduces complex, concrete reality into precise qualities which can be brought into logical relationships. Wimsatt says:

Not things but aspects of them can be contrasted in words. The more a writing deals with aspects as such, that is, with abstractions, the more plastic it is and shapable into the pure forms

which admit sharp contrast. "Honor" and "shame" make an antithesis which would be diffused in the meaning of "patriot," "gentleman," "lady," and "traitor," "scoundrel," "harlot."
(W, 43)

Abstraction is evident also in "...the passive voice and the absence of concrete nouns denoting agents." (W, 58) This emphasis on abstraction and on parallel and antithesis is perhaps a manifestation of the typical late eighteenth-century view that, as Paulson puts it, "'everything is bipolar, not multiple; reality is made up of opposites'--whether structured into a choice or resolved into a concordia discors." (P, 73) At any rate, Johnson's repeated use of the logical parallel and antithesis, and particularly of the "major antithesis...rooted directly in the central meaning," reflects a mental outlook similar, at least, to the paradigmatic Choice of Hercules between virtus and voluptas or luxuria.

However, there is one remarkable aspect of Johnson's diction--his use of scientific and "philosophick" words. (W, 59) This tendency is evident in the anecdote which has Johnson saying of The Rehearsal that "It has not wit enough to keep it sweet," and then correcting himself by saying that "It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction." (W, 61) Says Wimsatt, "If it is remembered that a "philosophic" word has a kind of meaning, a connotation, which its plain equivalent lacks, it will be easily understood that to use "philosophic" diction constantly is to give to writing an irrelevant overtone, to emphasize or attempt to emphasize every word in a monotonous uproar." (W, 62) Through the use of big latinate, philosophic words, "The scientific authority, the deliberation and certainty, is backed up by a thump on the table." (W, 61) But, used once too often, even the thump loses its force.

Nevertheless, Johnson's diction is occasionally very felicitous. He does use imagery--if we accept as imagery simply non-literal expression or metaphor. (W, 65) Wimsatt notes, quite properly I think, that

Since a great part of language, and almost all abstract language, is metaphor, dead, half dead, or alive, the use of metaphor,--"the unique expression of a writer's individual vision," or "the result of the search for a precise epithet"--shades imperceptibly into the use of the proper word, the word most relevant in a context. This is the merit of good diction in its most unspecified sense, a sense in which it may be attributed to every good writer. And it is only in this sense that imagery may be attributed to Johnson. (W, 65)

Mary Lascelles points out Johnson's facility in "coining pregnant abstrac-

tions," such as his description of the leisurely travellers who "missed ...the Pleasure of alarming Villages with the Tumult of our Passage, and of disguising our Insignificancy by the Dignity of hurry."³⁶ Wimsatt analyzes an outstanding example:

"Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination." The word "obsequious" is metaphorical, relevant, expressive, a good example of Johnson's felicity of diction. There is an odor of the "philosophic" about it; nevertheless, it has its more special value in the context and justifies itself eminently. This is Johnson's kind of imagery, which is founded, like all apt diction, in an imaginative concept, but in which there is little sensory value, and no need of such value. We need not imagine Time as a butler bowing to his master the Imagination. This is too much; it spoils by irrelevance. Apt diction draws on all the implications of words but leaves most of them remotely implicit. Johnson refines "obsequious" of almost all sensory value, perhaps down to its etymological sense, of "following," certainly to its archaic metaphorical sense of "obedient." Perhaps this is the thing most characteristic of Johnson's "imagery," a tendency to reverse dead metaphors, to force them back to their etymological meaning so that they assume a new metaphorical life. (W, 66)

Johnson's prose style as a whole may be constipated and over-emphatic. It may even have, for the most part, the monotony of a mental twitch or reflex, without imaginative spontaneity or craftsmanlike sensitivity and precision. It does evince profound thought and great earnestness. And occasionally the penetrating insight is perfectly crystallized into the finely-turned phrase memorable for its pungency and its revelatory wit. The flash of this incisive, epigrammatic insight gives a distinctive flavor to Johnson's neoclassical prose style.

1.3 The Novel Context

Finally, the context most relevant to Jane Austen's novels is, of course, the development of the novel in the eighteenth century. The novel as we know it began, in fact, around mid-century. As in the philosophy and the art theory, it may be helpful to see two general groups of novels, each ruled by a different cultural spirit, and each exploring a different aspect of the historical development of the novel genre. Roughly speaking, the first group corresponds to Hogarth's rococo art theory and to early Enlightenment philosophy, and in this spirit it is innovative; the second group corresponds to Reynolds's neoclassical art

theory and to later Enlightenment philosophy, and in this spirit it is integrative and focusing.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the works of Samuel Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne all tend to break down the tight, hierarchical genre classifications of classical literary theory, which included epic, romance, satire, pastoral, and so on. Ian Watt says that this system of critical values "...took for granted the permanence of the established literary forms, and among them the pre-eminence of epic" and assumed that "...any imitation of life in narrative form ought to be assimilated as far as possible to the rules of the epic which had proliferated since the Renaissance."³⁷ But Fielding, for example, calls Joseph Andrews (1742) a "comic romance" or a "comic epic-poem in prose," which makes nonsense of the traditional classifications. This is strikingly similar to what Ronald Paulson calls "intermediate genres"; "The steady search for them," he says, "from Hogarth's comic history painting to Greuze's domestic histories to Gilpin's 'picturesque' (between the sublime and beautiful) defines what is most significant about English art in the period." (P, 104) In this list I would include Watteau's fête galante and Diderot's drame bourgeois; and Fielding's "comic romance" or "comic epic-poem in prose" seems to be in very congenial company. Ian Watt suggests that Fielding's "...writing about the epic analogy... is more concerned with phylogeny, with claiming a respectable pedigree for an unhallowed literary genre, than with ontogeny, with explaining the nature of the genre itself."³⁸ I would be inclined to go further, to suggest that Fielding's "genre" label expresses Enlightenment impatience with the epic, comparable to the impatience of early Enlightenment philosophy with the older dogmatic speculative philosophy, and to Hogarth's impatience with arcane traditional iconography and history painting.

Richardson, on the other hand, with no classical education whatever and not a member of the literati, writes a prose narrative in ignorance of conventional expectations regarding the epic. After the fact, he recognizes that his narrative is indeed not classical epic, and proceeds to defend himself. In the traditional debate of ancient vs. modern, he comes out for the moderns, and thus for originality as opposed to imitation of the classics. Alan D. McKillop has shown that Richardson's

contributions to Edward Young's Conjectures on Original Composition (1759) "...betray not so much enthusiasm for original genius as eagerness to depreciate the dii majores of secular literature in favor of a new Christian dispensation."³⁹ Richardson objects to the pagan morality of classical epic and the effect this may have on the reader. His intention is to gain recognition for a new kind of writing.

Making the same point in a different way, Sterne flagrantly violates every convention of history painting and, thereby, of its literary counterpart, the epic. For example, says R. F. Brissenden, there is "...the compositional principle that the most important person in a history painting or a portrait should occupy the most prominent position."⁴⁰ In Tristram Shandy as a whole, Tristram, the nominal hero, "...can hardly be said to be present at all: in the composite portrait of the Shandy family Tristram is certainly not 'advanc'd foremost to the View of the Reader or Spectator.'"⁴¹ And on occasion, as Brissenden notes, there are letter-by-letter violations of the rules:

Trim, the most important figure, is placed in the centre: in 'the middle of the room, where he could best see, and best be seen by his audience' (II,xv). But Trim's importance is accidental and comical: he is socially the 'lowest' person in the company, he is not the author of the sermon, and he understands it only in a superficial way--he continually steps out of his oratorical role, and is far more distressed by what he is reading than are his auditors. The illustration of this scene which, at Sterne's request, was drawn by Hogarth, is completely in keeping with this spirit of comic inversion: Trim is shown standing in the classical pose of the orator, but with his back to the viewer of the picture, and not his front or his profile, as the conventions of history painting would demand.⁴²

In this way, says R. F. Brissenden, "Tristram Shandy is one of the most thoroughly anti-heroic works of fiction ever written; and it is not surprising that its author should have found himself out of sympathy with the uncompromisingly neo-classical orthodoxies then prevailing in the theory of painting."⁴³

One of the most striking evidences of innovation is reflected in the designation "novel." Arthur Heiserman says that "The English noun novel, which could denote any sort of novelty, became in the eighteenth century our specifically literary term...."⁴⁴ Heiserman contrasts the novel with the earlier romanz, which, "...appearing as a noun before 1140, denotes a long story whose materials are traditional, being drawn

specifically from the historical matter of Rome and told in French octosyllabic couplets or monorhymed stanzas. Very soon the term could signify any long story versified in any vernacular; but the story's matter was always purportedly inherited, not "novel," and therefore "true."⁴⁵

In the gradual shift in emphasis from romance to novel, Heiserman sees a fundamental change of attitude. He says that "...by the end of the century, "novel" made its own claim to realism, and "romance" was banished to the title pages of novels like The Monk, to fantasy, or to the moonlit historicism of Hawthorne." And "...whereas romances had been aesthetically credible because they were traditional, novels were credible because they were not."⁴⁶ Heiserman quotes Clara Reeve's The Progress of Romance through Times, Countries, and Manners (1785):

The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written....The Novel gives a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves; and the perfection of it, is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to deceive us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses of the persons in the story, as if they were our own.⁴⁷

The novel clearly differs from the romance, "...which treats of fabulous persons and things" and "in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen."⁴⁸ Certainly it is striking that these narratives deal with recognizably ordinary characters--a servant girl, a foundling, a member of the very minor gentry--in very ordinary situations. Moreover, the narratives unashamedly and even impudently raise these subjects to the level of art--or, perhaps more accurately, bring art out of the regions of the ideal--whether mythological, historical, or biblical--and into the contemporary world of things one can touch and see and smell. These narratives do for literature what Hogarth does for painting and what early Enlightenment thinkers do for philosophy. They fight the traditional way as dogmatic, speculative, arcane; and their emphasis is on the empirical reality and significance of everyday life.

These novels are also notable in that they focus very much on the subjective processes, the dynamics, the limits of knowledge. For example, Richardson's epistolary style focuses on motive and response rather than on the actual scene and incident themselves, as Ronald Paulson points out:

The letters reveal different aspects of a complex situation: how Clarissa's departure from the garden looked to her, how it looked to Lovelace, how his elaborate machinations affected the results, how Anna Howe responds from a distance, how the Harlowes respond, and how the 'editor' responds (he over-emphasizes Lovelace's control over events) in the notes--all fragmented, separated in time, and equally passionate and prejudiced. But we never see the scene itself....Clarissa's rape--the crux of the novel--is conveyed to us only by Lovelace's terse response ('The affair is over. Clarissa lives.') and then by Clarissa's own feverish, incoherent jottings, with lines running at random angles across the page; and only much later by her attempt to recall for Anna what actually happened. The complexity of the situation is revealed indirectly, but that of the responding mechanisms directly, vividly, and visually. (P, 134)

Here the "fragmentation" is a formal device that does not question the reality of the event itself, but rather leaves it implicit and focuses on responses to it in order to clarify the many dimensions of a very complex event. As Ronald Paulson says, this "fragmentation" serves to "...question some stereotype, whether that of the simple 'idea' of an object or the stereotype of response itself." (P, 135) In question here is the stereotype of one-dimensional action perceived in an unequivocal way. Richardson shows a wide variety of responses, each of which gets at some legitimate aspect, and thus shows the complexity of the event itself.

In a little different way, Fielding has, according to Paulson, "doubts about unified and stereotyped response":

His concern with the problematic nature of expression, in both object and observers, leads first to a greater discrepancy between responses--the spectrum of bad responses becomes a mixture of uncomprehending, mistaken ones--and then to the need for another observer, more skilled in physiognomy, who can penetrate behind a face and even words to actions and motives. This, of course, is the Fielding narrator, who shows the reader how to see and judge. (P, 133)

Paulson likens this aspect of Fielding's novels to Hogarth's The Laughing Audience, "...which omits the performance altogether and shows only the pleased responses of the pit, the disinterested ones of the box, and the businesslike ones of the orchestra." (P, 134) This emphasis in the novels on expression and response rather than on the action itself is comparable, I believe, to the empiricist emphasis of early Enlightenment philosophy.

This empiricist focus is especially noticeable in the emphasis

on feeling as an alternative to arguments based on Reason. Ronald Paulson says that feeling is a "response which by-passes the question of misunderstanding through structures of reason and the understanding." He says that:

The paradigm in this case is a scene like the one in Tom Jones in which Bridget Allworthy, Deborah Wilkins and Squire Allworthy respond to the discovery of the foundling Tom. The two rational but discordant and utterly selfish responses of the women (equally hobby-horsical but with opposite ends) are followed by Squire Allworthy's feeling the 'gentle pressure' of Tom's little hand, which seemed 'to implore his assistance, [and] certainly outpleaded the eloquence of Mrs Deborah.' (P, 136)

In a somewhat different way, in Tristram Shandy, "the occasional intuitive understanding...leaps the barrier of conventional words and actions to unite Toby and Walter Shandy..." (P, 136) These incidents insist that knowledge comes through empirical contact with reality, not from principles handed down ready-made from Reason. For Fielding, knowledge leading to right action comes through immediate sensation (literally, the touch of Tom's little hand); for Sterne, it comes through sympathy, an immediately communicable sensation. And for Sterne, at least, this empirical contact is exclusively intersubjective; external reality becomes irrelevant to human life. (P, 136)

This emphasis on the formation of composite, empirically-based principles and knowledge, rather than on the simple, ready-made knowledge deduced by Reason, is also reflected in the expected reader-response structured into the novels. Once again Ronald Paulson says that:

Clarissa's letters and Tristram's aperçus are segments, like the stops in the garden or the plates of a Hogarthian progress, and indicate a narrative line that is by no means straight. They not only do not progress in a chronologically straight line, their arrangement forces the reader to cross-reference from one account or time or place to another to fill in the action. And Fielding, while telling his story in linear chronology, complicates it so by his own ironic commentary that it becomes a matter of some importance to relate scenes and speeches spatially as well as chronologically. Tristram Shandy makes the point explicit when he tells his reader to go back and re-read chapters he has not retained.... (P, 51)

These formal structures do not give the reader the full, complete meaning in one piece; they give it in discrete, discontinuous pieces which must be fitted together, with some difficulty, in order that the design as a whole may be understood. Richardson emphasizes the process as a means,

ultimately, of providing active involvement in the fictional situation; Sterne, however, uses it more as an end in itself, as itself the point of the narrative.

A most distinctive aspect of these novels is their quality of broad toleration. These are all massive novels, with a spaciousness or, as Susan G. Auty says, "breadth"⁴⁹ or "roominess" which is "flexible enough to accommodate the elaborate plot of Tom Jones on the one hand and the undisciplined wanderings of Tristram Shandy on the other (not to mention the intensive analysis of Clarissa's experiences)...."⁵⁰ More to the point, these novels are chock full of details and small discrete parts which are all given careful attention. Thus R. F. Brissenden says that Sterne "...achieves his general effects by a concentration on a multitude of precisely observed and sensitively rendered, minute particulars."⁵¹ And Roger Robinson notes in Fielding's novels "...the realism of the component details themselves." "Fielding's digressive excursions," he says, "are not the remote fantasies which are interspersed into Don Quixote and the French romances, but are fully as realistic and topical as the main narrative itself."⁵² This is a kind of tolerance which admits the integrity and individuality of the parts in themselves and imposes on them only a very loose central focus.

Moreover, this literary "toleration" is based, as is its philosophical counterpart, on the assumption that principles are composite and empirically-derived, but also on the assumption that this random diversity is itself the unified design. The arrangement of the details and the parts has a "wantonness," a lavishness which reflects Hogarth's "composed intricacy of form." Roger Robinson captures this well in his discussion of Tom Jones:

The rococo 'wantonness', in fact, is the surface elaboration of a highly wrought structure, a composition which is 'regular' in its ultimate conception, for all its eccentric intricacy of execution.

Such a formula--this 'composed intricacy of form'--is remarkably apt to describe Tom Jones. The reader, and indeed the hero himself, are led an apparently 'wanton kind of chase' through a complex plot complicated further by chance encounters, irrelevant incident, and seemingly arbitrary and miscellaneous intruded comment. Yet for all this copious rococo informality at the surface of the action, the baroque principle of unity which Hogarth elicited from the Milton quotation applies equally here: when the maze seems most irregular, then it is likely to fit most cogently into the true 'composition' of the whole, which

is to be found not in the external connections of the narrative, but in the controlling regularity at the level of meaning.⁵³

As in early Enlightenment philosophy, there is a sense that the new "composition" is much broader, more "tolerant" than the old dogmatic one. Things that used to be labeled "bad," "wrong," and "evil" (or deviant in any way) and rejected, are now, in enlightened times, understood to be only apparently evil, and just as necessary to the whole composition as are the "good" things. Likewise, irregularity is admitted as part of a larger "regularity." In this connection, R. F. Brissenden says that Sterne's "...formal arrangements are asymmetrical but none the less fundamentally unified."⁵⁴

And this irregularity is evident also in the style of the novels. Roger Robinson notes, for example, "The rich verbal surface of Fielding's prose, with his constant pleonasms and extensions, ambiguities and after-thoughts, similes and parentheses...."⁵⁵ Furthermore, Robinson says:

The same exuberant copiousness is evident in Fielding's narrative and descriptive techniques. Andrew Wright, analysing the 'static' quality of Fielding's stage-like scenes, describes how these 'tableaux' are set within a 'rococo framework'. He refers to the Hogarthian exuberance of the 'almost labyrinthine construction' of authorial intrusion, mock-pompous generalisation, classical allusion, etc., through which Fielding tortuously conducts his reader to the 'scantly reported scene that follows'.⁵⁶

This kind of style is also part of the "regular irregularity" which can be readily "tolerated" and accommodated by these novels. Richardson and Sterne, in their own ways, also have this kind of regular irregularity consisting of a copiousness of narrative incident, a sinuousness of plotted structure, and a rich verbal surface, all twisted together in a "wanton kind of chace" that constitutes a "composed intricacy of form."

Most importantly, perhaps, early Enlightenment toleration is reflected in the spirit of genial comic acceptance pervading these novels. This kind of comedy is corrective, not of sin but of spleen or ill-nature, of the kind that it sees in Swifteen satire. Susan G. Auty says that:

Shaftesbury's disapproval of men "diseased" with the spirit of satire, whose "chief passion" was to "find fault, censure, unravel, confound, and leave nothing without exception and controversy," set the tone for the shift from brilliantly derisory wit to comfortably mirthful humor. His preference for the cheerful expressions of a healthy spirit proved to be contagious and encouraged writers to seek a more generous style of composition than the incisive verse satire.⁵⁷

Shaftesbury objects to Swift's ill-nature; and I think it is not unfair to suggest that he considers Swift's sense of real evil to be ill-natured and diseased. His alternative is a carefree, sunny cheerfulness or a genial comic acceptance of human faults and of unpleasant aspects of life. C. S. Lewis says that Addison, for example, treats human faults as "a lovable whimsy" or "a lovely absurdity";⁵⁸ and this seems applicable to many of these novelists.

Fielding's Tom Jones, for example, is permeated by a "light-hearted, sunny atmosphere."⁵⁹ Andrew Wright notes that this is set up structurally by the prefaces to each chapter: "The ornamental status of the prefaces makes us take Tom Jones on an ornamental level. Therefore, the probably most arresting structural fact about Tom Jones is the series of first-chapters that exhort the reader not to constructive action but to benign amusement."⁶⁰ In the same vein, Susan G. Auty says that: "If heaviness threatens the air at any time, caused either by the gloom in Tom's countenance at the harsh words of Mr. Allworthy or the devious evil of Blifil, the threat is brushed away swiftly with a whiff of Fielding's easy words, which preserve the air of well-being and preserve our confidence in the ultimate rightness of things...."⁶¹ This lighthearted comic geniality requires a certain coolness or distance, especially from distressing events. Susan G. Auty says that "Very often Fielding will turn moralist to maintain the steady comic tone of his story. By drawing our attention from one character, who may be caught up in an unpleasant event, to others or to observable truths about human nature, he saves us from undergoing the character's pain."⁶² In this way, she says,

...Tom's bastardy becomes a comic accident rather than a significantly crippling misfortune, as in life it would be. By arousing speculation on the possibility of Squire Allworthy's responsibility for the foundling, and by relishing the overly-proper Deborah's disdain and disgust, Fielding makes the whole event seem less a scar on the baby's future life and more an excuse to show how quickly people are ready to believe and circulate rumors that contradict all known facts and to condemn in others crimes which they themselves would (regrettably) never have occasion to commit. Though Tom does suffer because of his low birth--his original suit for Sophia's hand is considered unthinkable and his "ingratitude" severely punished--we are well assured at this point that he is really quite a genteel fellow. Throughout the long novel, Tom is never disgraced by being forced to behave like a bastard; he is consistently genteel, as in fact he turns out to have been all along.⁶³

Moreover, says Ms. Auty, "Madness, dire misfortune, despair--all these have little to do with the plot and nothing to do with the world of the novel."⁶⁴ And "Death is only suffered in a way that is remote from the actual world of the novel; it is as lightly treated as the class system--that is, only villains happen to die, as only good-for-nothings are unrelieved by the charity of either Allworthy or Jones. Death occurs only to those for whom it comes as a just desert..."⁶⁵ For Fielding, this placid comic sunniness is a way of viewing the world; it becomes a confession that denies the power of real sin, evil, and pain.

This confessional quality is evident also in Sterne's comic view of the world, in a different form. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Sterne has an "intense admiration for Swift";⁶⁶ he shares Swift's love of trivia--"learned junk, chambermaids' prattle and all vulgar idioms, the formless shows of things,"⁶⁷ in John Traugott's words. But Sterne does not have Swift's "...irony that calls up the final horror of this world--the King of Luggnagg's grace, for example, to the page who forgot to remove the poison from the floor when a young lord of promise was granted the honor of licking the dust before the royal footstool...."⁶⁸ Sterne, says John Traugott, lacks this "grand hauteur":

...unlike Swift, he appears often to go out of his way to mask himself in resolute foolishness, to make all subjects trivial. It is surprising, for example, how little about Sterne we can learn from his letters because of this very effort to speak in the voice of a character (Yorick, Tristram, a zany, a sentimentalist) and thus avoid a downright statement of anything. He seems to have been sure of himself only when he was being determinedly casual.⁶⁹

I think it fair to say that Sterne lacks Swift's "archimedean point"--that firm idea of good and evil and of what things should be--and instead has anchored himself in a profound skepticism. Thus John Traugott says:

It was simply to his purpose to prick here and there, for in this way he could ridicule solutions to speculative snarls... and at the same time could erect the fantasy world of dubious reality which...suggests man's responsibility to recognize himself a fool....For Sterne, a bishop, a professional virgin, a critic, a sentimentalist like himself, anyone who bore a shield blazoned with the straight line of rectitude, in some aspect everyone, should be ludicrous....⁷⁰

Out of this deep skepticism comes laughter as the ultimate way of existing in a nonsensical world; as Susan G. Auty puts it, "If things are so bad that they cannot get worse, one may as well laugh at them and enjoy

them."⁷¹ Sterne's laughter is broadly tolerant of the failings of himself and of others, because nothing else matters; in this spirit he "... [encourages] readers to purge life's troubles by sporting with them freely and to take heart in their own oddities by owning them joyfully."⁷² Ms. Auty calls this Sterne's "comic faith";⁷³ and it is actually very confessional. For Sterne there is no community of believers--there is only a group of isolated individuals who laugh at themselves, at each other, and at death itself, for there is nothing else they can do.

This genial comic acceptance often deals with the much-neglected middle ground of life. According to this view (of which Fielding is probably more representative than is Sterne), life rocks gently and comfortably on an even keel. And this view has its own charm and value, as C. S. Lewis says, with respect to Addison:

Writers like Addison who stand on the common ground of daily life and deal only with middle things are unduly depreciated to-day. Pascal says somewhere that the cardinal error of Stoicism was to suppose that we can do always what we do sometimes. No one lives always on the stretch. Hence one of the most pertinent questions to be asked about any man is what he falls back on....I fully admit that when Pope and Swift are on the heights they have a strength and splendour which makes everything in Addison look pale; but what an abyss of hatred and bigotry and even silliness receives them when they slip from the heights! The Addisonian world is not one to live in at all times, but it is a good one to fall back into when the day's work is over and a man's feet on the fender and his pipe in his mouth....I do not think Addison's popularity is likely to return; but something to fill the same place in life will always be needed--some tranquil middle ground of quiet sentiments and pleasing melancholy and gentle humour to come in between our restless idealism and our equally restless dissipations.⁷⁴

Genial comic acceptance, as indeed the whole world to which it belongs, does good work in opening up this "common ground" of "middle things." I think Lewis is right in this. But he is also right when he says that this world is "not one to live in at all times." However, Addison and Fielding and Sterne do see it as a world to live in at all times. And this is precisely its weakness. It is too level, too exclusively middle-groundish, even lukewarm. It has no cutting edge. As Lewis admits:

...certainly, if it were at all times true that the Good is the enemy of the Best, it would be hard to defend Addison. His Rational Piety, his smiling indulgence to 'the fair sex,' his small idealisms about trade, certainly fall short of actual Christianity, and plain justice to women, and true political

wisdom. They may even be obstacles to them; palliatives and anodynes that prolong the disease. In some moods I cannot help seeing Addison as one who, at every point, 'sings charms to ills that ask the knife.'⁷⁵

And he concludes, "All we can justly say is that his essays are rather small beer; there is no iron in them as in Johnson; they do not stir the depths."⁷⁶ In my judgment, Lewis accurately sums things up: "It is a cool, quiet world after that of the Tories--say, a water-colour world, but there is more room in it."⁷⁷ The early Enlightenment world of Hogarth, Fielding, and Sterne has breadth. Empiricism, broad tolerance, genial comic acceptance, rational piety--these things are broad indeed. But it has no depth--no lows, and consequently no highs. It denies the deep reality of sin, evil, and brokenness, and consequently cannot experience the joy of redemption and healing.

The novels toward the end of the eighteenth century are very different in spirit. Whereas the earlier novels are self-consciously innovative, these later novels attempt, seemingly, to consolidate the new genre and to integrate it with life as a whole by finding its place, its purpose (or, as I might say, its calling). It is important to remember that all this takes place in the context of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, events which draw all aspects of culture, including art, into urgent moral and ideological warfare. In this context, the novel finds its place as a peculiarly effective way of propagating moral and political ideas among the middle class--a sort of popular philosophy. And this strict moral and didactic purpose requires a tight, even reductive, artistic and moral focus. Thus at a crucial integrating stage, the novel finds its place by being instrumentalized as contemporary moral and political propaganda. Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling (1771) comes earlier in the century and is less topical and less rigidly partisan; but later novels, typified by William Godwin's Caleb Williams (1794) and the novels of Jane West focus directly on opposing moral and political issues involved in the French Revolution.

These later novels deal with moral issues by finding universal principles of morality. For Mackenzie, the principles are "feelings which applaud benevolence, and censure inhumanity";⁷⁸ and these right feelings are particularly evident in sympathy, a tenderness of heart toward those who have suffered injustice or cruelty. Harley weeps for the young girl forced into prostitution, for the old man violently pressed into mili-

tary duty, for the girl locked up in Bedlam for mourning a lost lover. For Godwin, however, the universal principle of morality is not sympathy, but violent revolt against the oppressive authority of conservatism. Jane West takes the opposite side--her universal principle of morality is submission to traditional group-oriented duty. These opposing universal principles come into open conflict in the novelists' treatments of the contemporary "persuasion" theme. Kenneth L. Moler says that "persuasion" has specific reference to the "parental attempt to influence a child's choice of a matrimonial partner."⁷⁹ Moler goes on to say that:

The 'persuasion' theme, the theme of love versus filial duty and social propriety, was fascinating to [these novelists]. To most of them the idea of filial obedience had an almost mystical appeal that was due partly to its relation to the Christian virtue of humility, partly to the fifth commandment, and partly, probably, to age-old sentiments and beliefs about the analogy between paternal, regal, and divine authority in a divinely ordered world. The sanctity of love was not to be denied, however; hence the fascination of the problem.⁸⁰

The conservatives, like Mrs West, reach a consensus; says Moler, "They clung to the time-honored tradition that a child should give up a match of which his parents disapproved, but need not marry against his own inclination in order to please his parents."⁸¹ They come down on the side of "true fortitude" which "...consisted in self-control rather than self-assertion, in the ability to restrain one's emotions rather than in the determination to indulge them at all costs."⁸² Godwin, however, "...praised the firm, independent, 'energetic' character, the man or woman possessed of 'fortitude' enough to defy social pressures and traditional systems of authority and follow the convictions of his reason."⁸³ For Godwin, says Moler, "...parental interference with the love affairs of their children becomes a symbol of the restraint which society's laws and traditions place on the sensitive, intelligent individual, and unwillingness or inability to submit to parental prerogative becomes the sign of a courageous, enlightened spirit."⁸⁴ These positions, more rigid than Mackenzie's sympathy, become moral formulae which deliberately avoid taking into account situation-specific elements.

This pulling-back from specific situations is related to the fact that the principles are highly idealized. They are part of an ideal world which is opposed to the real existing world. Mackenzie's sympathy clearly belongs to a higher world, as is evident by the fact that it cannot even

be understood, much less appreciated, in this hard world. Harley recognizes that:

There are some feelings which perhaps are too tender to be suffered by the world. The world is in general selfish, interested, and unthinking, and throws the imputation of romance or melancholy on every temper more susceptible than its own. I cannot think but--those regions which I contemplate, if there is any thing of mortality left about us, that these feelings will subsist;--they are called,--perhaps they are--weaknesses here:--but there may be some better modifications of them in heaven, which may deserve the name of virtues.⁸⁵

The content of Mackenzie's ideal world is similar to Kant's, and his "heaven" has some of the remote but compelling quality of Kant's noumenal realm. In contrast, this world is a "world of semblance," and "we take our ideas from sounds which folly has invented; Fashion, Bon-ton, and Virtu, are the names of certain ideals, to which we sacrifice the genuine pleasures of the soul..."⁸⁶ Sympathy is one way of staying in touch with the ideal world and bringing it to bear on the world as it is. In a very different way, Godwin's political and social ideals wage war on "things as they are" for the sake of "things as they are not." The conservatists, too, with their traditional moral ideals, seek an ideal world--a return of the good old days. This idealism, in whatever form, thus tends to view the present world as hopeless--as something to endure, to destroy, or to ignore.

Furthermore, these universal ideal principles have the status of moral laws which carry with them a sense of duty or obligation. The obedience required is difficult and involves a struggle to overcome obstacles. Mackenzie's sympathy, it is true, is very necessary but does not have the severity of the Kantian categorical imperative. However, it does emphasize the struggle against cynicism and hardness, the struggle to maintain faith in the existence of the ideal world despite this world's contempt and ridicule. Harley plays the game knowing that the deck, so to speak, is stacked against him, and his struggle is to be true and not give up, even when, for example, the position promised him is given to one less worthy, or when he returns to find the old school-house burnt to the ground. In a different way, Godwin's moral law requires one to be true to his own rational principles; the struggle is against repressive authority, conservatism, and other-worldly idealism. In addition, the struggle is against emotional bonds with other people, bonds

which are irrelevant distractions from revolutionary rational individualism and which tie one to the conservative order. On the other hand, for the conservatists like Mrs West, duty is the very traditional notion of self-control for the good of society. Says Marilyn Butler, "In the conservative novel, society itself is the real hero. The most typical plot has the central character, gradually schooled to objective reality, renouncing the private delusions that once tempted him to see the world other than it is."⁸⁷ The struggle is primarily against one's own self and one's own inclinations, desires, and feelings. But the struggle is also against new ideas, like Godwin's philosophy, which make it a virtue to follow one's own view of reality in opposition to society and to authority.

These novels live in an atmosphere of stern virtue and severity; they follow, so to speak, the narrow road. In Mackenzie's case, this is evident even in the fact that the novel is physically thin with no plot to speak of, but simply a story line (with the emphasis on "line"). The meaning aspect of the novel is one-dimensional and tightly focused. All the separate episodes are unified by the recurring motif of right feelings (like sympathy) misunderstood or, in R. F. Brissenden's phrase, "virtue in distress." And the reader response is likewise tightly focused and narrowed down to one: sympathy. This is accomplished through the framing device of the fictional editor of the manuscript. This manuscript is originally used by a curate as wadding for his gun, and falls accidentally into the hands of another man who reads it. This man, moved by the story in spite of himself, nevertheless condemns it by worldly standards:

I found it a bundle of little episodes, put together without art, and of no importance on the whole, with something of nature, and little else in them. I was a good deal affected with some very trifling passages in it; and had the name of Marmontel, or a Richardson, been on the title-page--'tis odds that I should have wept: But

One is ashamed to be pleased with the works of one knows not whom.⁸⁸

This frame sets up a sympathetic response to the story itself by emphasizing the fictional editor's cavalier treatment and philistine judgment of what is obviously a pathetic, modest little work with not much besides a good heart. The reader is intended to sympathize initially with the

neglected little manuscript itself, and later, with the hero of the story, against the judgment of the world. Mackenzie follows the narrow road in this exclusive structural focus on sympathy.

Godwin keeps to the narrow road in a different way; he instrumentalizes the novel itself for the sake of propagating moral and political philosophy. In his preface to Caleb Williams (1794) Godwin summarizes two contrasting attitudes toward "things as they are": that which "pleads for reformation and change" and that which "extols, in the warmest terms, the existing constitution of society." His intention is to show the "practical effects" of the existing government. He goes on to say:

It is now known to philosophers, that the spirit and character of the government intrudes itself into every rank of society. But this is a truth, highly worthy to be communicated, to persons, whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach. Accordingly it was proposed, in the invention of the following work, to comprehend, as far as the progressive nature of a single story would allow, a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism, by which man becomes the destroyer of man. If the author shall have taught a valuable lesson, without subtracting from the interest and passion, by which a performance of this sort ought to be characterized, he will have reason to congratulate himself upon the vehicle he has chosen.⁸⁹

Significant here is Godwin's air of apology for the triviality of his narrative, but also his defense of the novel as a "vehicle" suited to getting his philosophy across to people who need to hear it but who don't read philosophy or political theory. Gary Kelly notes, in the so-called Jacobin novels as a whole, "a militant sense of purpose" in which the syllogistic philosophical structure is foremost, and "the unpredictableness of 'entertainment'" is added later simply to sustain interest.⁹⁰ The Jacobin novel approach makes certain necessary concessions to the "vehicle"; but because it is actually an illustration of propositional philosophical truth, it instrumentalizes the novel and violates its artistic integrity.

The conservatists, or the anti-Jacobins as they called themselves, instrumentalize the novel in a different way. This is the novel for the sake of didactic moralizing, specifically for self-control and against what it considers the "cult of the self." The plot and the characters are subordinate to this stern moralizing purpose. For example,

Marilyn Butler says that the plot of Mrs West's The Advantages of Education is "...the story of the naïve young girl who must choose between two potential husbands, one outwardly attractive, the other really meritorious--the choice respectively of her passions and her moral sense..." (B, 98) Mrs West "...[organizes] her characters to display right and wrong ethical principles" (B, 103) and even "to underline and comment on moral contrasts..." (B, 98) But the emphasis on self-discipline extends even to the novel as a whole. Marilyn Butler points out that the conservative novelists "wrote to a formula and adopted an apparently conscious stance of self-effacement and personal anonymity." "Novel after novel," she says, "unashamedly used the same structure, the same incidents, the same caricatured figures," and even resisted the creation of a believable fictional world. (B, 88) In this case, then, even imagination, individuality, and originality are sacrificed to stern and severe virtue, and to the good of the group.

If the earlier novels tend to be easy-going and somewhat complacent, these later novels are, to use Lewis's phrase, living always at the stretch. The constant focus on the ideal loses touch with the everyday realities of life. And it makes these novels impotent, in a way--they have nothing to say to this world, and no cutting edge. The incessant subordination of everything to moral idealism and duty results in a stripped-down vision of life and, correspondingly, a stripped-down version of the novel. They cannot appreciate the complexity and diversity of life--qualities which, while they necessarily complicate moral decisions and judgments, also add richness, joy, and even laughter. These novels know something of the problems and evils of this world, but nothing of joy or laughter or comic enjoyment of life. They have little interest in this world, except as a necessary foil to the ideal world. They are blind to the creational goodness of this world which is broken but also awaiting glorious redemption.

If what I have said is true, these two groups of novels are spirited in very different ways.⁹¹ Moreover, I have tried to show what I think is a fundamental kinship between the early novels and both early Enlightenment philosophy and Hogarth's art theory. R. F. Brissenden and Roger Robinson point out that Sterne and Fielding are very close to Hogarth, and that all three can legitimately be said to be rococo-spir-

ited. In my judgment, this is accurate, at least with respect to Fielding and Sterne. Richardson fits in some ways but not in other significant ways. I shall deal with Richardson in greater depth in a later chapter. The later novels, on the other hand, exhibit, I suggest, a fundamental kinship with later Enlightenment philosophy and Reynolds's art theory. They represent that cultural spirit rather unfortunately called neoclassical. The kinship is necessarily rather general, because these novels cannot share Kant's Germanic philosophical background or Reynolds's position in the academy tradition. And unlike Kant, these novelists are virtually all second-raters. However, they are among the best novels in the late eighteenth century in England, and they represent, if not the best of this spirit, yet perhaps some logical outworkings of a spirited obeisance to encrusted tradition. Jane Austen, like Richardson with respect to the rococo spirit, is neoclassical in some ways but quite noticeably not in others. At least, she shares the "neoclassical" aura in a very different way. I shall move now to a more detailed examination of Jane Austen's last novel, Persuasion.

CHAPTER II

THE ANALYSIS OF PERSUASION

Persuasion is, at its core, a story which is shaped and structured, as all stories are, by certain "thematic" elements which tie it together in a certain way and highlight important aspects. It is also narrated by someone, and the way in which this is done adds important nuances to the story. Persuasion also involves a number of personae--the implied author, the narrator, the characters, the assumed reader--who are structurally and personally related to each other, again in ways which add more nuances to the story.¹ I shall try to analyze these different dimensions in order to find out the different kinds of nuances that contribute to the total meaning of Persuasion.

2.1 Thematic Structuring Elements

Persuasion is, as the title indicates, a treatment of the "persuasion" theme common in the eighteenth century. A noteworthy aspect of Jane Austen's treatment is that the "persuasion" situation is two-fold; the first situation acts as the background for a focus on the consequences of these actions and on the changes which lead up to the second situation. This two-fold action is "placed" by means of details which suggest the nature of the situation and the meaning of persuasion in each case. This specific context is set up by a triadic structure involving the three families--the Elliots, the Musgroves, and the Crofts/Wentworths--each of which represents a different cluster of qualities, and even a different world-view.

First of all, the Elliots are shown to be a once-distinguished family that has decayed from the inside. Sir Walter Elliot, a baronet, is part of the landed gentry with a large country estate, Kellynch-hall, and with responsibilities toward the tenants who live and work there. He is part of the backbone of country society, a focal point of traditional social responsibility. The family is "ancient and respectable," with

a history of "...serving the office of High Sheriff, representing a borough in three successive parliaments..." (3-4)² Sir Walter has a rich heritage of active social responsibility and of solid dignity and respectability. But as for Sir Walter himself, "Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character; vanity of person and of situation....He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy; and the Sir Walter Elliot, who united these gifts, was the constant object of his warmest respect and devotion."

(4) He has made a once-vital tradition ingrown and self-perpetuating; instead of using these "blessings" and "gifts" to serve his neighbor, he grows complacent and self-satisfied, seeing them as personal attributes which are fundamentally "his" and are there to serve him. When he leaves Kellynch-hall: "Sir Walter prepared with condescending bows for all the afflicted tenantry and cottagers who might have had a hint to show themselves." (36) "Afflicted" suggests their very real needs which Sir Walter ignores, and also his sense that whatever "affliction" they suffer is caused by his departure and can be cured with a bow from him. Real social responsibility has shrunk to "condescending bows" bestowed as something over and above what is deserved and exciting gratitude and esteem. Instead of responsibly administering the estate, Sir Walter milks it dry to enhance his "dignity" and "comfort" (really "indulgence of taste or pride"). (10)

When the Elliots' tradition turns inward and becomes self-perpetuating, a rich heritage, alive and well in Lady Elliot and Anne, is stifled and ignored. Lady Elliot had been

...an excellent woman, sensible and amiable; whose judgment and conduct, if they might be pardoned the youthful infatuation which made her Lady Elliot, had never required indulgence afterwards.--She had humoured, or softened, or concealed his failings, and promoted his real respectability for seventeen years; and though not the very happiest being in the world herself, had found enough in her duties, her friends, and her children, to attach her to life, and make it no matter of indifference to her when she was called on to quit them. (4)

"Excellent" here may suggest Proverbs 31; Lady Elliot is a strong, active woman who gives her daughters "good principles and instruction." (5) And "While Lady Elliot lived, there had been method, moderation, and economy, which had just kept him within his income; but with her had died all such right-mindedness, and from that period he had been con-

stantly exceeding it." (9)

Although "Elizabeth had succeeded...to all that was possible, of her mother's rights and consequence," (5) "...it was only in Anne that [Lady Russell] could fancy the mother to revive again." (6) Unlike Elizabeth, who is "...very handsome, and very like himself" and whose "...influence had always been great," (5) Anne's "delicate features and mild dark eyes" are "so totally different...from his own" that "her father...found little to admire in them." Further, "...there could be nothing in them now that she was faded and thin, to excite his esteem." (6) More than this, she is consistently undervalued and ignored; although "...with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must have placed her high with any people of real understanding, [she] was nobody with either father or sister; her word had no weight; her convenience was always to give way;--she was only Anne." (5) But Anne shows that, like her mother, she too is an "excellent" woman in her attitude toward her father's financial problems. Elizabeth can think up only two "expedients": "to cut off some unnecessary charities, and to refrain from new-furnishing the drawing-room" and "the happy thought of their taking no present down to Anne, as had been the usual yearly custom"; (9-10) and the Elliots in general want "...to devise any means of lessening their expenses without compromising their dignity, or relinquishing their comforts in a way not to be borne." (10) But Anne is consistently "...on the side of honesty against importance." She wants "...more vigorous measures, a more complete reformation, a quicker release from debt, a much higher tone of indifference for every thing but justice and equity." (12) "She considered it as an act of indispensable duty to clear away the claims of creditors, with all the expedition which the most comprehensive retrenchments could secure, and saw no dignity in any thing short of it. She wanted it to be prescribed, and felt as a duty." (12-13) Of course, Sir Walter indignantly rejects Anne's suggestions: "'What! Every comfort of life knocked off! Journeys, London, servants, horses, table,--contractions and restrictions every where. To live no longer with the decencies even of a private gentleman! No, he would sooner quit Kellynch-hall at once, than remain on it on such disgraceful terms.'" (13) Thus end Anne's hopes of reforming and renewing the Elliot tradition; instead, as usual, she is ignored and is subsequently forced to

leave Kellynch-hall. The Elliots go to Bath, but Anne goes to Upper-cross because, as Elizabeth says, "'...nobody will want her in Bath.'" (33) This treatment takes its toll: "...her bloom had vanished early" and she is now "faded and thin." (6) Anne, like her mother, carries on the rich, living heritage of active social responsibility and of true dignity and respectability; and like her mother, who was "...not the very happiest being in the world" and who had died young, she is having the life squeezed out of her by the weight of ingrown Elliot tradition.

The Elliots' decision to leave Kellynch-hall and move to Bath has great significance: they are thereby defaulting on a great trust and rejecting a rich heritage. Bath is certainly more congenial to their hollow tradition of consequence and self-indulgence; there they can be "important at comparatively little expense," (14) partly because "old-fashioned notions" of "country hospitality" (219) are not the thing in Bath. Their "heartless elegance" (226) is fashionable; "public manners" (246) are what count, regardless of the real feelings behind them. Thus Elizabeth sends her conventional "love" to Lady Russell:

'Very well,' said Elizabeth, 'I have nothing to send but my love. Oh! you may as well take back that tiresome book she would lend me, and pretend I have read it through. I really cannot be plaguing myself for ever with all the new poems and states of the nation that come out. Lady Russell quite bores one with her new publications. You need not tell her so, but I thought her dress hideous the other night. I used to think she had some taste in dress, but I was ashamed of her at the concert. Something so formal and arrangé in her air! and she sits so upright! My best love, of course.' (215)

This is the way of fashionable Bath society; certainly Elizabeth's "public manners" are flawlessly conventional, and within those limits she is free to express the casual, artless cruelty of her real feelings. Altogether, living at Camden Place (the most elegant part of the new section of Bath),³ Sir Walter and Elizabeth feel that they have moved up in the world; but Anne "...must sigh that her father should feel no degradation in his change; should see nothing to regret in the duties and dignity of the resident land-holder; should feel so much to be vain of in the littlenesses of a town." (138) The Elliots have in fact defaulted on their heritage and their responsibility; Sir Walter is nothing but "...a foolish, spendthrift baronet, who had not had principle or sense enough to maintain himself in the situation in which Providence had

placed him." (248) They are cast aside, and their place as leaders of society is given to others.

But the Elliots do more than just passively abandon the estate; they also actively destroy it. Mr Elliot, Sir Walter's heir, is like Sir Walter, only more so. More corrupt than Sir Walter, the coldly calculating Mr Elliot has smooth, perfect "public manners" which conceal the fact that he is "black at heart, hollow and black." (199) Initially, he values the estate and the baronetcy only for their cash value, and later for the status they give him. He is totally without feeling for other people: he is, as one of his victims says,

'...a man without heart or conscience; a designing, wary, cold-blooded being, who thinks only of himself; who, for his own interest or ease, would be guilty of any cruelty, or any treachery, that could be perpetrated without risk of his general character. He has no feeling for others. Those whom he has been the chief cause of leading into ruin, he can neglect and desert without the smallest compunction. He is totally beyond the reach of any sentiment of justice or compassion.' (199)

In Mr Elliot's hands, Kellynch-hall will give him the "consequence" of tradition; but it will be a dead tradition, hollow because the heart has gone out of it. The estate will be a fossil, and social leadership will be given to others more worthy of it.

In general, then, there is a great emptiness to the Elliots' way of life, highlighted by the word "vanity," which suggests a concern for personal appearance as the highest goal and the criterion of personal worth, with overtones of the biblical notion of futility. Sir Walter himself evidently divides his time between the looking-glass and the Baronetage, where "...he found occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one." (3) In his concern for Admiral Baldwin's rugged and weatherbeaten appearance, Sir Walter says of sailors in general, "'It is a pity they are not knocked on the head at once, before they reach Admiral Baldwin's age.'" (20) Certainly, too, Elizabeth's life is empty; anger and resentment are "...the cares to alloy, the agitations to vary, the sameness and the elegance, the prosperity and the nothingness, of her scene of life--...the feelings to give interest to a long, uneventful residence in one country circle, to fill the vacancies which there were no habits of utility abroad, no talents or accomplishments for home, to occupy." (9) In forfeiting their social responsibil-

ities, they have also forfeited their real dignity; and their anxious attempt to fill the void with the artificial dignity of acceptance in fashionable society is indeed a pitiful "vanity." The Elliots never feel secure in their acceptance by fashionable Bath society. Things are so complicated: they need to impress people who can help them rise socially, and they also need an admiring audience to look up to them and to take note of their rise. Thus Sir Walter has to think carefully before deciding that Admiral Croft will do:

...the Admiral's situation in life...was just high enough, and not too high. 'I have let my house to Admiral Croft,' would sound extremely well; very much better than to any mere Mr. ----; a Mr. (save, perhaps, some half dozen in the nation,) always needs a note of explanation. An admiral speaks his own consequence, and, at the same time, can never make a baronet look small. (24)

Then the Elliots toady to their dull cousins simply because they are "Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple, and the Hon. Miss Carteret." (149) And Elizabeth, genuinely anxious, has to think her way carefully around a difficult problem:

Elizabeth was, for a short time, suffering a good deal. She felt that Mrs Musgrove and all her party ought to be asked to dine with them, but she could not bear to have the difference of style, the reduction of servants, which a dinner must betray, witnessed by those who had been always so inferior to the Elliots of Kellynch. It was a struggle between propriety and vanity; but vanity got the better, and then Elizabeth was happy again. These were her internal persuasions.--'Old fashioned notions--country hospitality--we do not profess to give dinners--few people in Bath do--Lady Alicia never does; did not even ask her own sister's family, though they were here a month: and I dare say it would be very inconvenient to Mrs Musgrove--put her quite out of her way. I am sure she would rather not come--she cannot feel easy with us. I will ask them all for an evening; that will be much better--that will be a novelty and a treat. They have not seen two such drawing rooms before. They will be delighted to come to-morrow evening. It shall be a regular party--small, but most elegant.' And this satisfied Elizabeth... (219-220)

And when Anne announces that a previous engagement with Mrs Smith at Westgate-buildings (run-down buildings in the old part of town) will prevent her from visiting Lady Dalrymple at Laura Place (a ritzy, fashionable part of the new town), Sir Walter responds with withering sarcasm:

'Westgate-buildings!' said he; 'and who is Miss Anne Elliot to be visiting in Westgate-buildings?--A Mrs. Smith. A widow

Mrs. Smith,--and who was her husband? One of the five thousand Mr. Smiths whose names are to be met with every where. And what is her attraction? That she is old and sickly.--Upon my word, Miss Anne Elliot, you have the most extraordinary taste! Everything that revolts other people, low company, paltry rooms, foul air, disgusting associations are inviting to you. But surely, you may put off this old lady till to-morrow. She is not so near her end, I presume, but that she may hope to see another day. What is her age? Forty? (157)

There is an edge of real panic to his sarcasm: What will people think? and Will Lady Dalrymple be offended? The Elliots act according to what looks like "prudence," but is really "selfish caution." (27) They are too insecure to be able to afford spontaneous warmth and hospitality; they need to calculate what is at stake for their position and dignity in every activity and relationship.

Unlike the Elliots, landed gentry who have decayed from the inside, the Musgroves are solid, respectable squires in the village of Uppercross who are trying to "improve" themselves. This is evident in their situation:

Uppercross was a moderate-sized village, which a few years back had been completely in the old English style; containing only two houses superior in appearance to those of the yeomen and labourers,--the mansion of the 'squire, with its high walls, great gates, and old trees, substantial and unmodernized--and the compact, tight parsonage, enclosed in its own neat garden, with a vine and a pear-tree trained round its casements; but upon the marriage of the young 'squire, it had received the improvement of a farm-house elevated into a cottage for his residence; and Uppercross Cottage, with its viranda, French windows, and other prettinesses, was quite as likely to catch the traveller's eye, as the more consistent and considerable aspect and premises of the Great House, about a quarter of a mile farther on. (36)

The Great House has a solid, homely virtue and respectability which are threatened by the tawdry and affected "prettinesses" of the frenchified Cottage. And this is encroaching on "...the old-fashioned square parlour, with a small carpet and shining floor, to which the present daughters of the house were gradually giving the proper air of confusion by a grand piano forte and a harp, flower-stands and little tables placed in every direction." (40) Even "The portraits...seemed to be staring in astonishment" at "such an overthrow of all order and neatness." (40) This "improvement" in the sense of sophistication threatens to cheapen and undermine the real dignity and homely virtue of what is more solid.

Moreover, the Musgroves are also trying to "improve" the homely warmth of their manners and way of life:

The Musgroves, like their houses, were in a state of alteration, perhaps of improvement. The father and mother were in the old English style, and the young people in the new. Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove were a very good sort of people; friendly and hospitable, not much educated, and not at all elegant. Their children had more modern minds and manners....Henrietta and Louisa, young ladies of nineteen and twenty...had brought from a school at Exeter all the usual stock of accomplishments, and were now, like thousands of other young ladies, living to be fashionable, happy, and merry. (40)

At heart, the Musgroves are good, homely people. Unlike the Elliots, they are not anxious and dedicated social climbers who cultivate the "heartless elegance" congenial to fashionable Bath society. Although they lack "taste and delicacy," (230) the Musgroves have "a heartiness and a warmth, and a sincerity" (220) and Henrietta and Louisa are "very good humoured, unaffected girls." (92) But these younger ones also want to "improve" themselves; Charles has married into the Elliots, and the girls, particularly, long to live in Bath, and in a fashionable part of town--"...none of your Queen-squares for us!" (42) And in so doing they risk ruining what they already have. Just as the Great House has lost some of its solid dignity and hearty goodness with the addition of the prettified Uppercross Cottage, so, in their attempts to catch what they consider the dashing, exotic Captain Wentworth, Henrietta nearly loses Charles Hayter, and Louisa, very nearly, her life. But after Louisa's accident, the Musgroves go back to what they really enjoy--"a little quiet cheerfulness at home," (134) as when Anne and Lady Russell visit them at Christmas:

Immediately surrounding Mrs. Musgrove were the little Harvilles, whom she was sedulously guarding from the tyranny of the two children from the Cottage, expressly arrived to amuse them. On one side was a table, occupied by some chattering girls, cutting up silk and gold paper; and on the other were tressels and trays, bending under the weight of brawn and cold pies, where riotous boys were holding high revel; the whole completed by a roaring Christmas fire, which seemed determined to be heard, in spite of all the noise of the others. Charles and Mary also came in, of course, during their visit; and Mr. Musgrove made a point of paying his respects to Lady Russell, and sat down close to her for ten minutes, talking with a very raised voice, but, from the clamour of the children on his knees, generally in vain. (134)

In short, "It was a fine family-piece," (134) with a lusty vitality perhaps

in the manner of Goldsmith. Whereas the Elliots have already sold out to the hollow "heartless elegance" of fashionable society, the Musgroves, having flirted with "improvements," have for the most part given them up before ruining completely what is still a very good way of life.

The Crofts and Wentworths (and their friends the Harvilles) are neither landed gentry nor well-established squires; they are up-and-coming professional people--sailors and clergymen--who have worked hard for whatever they have. Although they do not have the dignity of traditionally established family, estate, and title, their "goodness of heart and simplicity of character" (127) give them a genuine dignity and importance that set them apart from fashionable society. Sir Walter's lawyer remembers Mr Wentworth, the curate, who "...came to consult me once, I remember, about a trespass of one of his neighbours; farmer's man breaking into his orchard--wall town down--apples stolen--caught in the fact; and afterwards, contrary to my judgment, submitted to an amicable compromise. Very odd indeed!" (23) And Anne is struck by the hospitality freely offered by the Harvilles out of their limited means; they have "...rooms so small as none but those who invite from the heart could think capable of accommodating so many." (98) And she finds "...so much attachment to Captain Wentworth in all this, and such a bewitching charm in a degree of hospitality so uncommon, so unlike the usual style of give-and-take invitations, and dinners of formality and display." (98) After Louisa's accident, they offer all possible help, "with a truth and sincerity of feeling irresistible." (113)

The Crofts are not interested in fashionable Bath society; they go to Bath for medical reasons, stay in respectable but not extravagant Gay-street, and keep "their country habit of being almost always together." (168) And the fact that the Crofts rent Kellynch-hall is important. They "improve" the place--significantly, by "...sending away some of the large looking-glasses from my dressing-room, which was your father's... Such a number of looking-glasses!...there was no getting away from one-self." (127-8) And Anne "...had in fact so high an opinion of the Crofts, and considered her father so very fortunate in his tenants, felt the parish to be so sure of a good example, the poor of the best attention and relief, that however sorry and ashamed for the necessity of the removal, she could not but in conscience feel that they were gone who deserved

not to stay, and that Kellynch-hall had passed into better hands than its owners'." (125) The Crofts are worthy to take the place traditionally held by the Elliots. Although the estate will eventually be taken over by Mr Elliot and will, in a very real sense, be destroyed, the Crofts and the Wentworths are the new backbone of society because they actively carry on, in a different situation and in a different way, the rich and living heritage originally embodied in the Elliots' estate tradition.

This triadic structure, then, sets up a meaningful context for the actual two-fold "persuasion" situation. On a superficial level it seems that, according to contemporary standards, Sir Walter exercises his legitimate parental prerogative of refusing consent for an unsuitable marriage, and Anne obeys this decision. But actually the situation is considerably more complicated. It is clear that Anne is very much alone; she no longer has her mother's support, and she is surrounded by an uncongenial father and sister and the colorlessness and stagnation of the life they have made for themselves. But it is also clear that Anne will not be moved by Sir Walter's threats or arguments: "Young and gentle as she was, it might yet have been possible to withstand her father's ill-will, though unsoftened by one kind word or look on the part of her sister..." (27) No, the actual conflict is between Anne and Lady Russell. Their differences are brought into focus by Frederick Wentworth's arrival and the profoundly unsettling impact of his vibrant, whirlwind personality on the drab and stale elegance of Kellynch-hall. He is "full of life and ardour," with a "sanguine temper, and fearlessness of mind." (27) For Anne, "Such confidence, powerful in its own warmth, and bewitching in the wit which often expressed it, must have been enough..." (27) But from Lady Russell's perspective, "He was brilliant, he was headstrong." (27) Thus we find that Lady Russell "...had prejudices on the side of ancestry; she had a value for rank and consequence, which blinded her a little to the faults of those who possessed them." (11) And, in addition, "Lady Russell had little taste for wit; and of any thing approaching to imprudence a horror." (27) In this light, she can only see the marriage as a "throwing away," as Anne's being "snatched off by a stranger" and "sunk by him into a state of most wearing, anxious, youth-killing dependance." (27) In light of Lady Russell's

overall integrity of heart and her position as Anne's trusted friend, mentor, and mother-figure, it is eminently understandable that Anne should accept Lady Russell's judgment of the situation in preference to her own. "She was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing--indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success, and not deserving it." (27) However, Anne clearly makes her own decision to yield, for her own reasons, and accepts responsibility for it. She acts, not out of pride, "selfish caution," self-preservation, or fear, but out of concern for Wentworth's welfare:

...it was not a merely selfish caution, under which she acted, in putting an end to it. Had she not imagined herself consulting his good, even more than her own, she could hardly have given him up.--The belief of being prudent, and self-denying principally for his advantage, was her chief consolation, under the misery of a parting--a final parting.... (27-8)

Anne's actions are guided by her conception of what is "right"--in this case, prudence and self-denial. But in another situation, Anne remains firm; although Lady Russell favors the match with Charles Musgrove, "... in this case, Anne had left nothing for advice to do." (29)

Then, in the next eight years, Anne's ideas change. In a nutshell, "She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older--the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning." (30) Without disavowing the validity of her earlier actions under those circumstances, she comes to value "early warm attachment, and a cheerful confidence in futurity, against that over-anxious caution which seems to insult exertion and distrust Providence." (30) In eight years,

She was persuaded that under every disadvantage of disapprobation at home, and every anxiety attending his profession, all their probable fears, delays and disappointments, she should yet have been a happier woman in maintaining the engagement, than she had been in the sacrifice of it; and this, she fully believed, had the usual share, had even more than a usual share of all such solitudes and suspense been theirs.... (29)

Significantly, Anne here gives way to a different kind of "persuasion"; rather than a yielding to an outside influence, here it is a yielding to a deep inner certainty that is very personal, distinct from or even in opposition to external opinions. In this case, not Lady Russell, but a deep personal knowledge of her own heart and feelings, and of Frederick Wentworth, effectively persuades her. "Anne, at seven and twenty, thought very differently from what she had been made to think at nineteen." (29)

Moreover, her sense of what is "right" has expanded to include more than prudence and self-denial; now it includes personal happiness, trust, and "romance."

This inner certainty changes the picture in the second part of this two-fold "persuasion" situation. This time, Lady Russell has increased dislike for Wentworth: "...her heart revelled in angry pleasure, in pleased contempt, that the man who at twenty-three had seemed to understand somewhat of the value of an Anne Elliot, should, eight years afterwards, be charmed by a Louisa Musgrove." (125) Now she strongly favors Mr Elliot. After Mrs Smith's disclosures, Anne reflects that "It was just possible that she might have been persuaded by Lady Russell." (211) But instead she has trusted her own judgment and has realized that, as she puts it, "we should not suit." (159) She goes on to accept Wentworth, in the teeth of the opposition. When Wentworth later mentions "the indelible, immoveable impression of what persuasion had once done" and what it might have done for Mr Elliot, Anne insists:

'You should have distinguished....You should have not suspected me now; the case so different, and my age so different. If I was wrong in yielding to persuasion once, remember that it was to persuasion exerted on the side of safety, not of risk. When I yielded, I thought it was to duty; but no duty could be called in aid here. In marrying a man indifferent to me, all risk would have been incurred, and all duty violated.' (244)

Anne recognizes that the situation has changed, and accordingly her conviction of what is right has changed. She is now free to be firm and hold her own in this matter. The point is that each situation is different and the appropriate response--yielding or remaining firm--is different. In this situation Anne can stand firm and even bear down the opposition, and yet not be stiffnecked or obstinate.

These are the two parts to the "persuasion" situation; but in between them are several sets of images and structuring thematic elements which make important connections between the two parts. First, then, Anne's geographical journey from the country to the city makes important connections. She goes from Kellynch, the scene of the first situation, to Bath, the scene of the second, by way of Uppercross (and Lyme). The stop at Uppercross is understood to be only a temporary haven between Kellynch and Bath. These two places are very much alike in terms of the pressures placed on Anne; but her journey is a depressing one insofar

as it means leaving the country for the city. Kellynch, however stifling, is still the country and has a certain resilience and the ability to renew itself. With the Crofts, Kellynch is no longer stifling, but free and open-hearted. In addition, the country suggests spontaneity, freshness, openness and expansiveness. Bath, on the other hand, has a "white glare" (33) in September, and in November Anne catches "...the first dim view of the extensive buildings, smoking in rain" (135) and hears "...the dash of other carriages, the heavy rumble of carts and drays, the bawling of newsmen, muffin-men and milkmen, and the ceaseless clink of pattens." (135) Bath is a typical example of urban blight; but it is also a rather degenerate watering-place. It suggests staleness, stagnation, and artificiality. Unlike Kellynch, Bath will not change if different people come; in fact, it remains the same and absorbs all who come. Anne dreads her time in Bath as an "imprisonment" (137) and she "must sigh that her father should see nothing to regret in the duties and dignity of the resident land-holder; should find so much to be vain of in the littlenesses of a town"; and must wonder at Elizabeth "who had been mistress of Kellynch Hall, finding extent to be proud of between two walls, perhaps thirty feet asunder." (138) Significant also in this context are the hearty, open-air lifestyles and personalities of the sailors, the Crofts, Wentworths, and Harvilles.

The country is also much closer to seasonal patterns of change, growth, and renewal. Seasonal imagery emphasizes recurrence and renewal, against which Elizabeth's personal stagnation is particularly noticeable:

Thirteen winters' revolving frosts had seen her opening every ball of credit which a scanty neighborhood afforded; and thirteen springs shewn their blossoms, as she travelled up to London with her father, for a few weeks annual enjoyment of the great world. (7)

Seasonal imagery also highlights Anne's personal journey (a positive one) as she makes her way from Kellynch to Bath. Her "bloom" is significant of her inner vitality and renewal. At Kellynch, the lasting effect of the broken engagement and the eight years of suffering is "an early loss of bloom and spirits" (28) and she is "faded and thin." (6) At Lyme, after her difficult experiences at Uppercross, her "bloom and freshness of youth" and her "animation of eye" (104) are returning. When she meets Lady Russell "on a dark November day," (123) Lady Russell's compliments

give Anne "...the amusement...of hoping that she was to be blessed with a second spring of youth and beauty." (124) In Bath, Anne's good looks are so striking that even her father "...began to compliment her on her improved looks; he thought her 'less thin in her person, in her cheeks; her skin, her complexion, greatly improved--clearer, fresher. Had she been using any thing in particular?' 'No, nothing.' 'Merely Gowland,' he supposed. 'No, nothing at all.' 'Ha! he was surprised at that...'" (145-6) The seasonal imagery of "bloom" and "spring" indicates Anne's healing and renewal. There is a chiastic structure in the contrast between Anne's depressing journey to Bath and its soggy urban blight and the exhilarating personal renewal of her life and confidence.

The seasonal imagery is particularly intense in the episode of the walk to Winthrop. Two important sets of images are juxtaposed in such a way that they counterpoint and comment on each other. The first set provides the assurance that spring will surely come. The image is two-fold: it contrasts winter/spring from a very elevated "poetic" viewpoint and from a very earthy, wise viewpoint. Anne, admiring the scenery (with the help of "poetical descriptions") overhears Wentworth talking to Louisa, and finds that "The sweet scenes of autumn were for a while put by--unless some tender sonnet, fraught with the apt analogy of the declining year, with declining happiness, and the images of youth and hope, and spring, all gone together, blessed her memory." (85) The description itself has consciously "poetic" touches--"tender," "fraught," and the elegaic "youth and hope, and spring, all gone together"--that verge on burlesque and give an ironic twist to the "apt analogy." Winter does not last forever, but gives way to spring; likewise, grief does not last forever, but gives way to hope and renewed life. Thus "blessed" is frankly ironic; much more helpful is the sight of "...large enclosures, where the plough at work, and the fresh-made path spoke the farmer, counteracting the sweets of poetical despondence, and meaning to have spring again." (85) The image of the revolving seasons is picked up here; the idea is that things keep moving, so that the seasons, and even the seasons of our emotions, do not get stuck permanently at winter, but move round to spring again. Only the artificial "sweets of poetical despondence" can last forever.

This two-fold image counterpoints Wentworth's image of the hazel-

nut, given to Louisa on the subject of "Let those who would be happy be firm": (88)

'--Here is a nut,' said he, catching one down from an upper bough. 'To exemplify,--a beautiful glossy nut, which, blessed with original strength, has outlived all the storms of autumn. Not a puncture, not a weak spot any where.--This nut,' he continued, with playful solemnity,--'while so many of its brethren have fallen and been trodden under foot, is still in possession of all the happiness that a hazel-nut can be supposed capable of.' Then, returning to his former earnest tone: 'My first wish for all, whom I am interested in, is that they should be firm. If Louisa Musgrove would be beautiful and happy in her November of life, she will cherish all her present powers of mind.' (88)

In this case, slightly askew connotations bring the emblem itself into question. The formula "Let those who would be happy..." suggests the beatitude formula of "Happy are those who..."; likewise, "blessed" and "have fallen and been trodden under foot" also have biblical connotations, thus emphasizing the confessional significance of this for Wentworth. But surely Wentworth has got it wrong; the real beatitudes say "Blessed are the poor in spirit...the meek...those who mourn..." and so on. And surely a hazel-nut is "meant" to be a hazel tree; but in order for this to happen, it has to "fall" and "be trodden under foot" and not remain a glossy nut that eventually rots on the inside. The image of the farmer speaks to this image: there the brokenness of ploughing prepares the way for new life in the spring, whereas here Wentworth is extolling firmness and not brokenness. Firmness and brokenness have their seasons; perhaps persuasion and determination also have their times or seasons.

These counterpointed seasonal images focus some important questions about persuasion and determination: how do they relate to weakness and strength, and under what conditions are they right or wrong? Earlier, for example, we have been told that Wentworth "had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill; deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity." (61) For him, then, yielding is weakness and lack of character, while determination is always right. And in response to his object lesson, Louisa assures Wentworth that "--I have no idea of

being so easily persuaded. When I have made up my mind, I have made it." (87) Eventually, this stiff-necked stubbornness is broken--physically, in Louisa's fall, and spiritually, as Wentworth, "staggering against the wall for his support, exclaimed in the bitterest agony, 'Oh God! her father and mother!'" (110) and later "sat near a table, leaning over it with folded arms, and face concealed, as if overpowered by the various feelings of his soul, and trying by prayer and reflection to calm them." (112) And Anne, watching them, wonders "...whether it ever occurred to him now, to question the justness of his own previous opinion as to the universal felicity and advantage of firmness of character; and whether it might not strike him, that, like all other qualities of the mind, it should have its proportions and limits." (116) Significantly, in November, Louisa, having said "'I am determined I will,'" (109) is broken and suffering, while Anne, the "weak," persuadable one, suffers but comes through with "a second spring of youth and beauty." Wentworth crystallizes it later when he admits that through this experience "...he had learnt to distinguish between the steadiness of principle and the obstinacy of self-will, between the daring of heedlessness and the resolution of a collected mind." (242)

An important image that highlights Anne's personal growth, healing, and renewed life, is that of the individual within the crowd. At Kellynch, Anne is stifled and treated as a nonentity: she is "only Anne." There is no doubt that she has strong principles and a strong sense of duty, as well as a willingness to deny herself for the sake of those she loves. But she has little self-confidence and firmness in asserting herself personally. Even her suggestions for economy and retrenchment are presented indirectly, in the third person, as if Anne's principles are up front, but she personally is effaced. Her loss of "bloom" and the fact that she is "faded and thin" testify to her lack of personal identity and "presence." She speaks up directly only three times, to defend the navy. At Kellynch the individual-in-the-crowd scenes show that indeed "her convenience was always to give way;--she was only Anne." (5) They show her life as one of perpetual duty and accommodation with no room for her own feelings or happiness.

The scenes at Uppercross are different in this respect because of the presence of Frederick Wentworth. Anne is still a peripheral member

of the group in which she moves: she is useful as a mediator, as a baby-sitter, as an accompanist for impromptu dances. But the narrative subtly changes the focus, so that, although Anne remains peripheral, spatially, our understanding of her perceptions, feelings, and thoughts makes her central. The scene in the Musgroves' parlor is typical of this dual perspective. Anne sits at the side with Mrs Musgrove, listening to Wentworth flirting with the Musgrove daughters. As he talks, we follow Anne's memories and her painful comparisons of the hopeful past and the barren present. But from time to time she must rouse herself and sympathize with Mrs Musgrove's comparatively trivial and superficial "fond regrets." Anne "suppressed a smile, and listened kindly, while Mrs Musgrove relieved her heart a little more..." (64) The detailed presentation of Anne's thoughts and feelings emphasizes the painful awakening of life and love which have been suppressed for eight years. Duty is still of central importance, but the arrival of Wentworth throws her emotional life into a crisis which demands immediate attention.

At Lyme, with the Harvilles, Anne finds herself, for the first time, in a congenial group. She is moved by their genuine interest, and by their spontaneity and warmth. In addition, Anne really shows her strength in the crisis surrounding Louisa's accident. In this she is less passive and has more firmness and presence. Her emotional life is more colorful, and has a wider range: she is by turns sharply imperative, irritated, amused, flattered, pained, concerned, and grateful. And it is at Lyme that her "bloom" begins to return.

At Bath, Anne should, by all rights, be completely effaced and overwhelmed by the vast impersonal crowds and by the uncongenial domestic surroundings; she herself dreads it as an "imprisonment." Instead, she shows a striking increase in self-confidence and in personal poise and presence. Initially, she is more able to hold her own within the family circle. This is evident in her decision to keep her engagement with Mrs Smith rather than toady to the rich Irish cousins. In response to Sir Walter's contempt and sarcasm, Anne says quietly, "...I do not think I can put off my engagement" (157) and proceeds to keep it. In addition, Anne gains confidence in her own intuitive judgment of Frederick Wentworth and Mr Elliot, and is able to withstand Lady Russell's very different judgments. Anne decides that:

Mr Elliot was rational, discreet, polished,--but he was not open. There was never any burst of feeling, any warmth of indignation or delight, at the evil or good of others. This, to Anne, was a decided imperfection. Her early impressions were incurable. She prized the frank, the open-hearted, the eager character beyond all others. Warmth and enthusiasm did captivate her still. She felt that she could so much more depend upon the sincerity of those who sometimes looked or said a careless or a hasty thing, than of those whose presence of mind never varied, whose tongue never slipped. (161)

Although Lady Russell "...could not imagine a man more exactly what he ought to be than Mr Elliot" (161) and even wishes Anne to marry him, Anne maintains her own opinion and is eventually proven right.

The larger crowd scenes form the context within which Anne must re-establish her relationship with Frederick Wentworth. These crowd scenes are characterized by impersonal relationships, "nothing-saying," and artificial feelings. They are inimical to the delicate and awkward process of establishing personal relationships, as Anne and Wentworth discover: the fine nuances of personal communication get lost, twisted, or misconstrued. Anne first meets Wentworth in Molland's, surrounded by other people. After Anne leaves with Mr Elliot, the busy tongues of the ladies with Wentworth inform him knowingly that "one can guess what will happen there." (177) At the octagon room, it is Anne who, "making a little advance," speaks to Wentworth, "in spite of the formidable father and sister in the background." (181) However, they are soon separated by the crowd, and the evening is full of attempts to catch sight of each other and to get within speaking distance, of communications begun and interrupted. Finally Mr Elliot's vexing intrusion provokes Wentworth's jealousy and makes Anne realize that he does love her. But still the anxiety is there: "How was the truth to reach him?" (191) Her anxiety is well-founded, as is evident from their meeting at the Musgroves' rooms at the White Hart:

She tried to be calm, and leave things to take their course; and tried to dwell much on this argument of rational dependance --'Surely, if there be constant attachment on each side, our hearts must understand each other ere long. We are not boy and girl, to be captiously irritable, misled by every moment's inadvertence, and wantonly playing with our own happiness.' And yet, a few minutes afterwards, she felt as if their being in company with each other, under their present circumstances, could only be exposing them to inadvertencies and misconstructions of the most mischievous kind. (221-2)

The normal difficulties of re-establishing a personal relationship in awkward and delicate circumstances are increased by the crowds surrounding and impinging on them.

In spite of the problems caused by these situations, Anne does manage to communicate with Wentworth. They cannot talk directly; Anne is talking to Captain Harville about Benwick, and Wentworth is across the room writing a letter, with his back to them. But the depth and simplicity of Anne's heartfelt emotion cuts through the obliquities of the situation:

'...God forbid that I should undervalue the warm and faithful feelings of any of my fellow-creatures. I should deserve utter contempt if I dared to suppose that true attachment and constancy were known only by woman....All the privilege I claim for my own sex...is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone. (235)

And although Wentworth can respond only indirectly, through a letter, his emotion is likewise direct: "'Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant.'" (237) They do have one short walk home in which to exchange feelings and promises and to "indulge in...retrospections and acknowledgements and...explanations." (240-1) But their final explanations and evaluations take place in the uncongenial context of an Elliot house-party. Wentworth suddenly realizes that "'Six years of separation and suffering might have been spared'" (247) but for his pride and obstinacy, and acknowledges that the reconciliation is a blessing given far above what he deserves:

'I have been used to the gratification of believing myself to earn every blessing that I enjoyed. I have valued myself on honourable toils and just rewards. Like other great men under reverses,' he added with a smile, 'I must endeavour to subdue my mind to my fortune. I must learn to brook being happier than I deserve.' (247)

And Anne, although admitting that her earlier decision was wrong, yet affirms her reasons for making it:

'...I must believe that I was right, much as I suffered from it, that I was perfectly right in being guided....To me, [Lady Russell] was in the place of a parent. Do not mistake me, however. I am not saying that she did not err in her advice. It was, perhaps, one of those cases in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides; and for myself, I certainly

never should, in any circumstance of tolerable similarity, give such advice. But I mean, that I was right in submitting to her, and that if I had done otherwise, I should have suffered more in continuing the engagement than I did even in giving it up, because I should have suffered in my conscience. I have now, as far as such a sentiment is allowable in human nature, nothing to reproach myself with; and if I mistake not, a strong sense of duty is no bad part of a woman's portion.' (246)

These are extraordinary communications to be made at a stale house-party. They demonstrate Anne's confidence and independence, not only with respect to her disapproving father and sister, but also with respect to Wentworth himself. She firmly insists on the rightness of her conduct in the previous situation, and on Lady Russell's fundamental goodheartedness, and leaves him to come to terms with it himself. This is the full measure of Anne's personal healing and renewal, and it enables her to "bear down" her family's disapproval and to marry Wentworth at last.

A very pervasive structural image in Persuasion is that of time, attitudes toward time, and existence through time. The juxtaposition of past and present situations suggests growth and change. The seasonal imagery, a sort of "patterned time," suggests natural growth and renewal. The journeying imagery suggests movement through space but also through personal time, as in stages of development. Each family has its own attitude toward time. The Elliots are entrenched in the past as a way of avoiding the demands of the present and of not acknowledging the passage of time. Sir Walter prides himself on holding time at bay, and his face-creams help him do it. He sees the future simply as that which progressively "wrecks" one's figure and complexion and deepens the crow's foot. For Elizabeth, time just drags on and on, "a long and uneventful residence ...vacancies which there were no habits of utility abroad, no talents or accomplishments for home, to occupy." (9) The future looks like a dreary thing to be filled up somehow. The Musgroves are uncertainly balanced between past and present, with a discontinuity between the two. The Crofts have fond memories of personal pasts; but they live fully in the present, and look forward to the future with confidence. Wentworth normally lives vibrantly in the present and steps eagerly into a future full of opportunity. But he is hurt and disappointed about the broken engagement and, as his hazel-nut emblem shows, his resentment stalls the natural

process of healing and reconciliation until Anne's constancy gives him a second chance. For Anne, eight years of suffering cause fading and decline. But eventually time brings both brokenness and renewed life (if one doesn't insist on artificially prolonging "the sweets of poetical despondence"). Eventually, for both of them, the past, with its mistakes and suffering, is "redeemed"--it is made to contribute to the joyful present. Thus we are told that:

...they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their reunion, than when it had been first projected; more tender, more tried, more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment; more equal to act, more justified in acting. (240)

They move cheerfully into the future, secure in each other's love. Again we are told that:

...Anne's [spring of felicity] was in the warmth of her heart. Anne was tenderness itself, and she had the full worth of it in Captain Wentworth's affection. His profession was all that could ever make her friends wish that tenderness less; the dread of a future war all that could dim her sunshine. (252)

The ambiguity of "spring" suggests both a continual springing up of happiness from within and the vernal freshness of that happiness and warmth.

In addition, I think it can be said that Anne and Wentworth renew and improve the real, living Elliot heritage. It is impossible to go back to the way things used to be, although Anne is tempted by the thought:

For a few moments her imagination and her heart were bewitched. The idea of becoming what her mother had been; of having the precious name of "Lady Elliot" first revived in herself; of being restored to Kellynch, calling it her home again, her home for ever, was a charm which she could not immediately resist. (160)

But then she realizes that it is impossible to marry Mr Elliot, who dead-ends Kellynch-hall as a living societal center. By marrying Wentworth, however, Anne can carry on the real, living heritage. Although "Anne had no Uppercross-hall before her, no landed estate, no headship of a family," (250) yet she and Wentworth care for their neighbors by, for example, recovering Mrs Smith's estate for her. Ultimately, then, although some of the characters in Persuasion are stagnant, Persuasion itself is not. It has a deep sense of the passing of time and of the effects of time on human life. It also stresses the need to take account

of the passage of time--to change and grow, to experience the healing effects of time, and to rejoice that even the passage of time can be redeemed.

Ultimately, the attitude of Persuasion toward "persuasion" is a complex one that ties together all of these images and thematic structuring elements. In my judgment, the ideal is that one maintain one's own responsibility and power of decision, and, when appropriate to the requirements of duty and happiness in a specific situation, yield to persuasion or remain firm. Thus in the first situation Anne yields because she thinks it right, and in the second she remains firm because she thinks it right. The situation, her conception of what is "right," and thus the appropriate response, may have changed, but her motive and intention remain constant. This means that there are times and seasons, so to speak, for yielding and remaining firm, and it is possible to maintain one's own integrity through change and within communal life. I think Persuasion emphasizes that one must not be too much either way--neither a weathervane like poor Henrietta, who wavers and is betrayed into "non-sensical complaisance" (87) and is "soon persuaded...to think differently," (114) nor stubborn in a petty and irritatingly self-centred way like the younger Musgroves. Mary says of Charles Jr., "'If I were to shut myself up for ever with the child, I should not be able to persuade him to do any thing he did not like.'" (57) Like mother, like son. More stiff-necked are Frederick Wentworth, who objects to persuasion on principle (at least he thinks so; we know that he is hurt and defensive) and is committed to inflexible firmness and determination; and Louisa Musgrove, who "besides the pleasure of doing as she liked," is also naively "armed with the idea of merit in maintaining her own way." (94) In addition, those who refuse to be persuaded are driven by inner prejudices or fears. Thus Anne suspects that in Wentworth's case "the same unfortunate persuasion...still governed." (221) And Elizabeth is governed by "internal persuasions," (219) those uncritically accepted conventional rationalizations current in Bath. The idea seems to be that one must be flexible and open to the demands of reality, and to changes in situations. Thus when considering walking out with the Misses Musgrove, "Anne felt persuaded...that it was precisely what they did not wish" (83) and accordingly tries to turn Mary back. But when she genuinely prefers to stay

to nurse little Charles, and thinks herself right in doing so, "she was quite unpersuadable..." (58) One must always do what is right--and that may mean holding firm or yielding to another view as the appropriate response to a specific time-bound situation.

These structuring thematic elements, as I have called them, give depth to the simple story of a young woman who cannot marry the man she loves. The idea of "persuasion" itself is explored, and its meaning deepened. It relates to principle on one end, and on the other to the changing reality of specific situations. These elements also link "persuasion" and determination to the natural cycle of times and seasons, to the tension between asserting individual integrity and giving way to others, and to the roles of inner "persuasion" or certainty and outer "persuasion" by another person. These elements open up the simple story and give it critical depth and wide-ranging resonance.

2.2 Narrative Qualities

These images and themes in themselves contribute significantly to the total impact of the novel; but also significant is the way in which they are presented. On a different level, then, the narrative presentation of the story, by the very mode of presentation, adds nuances which fill out and reinforce the larger aspects of the story. Norman Page suggests that a three-part sentence is the favored syntactic structure.⁴ This is in line with the fact that the story has three daughters, three families, three towns, and even three distinct sections. In my judgment, this tripartite sentence structure has an air of thoughtful reflection, considered judgment, and inner confidence; it also combines these qualities with deep feeling, an awareness of variety and diversity, and a degree of flexibility and movement. It gives shape to experience without putting it into a logical straitjacket. It is carefully structured and proportioned, but not simplistic; it has considerable complexity which does not parade itself but which quietly textures the style. The tripartite structure has, I believe, a depth and complexity which suit and reinforce the comparable thematic qualities.

A particularly fine example of this tripartite structure in action is that which describes those few precious moments alone when Anne and Wentworth meet and are fully reconciled:

There
 they exchanged again those feelings and those promises
 which had once before seemed to secure every thing,
 but
 which had been followed by so many, many years of division
 and
 estrangement.

There
 they returned again into the past,
 more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their reunion,
 than when it had been first projected;
 { more tender,
 { more tried, } in a knowledge of each other's { character,
 { more fixed } { truth, and
 { more equal to act, { attachment;
 { more justified in acting.

And
 there,
 as they slowly paced the gradual ascent,
 heedless of every group around them,
 seeing neither { sauntering politicians,
 { bustling house-keepers,
 { flirting girls,
 nor nursery-maids and
 children
 they could indulge
 in those { retrospections and
 { acknowledgements, and
 especially
 in those { explanations
 of what had directly preceded the present moment,
 which were
 so poignant
 and
 so ceaseless
 in interest. (240-1)

This passage is not a static inflation of one idea; rather, it is dynamic, with clear forward movement and progression. First, they take care of the important business--exchanging feelings and promises--and then indulge in the explanations, retrospections, and so on. The prose has meaningful, symmetrical shape which is congruent with the inner significance of their experience. The doublet at the beginning contrasts past and present very succinctly; the middle section expands on the emotional meaning of this contrast for them; and the last section brings the explanations up to date, ending at last with the joyful reconciliation of the present. The dignity and deep feeling of the style are appropriate to the situation. There is nothing sloppy or maudlin about this, nor is it stiff and formal. It is somewhat distanced (it does not pre-

tend to give a "slice of life") but this, I think, reflects a diffidence--not prudishness or coldness, or even ironic detachment--about intruding too much on a very intimate moment or cheapening it by handling it too familiarly. The passage is "framed" by parallel elements; within this frame, the tripartite structure savours the experience and unfolds it with a symmetry, dignity, and deep feeling that reinforce the thematic meaning of this important moment.

The diction in Persuasion is, in my judgment, remarkable not for the overwhelming use of any one kind of word, but for its sensitivity, flexibility, appropriateness, and precision of expression. For example, abstract words are used for moral "placing" and judgment, as well as for descriptions of people and places. C. S. Lewis says that "The great abstract nouns of the classical English moralists are unblushingly and uncompromisingly used..."⁵ Prominent examples of these words are Sir Walter's "vanity," Lady Elliot's "excellence," and Captain Wentworth's "folly." And Anne's perception of Mrs Smith is particularly revealing:

A submissive spirit might be patient, a strong understanding would supply resolution, but here was something more; here was that elasticity of mind, that disposition to be comforted, that power of turning readily from evil to good, and of finding employment which carried her out of herself, which was from Nature alone. It was the choicest gift of Heaven; and Anne viewed her friend as one of those instances in which, by a merciful appointment, it seems designed to counterbalance almost every other want. (154)

But the general narrative style mixes several elements. Formal latinate diction is used quite freely, especially for "serious" commentary. It is often used to distance us slightly from very intimate or delicate situations, to treat these scenes with diffidence and respect, and to express their dignity and importance. In the passage quoted above (p. 69), this sort of formal diction is expressive of the emotional depth and dignity of the situation.

But also important to the narrative commentary are colloquial words and idiomatic expressions. The preposition left dangling at the end of a relative clause is an idiomatic construction that balances and lightens the latinate formality of other words. This construction is very common--for example, Wentworth's "contemptuous glance...which Anne perfectly knew the meaning of," (86) the "admiration...which she could not be insensible of," (104) and "subjects, which his usual companions

had probably no concern in..." (100) Another idiomatic construction is the use of a normally transitive verb as an intransitive, such as "the harp, which was bringing in the carriage" (50) and the child who "...put in his claim to any thing good that might be giving away..." (79) Some colloquial expressions also add informality and down-to-earth-ness: "She must be jumped down...he had to jump her from the stiles"; (109) "when the horses were baited"; (117) "another hour of music was to give delight or the gapes, as real or affected taste for it prevailed"; (189) "how determined he was to save himself from being cut out by one artful woman"; (250) "some mischance, to damp the perfection of her felicity"; (239) "dawdling about..." (73) Here is a particularly fine example: "After laying out for some compliments of being deeply regretted in their old neighborhood, which Anne could not pay, they had only a few faint enquiries to make, before the talk must be all their own." (137) "To lay out for," a colloquial expression for "to make tentative suggestions for, to drop hints to obtain," amusingly characterizes the broadness of the Elliots' hints and the way in which they grovel for admiration. K. C. Phillipps says that "to lay out for" is an example of "that most idiomatic of English turns of phrase, the phrasal verb."⁶

Also prominent are ordinary anglo-saxon words which still retain some of their original force. Many of these refer metaphorically to feelings and emotions: "he burst forth, as if wholly overcome--"; (116) "feelings glad to burst their usual restraints"; (100) "she would shrink unnecessarily from the office of a friend"; (116) "He was more obviously struck and confused by the sight of her..."; (175) "he had seized a sheet of paper, and poured out his feelings..." (241) The use of these ordinary, down-to-earth words tends to treat feelings in a very blunt and forthright way, as a normal, not-to-be-denied part of life. These words also serve to anchor the more formal, high-blown latinate words.

On another level still are the transformations and innovations which reflect a certain freedom with respect to diction; as K. C. Phillipps says, "Jane Austen shows great freedom, and even daring, in her conversion and use of almost any part of speech as any other part of speech....Various other bold transformations occur: conversions

into verbs from common and abstract nouns, from adjectives and adverbs, even from proper names."⁷ Some examples of this are: "his time was otherwise trifled away"; (43) "the fitting-up of the rooms"; (98) "every face in the neighborhood worsting"; (6) "a sort of take-leave"; (39) "the half hour was chatted away pleasantly enough"; (41) "the beginning of other dinings"; (63) "the usual style of give-and-take invitations"; (98) "...was become a mere nothing"; (99) "a period of nothing-saying"; (189) "'I was privy to all the fors and againsts.'" (200) These innovations, comparable to Shakespeare's "out-Herods Herod,"⁸ reflect a similar freedom to take certain liberties with the language and even to change it for expressive purposes. I believe that these innovations add great vividness and liveliness to the narrative.

K. C. Phillipps also suggests that a particular syntactic element, an expanded verb tense, is characteristic of Persuasion. He explains that "Whereas verbs with simple infinitives following them express an intention likely to be followed up by an event ['Admiral Croft ...only wanted a comfortable home, and to get into it as soon as possible'] , verbs followed by expanded infinitives tend to express a point of view or an emotional inclination that is not sure of realization ['This was the principle on which Anne wanted her father to be proceeding, his friends to be urging him'] ." ⁹ Furthermore, "...in this wider use of expanded tenses, Jane Austen is clearly an innovator....She clearly felt that expanded tenses gave increased actuality, that they heightened the emotion, excitement, or irritation of a situation."¹⁰ Thus these expanded tenses express a depth and constancy of feeling. This also reflects a certain freedom to modify language for expressive purposes. In this way the diction reinforces the thematic concern with time--and the continuation of love through the passage of time.

The diction in the narrative presentation of Persuasion has considerable variety, suggesting a range of emotional tone, attitude, and expression. But overall, the diction is understated; few words or kinds of words stand out or call attention to themselves. The modulations are very subtle, and the distinctions very precise. Precision is, in fact, one of the main qualities of this diction. Norman Page says that "... a very important element in her vocabulary is this result of a wish to make everyday words convey an exact and substantial meaning....A famil-

iar word can thus carry unusual weight; and normally she has no need of emphatic language to make her points cogently."¹¹ Overall, says Page, her style is "condensed"; it is

...an economical, self-restrained quality of construction and expression in which there are no superfluities or digressions, no padding or diffuseness, but in which every chapter and paragraph, even every word and phrase, makes a calculated contribution to the total meaning....In a 'condensed' style language is likely to take on a density of meaning, a heightened expressiveness; special effects such as humour or irony can be created by only minute departures from a serious or literal norm. Thus, whereas Dickens ensures that his intentions reach their destination by emphasis and repetition (anaphora being one of his favourite rhetorical devices), and Thackeray finds it necessary to underline his ironies in a manner which deprives them of all subtlety, Jane Austen often needs no more than an unexpected phrase, an unfamiliar word-order, or a single word out of key with its context, to signal her purpose.¹²

Page sums up this aspect by saying:

What her novels display is a consistently scrupulous attention to verbal values, a sensitiveness to nuances of vocabulary and phrasing, and a flexibility of approach to syntax which can combine the strengths of an inherited tradition with a readiness for innovation.¹³

In this way, the diction reinforces the thematic concern with time, change, and the need to renew tradition. The diction also has decorum, and is thereby perfectly expressive of the world it represents. Yet delicate nuances and connotations make it possible for the narrative to analyze and expose that refined world in a way that is subtle yet deeply penetrating.

The narrative also mimes physically what I might call the inner emotional dynamics of situations. For example, when Mary's eldest boy falls and dislocates his collar-bone, the narrative suggests the character of the situation:

It was an afternoon of distress, and Anne had every thing to do at once--the apothecary to send for--the father to have pursued and informed--the mother to support and keep from hysterics--the servants to control--the youngest child to banish, and the poor suffering one to attend and soothe;--besides sending, as soon as she recollected it, proper notice to the other house, which brought her an accession rather of frightened, enquiring companions, than of very useful assistants. (53)

The dashes and the fragmented syntax effectively suggest the sense of emergency and the demands that are made on Anne; but even the fragments are still parallel and coherent. Thus the narrative is able to suggest

distress and disorder while also suggesting Anne's composure and presence of mind in the midst of it--in striking contrast to the others who are distracted and helpless at merely receiving "proper notice" after the fact. And it also retains the underlying balance and judgment characteristic of the general narrative style.

Further, the narrative mimes the individual personalities of the characters in the story. Represented speech suggests individual attitudes and qualities by means of variations in diction, syntax, and punctuation on the characteristic narrative style. For example, Elizabeth's genteel cruelty and Mr Elliot's coldly calculating evil are far more civilized and sophisticated than Miss Lucy Steele's pert, vulgar spitefulness; consequently, their speech has the heartless elegance of correctness without warmth or concern for others. Indeed, Mr Elliot's "rational, discreet, polished" conversation conceals his calculating inhumanity, and does it so well that only Anne perceives anything wrong: "...he was not open. There was never any burst of feeling, any warmth of indignation or delight, at the evil or good of others." (161) And Elizabeth's wit is sophisticated but heartless; in the "love" she sends Lady Russell, her speech touches lightly on "'that tiresome book she would lend me,'" and 'on Lady Russell's "'hideous'" dress and "'arrangé'" air. The exclamation points suggest a rather gratuitous cruelty; uncarving and uninvolved, Elizabeth casually indulges her elegant but heartless wit at Lady Russell's expense.

In a different way, the representation of Sir Walter's speech reflects his own self-involvement: "'He had never walked any where arm in arm with Colonel Wallis, (who was a fine military figure, though sandy-haired) without observing that every woman's eye was upon him; every woman's eye was sure to be upon Colonel Wallis.'" (142) His words have the past-tense verbs and third-person pronouns of narrative proper, but the quotation marks of direct speech; this combination makes the speech curiously oblique, as if he were viewing himself from outside himself. It suggests Sir Walter's extraordinary self-consciousness: the way he looks at the world but sees only himself. It also suggests his anxiety to seem elegant and nonchalant, while at the same time coyly fishing for a compliment. In addition, the representation of his speech expresses the very real crudity of his feelings. He dislikes the navy

because "...it cuts up a man's youth and vigour most horribly!" and because "...they are all knocked about" and concludes that "It is a pity that they are not knocked on the head at once." (20) In Bath he complains that "One handsome face would be followed by thirty, or five and thirty frights" and of "such scare-crows as the streets were full of!" (141-2)

Mary's speech often rambles endlessly on, jumping fretfully from topic to topic; but all of her topics are unified, like the spokes of a wheel, by their reference to herself. Thus she complains to Anne:

'Yes, I made the best of it; I always do; but I was very far from well at the time; and I do not think I ever was so ill in my life as I have been all this morning--very unfit to be left alone, I am sure. Suppose I were to be seized of a sudden in some dreadful way, and not able to ring the bell! So, Lady Russell would not get out. I do not think she has been in this house three times this summer.' (37)

Mary also talks like the Musgroves: she complains that Mrs Musgrove's servant is always "gadding about the village," just as Mrs Musgrove says that Mary's servant is "always upon the gad." (45) They talk in a comfortably complaining, pleasantly gossipy style.

On the other hand, Admiral Croft's speech is liberally sprinkled with salty expressions like his reference to Mrs Croft: "She, poor soul, is tied by the leg. She has a blister on one of her heels, as large as a three shilling piece." (170) Or his pithy summary of Louisa's accident: "Ay, a very bad business, indeed.--A new sort of way this, for a young fellow to be making love, by breaking his mistress's head!--is it not, Miss Elliot?--This is breaking a head and giving a plaister truly!" (126-7) His speech has an openness and a heartiness to it, like a breath of salty sea air.

The narrative focuses on Anne, miming not only her personality but also the dynamics of her inner life of feeling, perception, and thought. It reveals the hidden depths of emotion and reserves of strength in a faded twenty-seven-year-old spinster, a "nobody" who is largely ignored and who hasn't, for certain reasons, much to say for herself. The general narrative style is modified in important ways to suggest her vivid and complex but submerged emotional life and the quality of her thoughts and judgments. For example, immediately after Anne meets Wentworth at Uppercross and hears his comment that "you

were so altered he should not have known you again,'" the narrative describes Anne's feelings:

'Altered beyond his knowledge!' Anne fully submitted, in silent, deep mortification. Doubtless it was so; and she could take no revenge, for he was not altered, or not for the worse. She had already acknowledged it to herself, and she could not think differently, let him think of her as he would. No; the years which had destroyed her youth and bloom had only given him a more glowing, manly, open look, in no respect lessening his personal advantages. She had seen the same Frederick Wentworth.

'So altered that he should not have known her again!' These were words which could not but dwell with her. Yet she soon began to rejoice that she had heard them. They were of sobering tendency; they allayed agitation; they composed, and consequently must make her happier. (60-1)

The quoted phrases have the emotional punctuation that reflects the continuing vivid force they have for Anne. "Doubtless it was so" has the flavor of Anne's own humiliating admission; and the mention of Wentworth suggests Anne's honesty and generosity as she struggles to admit to herself that he, unlike herself, has changed only for the better. And "must" suggests her own attempt to deal with her own unruly feelings. "Straight" narrative sets up the situation--"Anne fully submitted, in silent, deep mortification"--and gives direction throughout. Altogether the section is narrative that maintains the balanced general narrative style while at the same time suggesting Anne's own perceptions and responses.

Again, after the walk to Winthrop, and after Wentworth has assisted Anne into the Crofts' carriage, the narrative mimes her response:

Yes--he had done it. She was in the carriage, and felt that he had placed her there, that his will and his hands had done it, that she owed it to his perception of her fatigue, and his resolution to give her rest. She was very much affected by the view of his disposition towards her which all these made apparent. This little circumstance seemed the completion of all that had gone before. She understood him. He could not forgive her,--but he could not be unfeeling. Though condemning her for the past, though perfectly careless of her, and though becoming attached to another, still he could not see her suffer, without the desire of giving her relief. It was a remainder of former sentiment; it was an impulse of pure, though unacknowledged friendship; it was a proof of his own warm and amiable heart, which she could not contemplate without emotion so compounded of pleasure and pain, that she knew not which prevailed. (91)

At certain points, the narrative suggests a sense of Anne's own perceptions and feelings; it is made translucent in this way by an absence,

at times, of the self-consciously narrative presence implicit in "she thought," "she felt," and so on. Thus the words "Yes--he had done it" are not introduced by the narrative tag "she knew that..." which would look at Anne's perceptions from outside her; rather, the absence of that reminder of the narrative stance gives the sense of seeing Anne's perceptions as she herself sees them, from inside herself, looking out. It emphasizes the vividness and force with which that realization strikes Anne. Immediately, however, the narrative stance recurs, with "she...felt that...", "she was very much affected by...", "she understood him." In this way the usual descriptive style of narrative provides a setting for and introduces what follows. Again, the narrative becomes mimetic, and we sense again, as if inside Anne looking out, the revelatory quality of these vivid impressions. This sense of immediacy and intimacy is not just a display of technical virtuosity or sleight of hand; the narrative does suggest in a very real and sympathetic way that these are indeed Anne's own feelings and perceptions. The emotion might seem disproportionate to the action which gave rise to it; but the narrative's meticulous, almost microscopic attention to detail magnifies the significance of the incident, suggesting very vividly the still-raw feelings which give Anne a heightened sensitivity to the significance of the subtle nuances of words and actions. And the generosity with which she interprets Wentworth's actions, through her own pain, is peculiarly characteristic of Anne. Finally, the descriptive narrative style resurfaces, summarizing the effect of this recognition on Anne. The tripartite structure characteristic of the general narrative mode is evident throughout this section; it remains fully narrative, but is varied in certain ways to suggest the breath-taking importance of this realization to Anne, and the quality, even the texture, of her own perceptions.

This dimension of Persuasion provides nuances which reinforce and modify the thematic elements of the story. These kinds of nuances are comparable, perhaps, to those given to verbal communication by the specific choices of grammar and syntax, voice intonations, and emphasis. Narrative flexibility, appropriateness, and precision reinforce these qualities on the thematic level, as does the surface plainness of the style which is deepened by many subtle nuances. The mode of presentation

also reflects the thematic nature of "persuasion"--normed by principles, but also open to reality. The narrative is correct and serious, but also idiomatic and colloquial; it maintains its grip on the story, but also mimes the characters of individual people and situations. For the most part, the mode of presentation is admirably congruent with what is presented.

2.3 Fictional Personae and Interrelationships

I have suggested that the general narrative style in Persuasion can be varied in a number of ways to suggest and mime individuality, emotion, and so on, and still maintain its narrative grip on the story. This results in an extraordinarily strong narrative presence; the narrative qualities coalesce to form a narrator--a person with a stable, coherent identity, and with definite character and personality. It is this narrator who radiates considered judgment, confidence, and deep feeling. The narrator describes his characters in a variety of ways: he¹⁴ often uses an abstract concept, like "vanity," to establish a focus and a point of reference for understanding a character; then he fills this out with descriptions of characteristic attitudes and activities, like a habit of reading the *Baronetage* as a Bible or devotional book; then he illustrates concrete actions and responses by representing particular speech and action. All of these are given nuances that suggest subtle details, attitudes, and judgments to fill out a well-defined character. I think it is significant, however, that the narrator is hesitant to make absolute, final, ultimate judgments on characters. The deeper, more serious side I see in "vanity" remains a suggestion, if that. True, Mr Elliot is judged harshly, but by another character who acknowledges her bias, and not the narrator himself; even Mr Elliot's self-incriminating letter is judged very generously and justly by Anne. The narrator does have considerable knowledge of his characters' hearts and minds, but he presents it without violating their integrity or making unwarranted assumptions, and without arrogance or a holier-than-thou attitude.

This narrator also develops a personal relationship with the characters in the story; the narrative reveals some of these feelings, one of the most distinctive of which is his comic sense. Toward Sir Walter, he is both serious and comic. The narrator treats Sir Walter's "vanity"

quite seriously insofar as it is a very real idolatry; but he pokes fun at Sir Walter's vanity over his personal appearance. Likewise, treating the Baronetage as a book of devotions on oneself is a serious matter; but it is also ridiculous. Mr Elliot, on the other hand, is seldom treated comically; he is genuinely hurtful, and his deceptions and hypocrisy are sordid and not entertaining. The narrator seems frankly to enjoy Admiral Croft's colorful eccentricities; but his enjoyment of Mary is tinged with contempt. There are times when the narrator seems almost to be mimicking Mary:

When the plan was made known to Mary, however, there was an end of all peace in it. She was so wretched, and so vehement, complained so much of injustice in being expected to go away instead of Anne;--Anne, who was nothing to Louisa, while she was her sister, and had the best right to stay in Henrietta's stead! Why was not she to be as useful as Anne? And to go home without Charles, too--without her husband! No, it was too unkind! And, in short, she said more than her husband could long withstand... (115)

The narrator may be somewhat impatient with Mary--he seems to abridge her remarks rather freely in a way that pithily summarizes her attitude, while at the same time mimicking her own attitudes and expressions. The narrator is also rather unkind to Mrs Musgrove in an unfairly notorious aside:

Personal size and mental sorrow have certainly no necessary proportions. A large bulky figure has as good a right to be in deep affliction, as the most graceful set of limbs in the world. But, fair or not fair, there are unbecoming conjunctions, which reason will patronize in vain,--which taste cannot tolerate,--which ridicule will seize. (68)

A more sympathetic comic spirit is evident in other places: "This decision checked Mary's eagerness, and stopped her short in the midst of the Elliot countenance," (133) and "Mrs Musgrove had not a word to say in dissent; she could not accuse herself of having ever called them anything in the whole course of her life." (70) Here the comedy is more sensitive to the possibility that Mary is disconcerted or that Mrs Musgrove is secretly embarrassed by her ignorance.

When he deals with Anne, the narrator seems tacitly to acknowledge that, although she shares the same judgment, yet she is more generous in expressing it, as well as more disciplined. For example, with respect to Mrs Musgrove's sorrow, the narrator says that "Anne suppressed

a smile, and listened kindly, while Mrs Musgrove relieved her heart..."

(64) He says that Anne, greatly provoked by her father's attitude toward Mrs Smith, would have liked to make a pointed remark about Mrs Clay, "...but her sense of personal respect to her father prevented her."

(158) And after reading Mr Elliot's letter,

Anne could not immediately get over the shock and mortification of finding such words applied to her father. She was obliged to recollect that her seeing the letter was a violation of the laws of honour, that no one ought to be judged or to be known by such testimonies, that no private correspondence could bear the eye of others... (204)

Even in her judgment on Lady Russell's wrong advice, Anne is charitable enough to use the kinder word "err" and to admit that "'It was, perhaps, one of those cases in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides...'" (246) The narrator's carefulness and sensitivity in suggesting Anne's thoughts and feelings is indicative of respect for her integrity, for the depth of her feeling, and for the fineness of her perceptions and judgments.

The narrator rarely laughs at Anne; but often he seems to laugh with her, even when she laughs at herself. Anne's comic sense is no less perceptive than the narrator's, but it is kinder. Thus, after seeing Mr Elliot at Lyme,

She would not, upon any account, mention her having met with him the second time; luckily Mary did not much attend to their having passed close by him in their early walk, but she would have felt quite ill-used by Anne's having actually run against him in the passage, and received his very polite excuses, while she had never been near him at all; no, that cousinly little interview must remain a perfect secret. (106-7)

Anne is every bit as aware of the ridiculous and the provoking in Mary's peevish fretfulness, but she chooses to keep this to herself, only imagining it to herself with an inward smile. At the concert, "...by some other removals, and a little scheming of her own, Anne was enabled to place herself much nearer the end of the bench than she had been before, much more within reach of a passer-by. She could not do so, without comparing herself with Miss Larolles, the inimitable Miss Larolles,--but still she did it..." (189) Even in her anxiety, Anne has enough distance to be able to laugh at herself. And Anne "...could not help being amused at the idea of her coming to Lyme, to preach patience and resignation to a young man whom she had never seen before; nor could she

help fearing, on more serious reflection, that...she had been eloquent on a point in which her own conduct would ill bear examination." (101) Anne's comic sense is dry and delicate; moreover, it is tempered by a realization that the comic often has a darker side.

Cumulatively, through all of this, the narrator builds up a personal relationship with his assumed reader, a relationship which grows in trust and intimacy. This relationship is particularly evident in the "moral" of the story: "When any two young people take it into their heads to marry, they are pretty sure by perseverance to carry their point, be they ever so poor, or ever so imprudent, or ever so little likely to be necessary to each other's ultimate comfort." (248) This "moral" has just the opposite effect than a conventional "moral" would have: instead of nailing down the point of the story, it comically relativizes some of the high seriousness of the whole "persuasion" theme. As the narrator himself says: "This may be bad morality to conclude with, but I believe it to be truth..." (248) It keeps in view the level at which things really get done in the world. This keeps our feet on the ground and punctures high other-worldly idealism; but its wry comic spirit keeps us also from cynicism. The effect of this complicated sentence is to draw the reader into collusion with the narrator; like the narrator's comic observations and serious evaluative commentary, it makes the reader privy to the narrator's larger perspective on the story. At these times, the reader responds directly to the narrator, not by way of the characters; the two then develop a relationship of rare intimacy.

The narrator is also related very closely to the implied author --the author implied by this particular story, as distinct from, and not necessarily corresponding in every particular to, the real author, Jane Austen herself. There appears to be no great distance or serious disagreement between the two personae; but there may be some disagreement, all the same. For instance, the narrator makes some rather unfeeling remarks about Mrs Musgrove; and Anne acts as a kind of indirect rebuke--never stated explicitly, but implied by contrast. And it is the implied author who both identifies closely with the narrator and provides the implied rebuke through Anne. I suggest the possibility that the implied author may here admit to having an unfeeling, critical attitude, while at the same time distancing herself and showing it to be wrong. In this

connection, it is interesting to see in Jane Austen's letters a rueful admission of the occasionally malicious barb to her comedy¹⁵ and her equally rueful confession that "I am still a Cat when I see a Mouse."¹⁶

The author's relationship to her reader is also structured into the text itself. Persuasion, it seems to me, does not speak exclusively to an "in" group with a definitely understood position; on the contrary, it goes to great lengths to explicate a very complicated position and make it accessible to a general audience. It is not necessary, therefore, to understanding the novel, that the reader agree beforehand with the author in every respect. Persuasion has a narrator who stands outside the story and who can give necessary information and background and also reliable judgment and interpretation. But the narrative is delicately textured and very subtle--not at all obtrusive or pedantic. In fact, Persuasion requires an active, sensitive, critical attitude in the reader. The relatively high degree of difficulty of the text itself requires the reader to be active and alert; moreover, he is not given everything in declarative statements, but in numerous small details and impressions which need to be associated and pieced together. The reader must also be sensitive to connotations and subtle nuances and overtones in words and syntactic structures, and able to make critical judgments on the characters, possibly the narrator, and even himself.

These three dimensions--thematic structuring elements, narrative qualities, and fictional personae and interrelationships--provide different kinds of nuances that reinforce each other and provide a coherent vision and meaning. The thematic structuring elements, as I have called them, seem to suggest the dimensions or resonances of the action and the shape of the world of which it is a part. In my judgment, the exploration of the meaning of "persuasion" itself has surprising depth and penetration. And the thematic emphasis on time, tradition, and change, and on the natural seasons of firmness, brokenness, and fruition open up the implications of the "persuasion" situation in a fairly deep-going way. The set-up reveals the first situation as an "unnatural beginning" and the second as the "natural sequel" which is also miraculous. In the world of Persuasion, things are often "unnatural," and it is miraculous when that which should be "normal" for human life does actually take place.

On another level, the narrative style provides nuances of tone, manner, and texture; it expresses the "how" aspect, the presentation of the story. In this case, I believe that the mode of presentation reinforces what is presented. The style is understated and plain, but has nevertheless trustworthiness, sensitivity, and comic laughter. It is also surprisingly vibrant and even earthy, with blunt anglo-saxon and familiar idioms and colloquialisms. It also mimes the emotional dynamics of situations and actions in the very physical appearance and sound of the text. The narrative style reinforces the depth aspects of the thematic elements, and emphasizes particularly a connection with everyday reality. It also adds the leaven of laughter.

Finally, the fictional personae and their interrelationships add a very subtle spirit or aura to the telling of the story. They express a general attitudinal coloring like, for example, hate, love, callousness, condemnation, and so on. In Persuasion, the relationships of these personae express an attitude of respect for all involved, for their integrity as persons, for their inner motives, and for their abilities and intelligence. In my judgment, the implied author obliquely suggests a self-awareness of the problems concomitant with a critical intelligence, along with an effort to be self-critical and to be understanding and generous toward others. This reinforces both the critical depth and the sensitivity of other dimensions of Persuasion. There is surprising depth also in this dimension; it has an aura that expresses personal concern, on the part of the implied author and narrator, for the characters as persons--even when they are judged in certain ways in the story. I think that the narrator and the implied author take personal responsibility for the story and stand behind it, and that they relate to the reader honestly and forthrightly. In these ways, then, all of these dimensions reinforce the basic values of the story, while adding their own nuances which contribute to the total meaning of Persuasion.

CHAPTER III

THE KINSHIPS OF PERSUASION

In attempting to understand Persuasion, I think it is helpful to examine it as it relates to its specific historical context. I see three significant dimensions: its relationship to an historical community, its relationship to what I might call a spiritual community,¹ and its relationship to Jane Austen's own individual gifts and circumstances. These relationships, while certainly not the only ones, nevertheless seem to me to be important ones. In my judgment, they help to "locate" Persuasion by providing coordinates for comparison with other works and thinkers, and thereby to help us better understand its distinctive nature and style.

3.1 The Historical Community

The first significant dimension, then, is what I have called "historical community." This community consists of historical contemporaries who, in spite of different approaches and perspectives, are pulled or driven in the same general direction. It is rather loosely organized around a cluster of general traits which manifest the dynamism of a Zeitgeist. This community has a historical boundedness and culture-wide homogeneity which allow us, I believe, to speak of, for example, a rococo or neoclassical "period." In my judgment, Persuasion shows traits which we might call neoclassical: it shares with Adam Smith and Kant a deeply felt moral earnestness and desire for general principles for moral action, with Reynolds a dignified simplicity and an interest in carrying on viable tradition, with Johnson a precision of language and a complex but tightly structured prose style that is spare but vigorous, with Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling a simplicity of structure and a deep awareness of the gap between what is and what ought to be.

One general characteristic is the strong emphasis on moral duty.

A central affirmation in Persuasion is Anne's contention that "...if I mistake not, a strong sense of duty is no bad part of a woman's portion." (246) Duty is very important in Persuasion, and it requires considerable exertion, as in Anne's stay at Uppercross. But moral duty is rarely abstracted from specific situations, idealized, or left up in the air. Only occasionally in Persuasion do we see Duty in the abstract; usually we find duties as the responsibilities which belong to very ordinary--even humdrum--everyday life. Anne "...considered it as an act of indispensable duty to clear away the claims of creditors, with all the expedition which the most comprehensive retrenchments could secure." (12-13) In moving to Uppercross, Anne is "glad to be thought of some use, glad to have any thing marked out as a duty." (33) But her duties consist of cheering up Mary, mediating between husband and wife and between the two houses, babysitting, listening to Mrs Musgrove's effusions, playing the piano for impromptu dances, and in general being useful as a maiden aunt. Duty can be a stern and severe virtue, but often is on the level of "wholesome exertion." (43) Moreover, moral duty in Persuasion does not exhaust that which is "right" for human life. Also "right" are things like happiness, health, enthusiasm, laughter, romance, tenderness, warmheartedness, and friendship. In the world of Persuasion, it is right to do one's duty, but it is also right to fall in love. Nor is duty incompatible with these other things. The Harvilles' hospitality is that of "those who invite from the heart" (98) and arises from personal "attachment" (98) and friendship. And the Wentworths, simply out of gratitude and friendship, are delighted to help Mrs Smith recover her property. Duty need not be an exertion of the will in opposition to inclination and feeling, nor the core of what it means to be human, as it is for Kant; in Persuasion, doing one's duty may be painful, but at its core it simply means doing right by oneself and one's neighbor in a particular situation, or bearing one's responsibilities, as an integrated part of a full and varied domestic life.

A further neoclassical interest is in comprehending all in a tight focus and then stripping down to the bare essentials. In a similar way, Persuasion has an interest in a central norm which holds for all times and situations. At the same time, it distinguishes between that norm itself and various encrustations: mores, those social conventions

which pass for the norm; and empty fossils, those outmoded expressions of the norm which seem to become the norm itself. A central norm in Persuasion is that one should care for one's neighbors by giving help, hospitality, and friendship, and that this care should come generously from the heart. Bath society is an example of social conventions which pass for the norm; by appealing to them, Elizabeth can justify not inviting her relatives to dinner. And Sir Walter is living proof that simply having a baronetcy and an estate does not necessarily make one a responsible landlord. Likewise, Anne discovers that one can care for one's neighbors as well in a tiny rented house as in a traditional landlord-tenant relationship, if one is so minded. This is one way of getting at what is essential; it is comparable to but not identical with Kant's notion of the categorical imperative. Both are general principles rather than specific formulae; but the norm in Persuasion is not idealized so much as it is expressed in terms of visiting a widowed friend and providing "attention and relief" to the poor. (125)

This emphasis on concentrating, focusing, and stripping down to essentials is also evident structurally in Persuasion. The plot is considerably simplified by comparison, for example, with that of Tom Jones. But, unlike the loosely episodic story line of The Man of Feeling, the plot of Persuasion is still recognizably a plot, with several triadic structures, repetition of unifying motifs, and a past/present counterpointing effect that gives it satisfying shape and symmetry. Nevertheless, at least in terms of action, it is a simplified plot. But this simplicity allows for other kinds of complexity, like the exploration of the complexities of personal knowledge and relationship. For example, the contacts between Anne and Captain Wentworth at Uppercross are few, brief, and hardly significant in terms of action. In one scene Wentworth simply walks into the drawing room at the Cottage during breakfast. The focus is elsewhere--on the sensitive rendering of a complex personal relationship and of the different perspectives and perceptions on each side. For Anne's part, "...with all her reasonings, she found, that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing." (60) And on finding that Wentworth considers her "'Altered beyond his knowledge'" (60) she submits with "silent, deep mortification" but can take no revenge. The subtle, complex nuances

of Anne's feelings are the nimbus around an apparently insignificant event. In addition, we are told of Wentworth's perspective and feelings:

Frederick Wentworth had used such words, or something like them, but without an idea that they would be carried round to her. He had thought her wretchedly altered, and, in the first moment of appeal, had spoken as he felt. He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill; deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity. (61)

In a very short space, we know or at least suspect several things about Wentworth's perspective and his perceptions. First of all, we know that he is not petty enough to say this with intent to injure Anne; he is simply impetuous and quick-tongued. We also see how strongly he still feels the pain and disappointment of that broken engagement. For the language is strong; it suggests Wentworth's own perspective, which is colored by his pain and resentment. And we also get a hint that, because of this resentment, he is misjudging the situation. When we are told later that "Her power with him was gone for ever," (61) we are aware that this is Wentworth's own conviction. We also suspect that he protests a touch too strongly, and that he is more vulnerable than he realizes. Indeed, we are told that "...Anne Elliot was not out of his thoughts, when he more seriously described the woman he should wish to meet with." (62) The actual meeting, then, between the two is a very brief incident that nevertheless crystallizes round itself the perspectives, perceptions, and feelings of two persons in a very complex relationship that exists in the past as much as in the present.

This emphasis is particularly evident in the treatment of Anne's time in Bath. In terms of what we conventionally understand as plot, very little happens. Again, the actual incidents are almost insignificant, but Anne's perceptions of them are very complex and detailed. For example, in the octagon room Anne speaks briefly to Wentworth; but what is remarkable is the way in which Anne's mind takes "a hasty range over it" and arrives at a conclusion:

His choice of subjects, his expressions, and still more his manner and look, had been such as she could see in only one light. His opinion of Louisa Musgrove's inferiority, an opinion which he had seemed solicitous to give, his wonder at

Captain Benwick, his feelings as to a first, strong attachment, --sentences begun which he could not finish--his half averted eyes, and more than half expressive glance,--all, all declared that he had a heart returning to her at least; that anger, resentment, avoidance, were no more; and that they were succeeded, not merely by friendship and regard, but by the tenderness of the past; yes, some share of the tenderness of the past. She could not contemplate the change as implying less.--He must love her. (185-6)

The punctuation indicates the eagerness with which Anne pieces together her small bits of evidence. In doing so, her hope begins to snowball and finally jells all at once into conviction. The last sentence, after the breathless excitement before, has the exaltation and yet the quiet conviction of certain heart knowledge. Again, this complex web of perception and feeling opens up the real significance of an apparently small incident. The plot is not complex, and moreover it is everyday and domestic, without a high level of suspense; and because this basic structure is itself very finely textured, subtle nuances and distinctions gain prominence.

Likewise, a certain focusing is evident in Jane Austen's characterizations. Physical description is general rather than specific and visual. And precise conceptual words, like "vanity," "enthusiasm," "good," or "designing" seem to focus a character. Precise bits of information serve to fill this in a bit by showing characteristic actions or sentiments, like Sir Walter and the Baronetage, Lady Russell's horror of anything even approaching imprudence, Wentworth's anger over the broken engagement, and Mr Elliot's letter in which he writes, "'Give me joy; I have got rid of Sir Walter and Miss.'" (203) This simplicity leaves room for a complexity of moral judgment on these characters. Thus because of her prejudice on the side of rank and her excessive concern for safety and prudence, Lady Russell makes wrong judgments and gives wrong advice; but at the same time it is clear that these are done with the best of moral intentions and are not intended to hurt. Wentworth is guilty of "folly" and wrong judgment; but we understand that the strength of his feelings affects his judgment, and the openness of his character impels him to say things a bit too strongly and to take extreme courses of action or points of view. Sir Walter is wrong, but in a way that is on one level quite serious, and on another rather trivial and insignificant. On the one hand, he "had not had principle or sense enough to

maintain himself in the situation in which Providence had placed him," (248) but on the other he is never really an obstacle for Anne. Nevertheless, he can cause pain and sorrow first by refusing his consent, and later by granting it in a very patronizing, condescending way that completely exposes the scope of his irresponsibility and his own total lack of self knowledge. Sir Walter is definitely not a prize as a father-in-law. Still, he does give his consent, if grudgingly. And even Mr Elliot is not completely damned. The epithet "black at heart" is understood to arise from Mrs Smith's own resentment, and even the letter is admitted to be unfair as a basis for utter condemnation. The way is left open for Mr Elliot to have had a real change of heart. But he does not change; he goes on plotting and taking advantage of people. Mr Elliot is also a very interesting character in that he is an example of the ease with which a conservatist formula morality based on caution and prudence can be used as a cover for an evil and dishonest heart. At any rate, the simplicity and focusedness of the characterization leaves room for other kinds of complexity, like moral judgment and evaluation.

To be sure, Jane Austen's comic spirit, subdued perhaps but still very evident in Persuasion, does not seem very neoclassical. I do not sense much room for comedy in Kant's practical Reason, in Reynolds's ideal of history painting, or in Mackenzie's quality of sympathy. Indeed, critics have drawn attention to Jane Austen's comic spirit in comparison to that of Fielding or Pope.² I shall examine this comic spirit in more detail later; but I shall merely say here that in my judgment Jane Austen's comic spirit is very different from what I have called the rococo comic spirit of Hogarth, Fielding, and Sterne. Whereas that sort of comic spirit tends to minimize evil and the whole good-evil distinction, to laugh benevolently and tolerantly at everything indiscriminately, Jane Austen's comic spirit is based quite firmly on a sharp good-evil distinction. In Persuasion one laughs at incongruity, pretension, and nonsense, but not at evil or suffering, or at genuine virtue. There is a moral seriousness or earnestness about Persuasion, an awareness of evil and suffering, that makes it more akin to Adam Smith's awareness of guilt and anxiety, to Kant's sense of the continuing imperative for one to be good, to Reynolds's deep desire to give painting a noble simplicity and moral force, to Mackenzie's awareness of real social problems.

and injustices. The comic spirit in Persuasion is based on this sort of awareness, and is in this respect fundamentally different from that of the mature Hogarth, who might see evil and be content to laugh at it, albeit a little bitterly, or of Fielding, who might rather maintain a light, genial comic tone by minimizing the reality of evil. Jane Austen's comic spirit is not incompatible with a spirit that takes duty seriously; each modifies the other and gives Persuasion an unconventional kind of neoclassical spirit.

On another level, Jane Austen's prose style in Persuasion is recognizably similar to certain neoclassical prose styles--particularly those of Reynolds and Johnson. In my judgment, Jane Austen's prose style is similar in many respects to that of Johnson; nevertheless, there are significant differences because Jane Austen often uses the same elements to produce a very different effect. For example, with respect to syntactic structures, it is clear that Jane Austen uses parallelism and antithesis. But, in the passage quoted above (see p. 69), the effect is different; as Norman Page says:

...the pattern is dictated not by a mere mechanical fondness for the pairing of phrases and clauses, but by the artistic necessity of a quiet, restrained tone in which intense emotions can be exhibited for contemplation. The climax in the final clause is not a logical one--not the Johnsonian triumph of rationality--but an emotional climax, with the weight falling upon the two epithets ('so poignant and so ceaseless in interest') which are, for Jane Austen, unusually coloured by feeling.³

Jane Austen's use of parallel and antithesis seems to be governed by the needs of expression; it does not have a theoretical axe to grind, as Wimsatt would say of Johnson. Moreover, Jane Austen moves toward the tripartite structure as more her own characteristic syntactic structure. Norman Page notes a trend in her later work away from formal syntax and toward a freer and more dramatic kind.⁴ The tripartite structure seems to me to be more dramatic, as well as more flexible and varied, and more expressive of emotional tones. For example, Page says that:

Without extending the sentence to inordinate lengths, the three-part structure permits a pattern to be established and subtle but perceptible variations to be rung on that pattern: the first two parts of such a sentence establish an expectation which, by being in some respect disappointed in the third part, can produce an effect of surprise, whether the purpose is to be witty or dramatic.⁵

But, as I have tried to demonstrate above, this tripartite structure can also express balanced, considered judgment and the swelling of deep heartfelt emotion. Its formal quality gives it a sense of trustworthiness of judgment and also a diffidence that takes a respectful distance from intimate, painful, or otherwise difficult scenes. On the whole, her syntactic choices are not the effect of a mental twitch; they are functional, and the top priority is the particular nuance that needs to be expressed in a given situation.

This kind of flexibility and variety is also evident in diction. Again, Jane Austen uses many words characteristic of Johnson, but produces a different effect. I think C. S. Lewis is correct when he notes Jane Austen's use of "the great abstract nouns of the classical English moralists" and when he says that "In her we still breathe the air of the Rambler and Idler."⁶ The important thing to note is that Jane Austen uses these abstract words for moral judgment and "placing"; for other purposes she uses other kinds of words. She is not like Fanny Burney, of whom Page says, "...these hard-worked words fall at times thick and fast from the writer's pen."⁷ Jane Austen freely uses colloquialisms, idiomatic phrases, and even made-up words--whatever suits the needs of the particular situation. As in her choice of syntactic structures, Jane Austen's diction has more flexibility and variety than does Johnson's; and it is burdened less by theory than by the needs of expression. However, Jane Austen shares with Johnson a sensitivity to distinctions between words, and a high degree of precision in the use of words.

Jane Austen's word order is likewise similar to Johnson's. Her word order is complex but clear; it reads slowly and deliberately but--unlike Johnson's--does not have a clotted or sluggish effect. It is intricate and precise; but it is not unidiomatic. K. C. Phillipps says that:

...although Jane Austen's style has its roots firmly in the eighteenth century, and owes much, for instance, to Dr Johnson, she knew how to lighten the rather ponderous tendencies of a balanced, Latinate cast of sentence with the leaven of sprightly colloquial English. The type of clause with the preposition at the end, either with a passive or following a relative pronoun, sometimes has this effect.⁸

In addition to these colloquialisms, Jane Austen also varies sentence length and complexity. So while she does use a strong, carefully ordered, complex sentence, it is always flavored by a very English idiom.

In my judgment, Jane Austen's prose style most resembles Dr Johnson's style in the very felicitous word choice which verges on the epigrammatic. For example: "The Mr Musgroves had their own game to guard, and to destroy..."; (42) "her large fat sighings"; (68) "no pitiful triumph in his manner"; (82) "heartless elegance"; (226) "the horrible eligibilities and proprieties of the match." (244) Especially close to Johnson's style are these: "...internally her heart revelled in angry pleasure, in pleased contempt..."; (125) "the elegant stupidity of private parties"; (180) "all the eagerness compatible with anxious elegance"; (184) "They had their great cousins, to be sure, to resort to for comfort; but they must long feel that to flatter and follow others, without being flattered and followed in turn, is but a state of half enjoyment." (251) Mary Lascelles says:

If Jane Austen trained herself in Johnson's school, that was not, I think, the limit of her debt to him; something more personal remains--some tones of his voice seem to be echoed in her style....I think I see in her familiarity with, and love of, his work the explanation of her aptitude for coining pregnant abstractions--such phrases as Miss Bates's desultory good-will, of which the sounds pursued her visitors as they mounted her stairs; Mrs. Elton's apparatus of happiness, her large bonnet and basket; and Sir Walter's advance towards his grand cousins 'with all the eagerness compatible with anxious elegance'; these, surely may be called Johnsonian phrases and may fairly remind us of such passages in The Rambler as the description of the leisurely travellers who 'missed...the Pleasure of alarming Villages with the Tumult of our Passage,⁹ and of disguising our Insignificancy by the Dignity of Hurry'.

This epigrammatic style in Jane Austen, as in Dr Johnson, expresses an element of hardheaded good sense and rapier wit that delights in puncturing pretension and snobbery. In my judgment, Jane Austen's prose style is neoclassical in a Johnsonian way: it is precise and thoughtful; it has a deep earnestness and an uncompromising toughmindedness; and it has undoubted integrity. But it is not so insistently rigid and theory-bound; it has freedom and variety, a flexibility that enables it to adapt itself to the changing demands of artistic representation and expression.

I have said that Persuasion is fundamentally neoclassical rather than rococo; but it has long been considered "Romantic" in some respects, particularly by comparison with the rest of the Austen canon. In 1862 Julia Kavanagh wrote that:

Beyond any other of Miss Austen's tales, Persuasion shows us the phase of her literary character which she chose to keep most in the shade: the tender and the sad....Here we see the first genuine picture of that silent torture of an unloved woman, condemned to suffer thus because she is a woman and must not speak, and which, many years later, was wakened into such passionate eloquence by the author of Jane Eyre. Subdued though the picture is in Miss Austen's pages, it is not the less keen, not the less painful....This melancholy cast...distinguishes Persuasion from Miss Austen's other tales. They were never cheerful, for even the gentlest of satire precludes cheerfulness; but this is sad.¹⁰

In 1929 Virginia Woolf wrote that:

There is a new element in Persuasion....She is beginning to discover that the world is larger, more mysterious, and more romantic than she had supposed....She dwells frequently upon the beauty and the melancholy of nature [upon the autumn when she had been wont to dwell upon the spring]. She talks of the "influence so sweet and so sad of autumnal months in the country." She marks "the tawny leaves and withered hedges." "One does not love a place the less because one has suffered in it," she observes. But it is not only in a new sensibility to nature that we detect the change. Her attitude to life itself is altered. She is seeing it, for the greater part of the book, through the eyes of a woman who, unhappy herself, has a special sympathy for the happiness and unhappiness of others, which, until the very end, she is forced to comment upon in silence. Therefore the observation is less of facts and more of feelings than is usual.¹¹

In a similar vein, Marvin Mudrick notes that "...Persuasion is the first book in which Jane Austen uses the words 'romance' and 'romantic' without irony and in their favorable sense" and that for her "...the world is enlarging--with some loss of hard, sharp contour initially, but with a great potential (and often realized) gain in variety and power."¹² While I do not acknowledge any sharp break with the earlier novels--particularly along the lines of Reason vs. Feeling,¹³ and the like--I think it is true that Persuasion, written in 1815-16 and published in 1818, does, in a somewhat new way, share some important interests with Romantic works. But while there are important points of contact, I believe that Persuasion is fundamentally not Romantic in spirit.

William A. Walling, for example, notes the "historical consciousness of acceleration"¹⁴ in Persuasion and also its "confrontations with a social setting in dramatic fluidity during the Napoleonic wars."¹⁵ Thus Persuasion shares a typical Romantic interest in the relationship of the past to the present; nevertheless it treats the past in a very

different way. Persuasion is distinctive in its "recapturing of the past, but of a past (unlike Wordsworth's, say, or Proust's) capable of a vital re-creation into new-found harmony with the actualities of Anne Elliot's present world"; it evinces a "simultaneous attachment to and revision of history."¹⁶

Again with respect to this past-present interest, Gene W. Ruoff suggests that the ending of Persuasion is in some ways a Romantic "loss of center" for human communal life:

...if Romanticism's affirmations often involve the successful discovery of a center, its darker musings are concerned with what happens when the center does not hold--when the bower is destroyed, the island invaded, the longed-for return to the childhood home crushed by the death of a beloved brother, or, to borrow Alistair Duckworth's phrase, the estate abandoned. Without a fixed point, can there be any secure foundation for the individual or social existence? Cain and Asmodeus, we remember, are nightmare figures of the age.¹⁷

Ruoff points out that the estate is no longer functional as a center in this way; in the community, "...all are tenters, with temporary accommodations ranging in scale from the grandeur of Kellynch-hall to cramped lodgings in Bath, 'a noisy parlor, and a dark bed-room behind'. Anne and Wentworth are themselves given no geographical destination."¹⁸ Ruoff suggests that, in a typically Romantic way, the continuity of this new community depends, not on the estate as embodiment of familial and cultural memory, but on individual memory of the past. I would agree that discontinuity and dissolution are present: the estate has deteriorated under Sir Walter's management so that it no longer assumes cultural leadership, and in Mr Elliot's hands it will be worthless in this respect. But the new community, although breaking away from the dead estate tradition, is not simply on its own with only tenuous personal memory to provide continuity. The continuity is real: the new community, in its living concern of each person for the other, is in touch with universally-valid norms and updates tradition. In a very real sense, the cultural leadership or the existence as a living cultural and communal center has been taken from the estate tradition and given to those who have "no landed estate, no headship of a family." In this way, although it shows some Romantic concerns, Persuasion is not Romantic, I think, but rather it is neoclassical in a somewhat unconventional way.

Interesting comparisons have been made between Jane Austen and

Wordsworth. The comparisons are very helpful in clarifying the nature of the similarities and differences. Stuart M. Tave, for example, points out certain general similarities between Jane Austen and Wordsworth: both "...look for significance in the quiet unregarded daily round of life, the places unheard and unseen by a literature of violent stimulation";¹⁹ both favor a "plain" language and are "disgusted with the style and morality of a hackneyed language; it is a formula to express high feelings without origin in the present reality of the speaker; it is unfriendly to what Wordsworth calls 'one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense'";²⁰ and "For both authors the wisdom of daily life is expressed notably in what both call a cheerfulness."²¹ But Tave also points out that this cheerfulness has a different "ground of faith" for each: "Wordsworth puts on his priestly robe for the holy services of poetry with 'A cheerful confidence in things to come' (Prelude, i, 58). Anne Elliot could have been eloquent on the side of 'a cheerful confidence in futurity' which does not distrust Providence."²² But they differ on a more fundamental level:

Wordsworth's vision is the emblem of a mind that feeds upon infinity and broods over the dark abyss, and that is not Jane Austen's mind and no wit will bridge that gulf. She does not deal in the unlimited nor in visions, except in the way of pricking such bubbles, and her step is not upon the mountains.²³

John Wiltshire also points out that the ending of Persuasion has something Romantic about it. He says that "...the resolution which Jane Austen undertakes is one that includes rather than evades reality and sorrow."²⁴ Anne's achievement is "a personal authority and poise won out of a position exposed to distress."²⁵ Furthermore:

It is Wordsworth...to whom the sensibility expressed at the close of this novel has affinities. For if Persuasion achieves something that is as much a sublimation of grief as a fulfillment of love, then the simple, factual gravity of Anne Elliot's tone, that composure made out of pain itself, relate to "The Ruined Cottage" and the close of "Michael".²⁶

Nevertheless, this sensibility in Persuasion has, in some respects, a nature fundamentally different than that of Romantic sensibility. Wiltshire points out that, in the reconciliation scenes,

The feeling expressed in this scene is the more poignant because it results, for both character and novelist, from a deeply-felt discipline of moral and social decorum. And afterwards, as Anne and Wentworth do re-enter the past, the novel is still

poised and aware of "sauntering politicians, bustling house-keepers, flirting girls...nursery maids and children." Life is still going on, busy, unaware, but renewing and flowering; it is a much finer conception than the contrast between the lovers and the indifferent world about them at the close of Little Dorrit....²⁷

With Captain Harville, "[Anne] speaks composedly, and her composure comes from acceptance of the place that sadness and pain have had in her experience of life. She allows them that place, but equally she knows there are other seasons..."²⁸ I believe this issue helps to distinguish Jane Austen from the Romantics. At points the difference becomes more self-consciously articulated. For example, in the walk to Winthrop, Anne puts away her poetical descriptions of autumn, "...unless some tender sonnet, fraught with the apt analogy of the declining year, with declining happiness, and the images of youth and hope, and spring, all gone together, blessed her memory." (85) Juxtaposed to this are the "large enclosures, where the ploughs at work, and the fresh-made path spoke the farmer, counteracting the sweets of poetical despondence, and meaning to have spring again." (85) Later, we find that Captain Benwick has read Marmion and The Lady of the Lake, and also the Giaour and The Bride of Abydos, and that he "...shewed himself...intimately acquainted with all the tenderest songs of the one poet, and all the impassioned descriptions of hopeless agony of the other," and "repeated, with...tremulous feeling, the various lines which imaged a broken heart, or a mind destroyed by wretchedness." (100) Anne promptly recommends Scott and Byron "but sparingly," and even "...ventured to recommend a larger allowance of prose...calculated to rouse and fortify the mind by the highest precepts, and the strongest examples of moral and religious endurance." (101) The idea seems to be that Romantic grief is like winter all year round, while, for Jane Austen, grief is only one season which, like winter, gives way to spring. In addition, the form of the ending itself is not Romantic in spirit. Although it has deep feeling, includes pain and sorrow, and has a sense of loss, still all the ends are tied up neatly in a way that is foreign to the Romantic spirit. In general, then, I believe that Persuasion shares some important concerns and qualities with some contemporary Romantic art works; but on a deeper level it is not buoyed by a Romantic spirit. It breathes a neoclassical sense of moral order within which one can live and love and find one's meaning.

3.2 The Spiritual Community

The first dimension, then, comprises the "historical community" of Persuasion; the second dimension is what I have called its "spiritual community." I see this community as one which is not necessarily contemporaneous but includes works from all different kinds of historical communities and Zeitgeister, and which is bound together by a discernibly similar perspective on life. This common perspective may then bind together individual works in such a way that, although each may be pulled by a different historical Zeitgeist, they form what I might call a weltanschaulich tradition. In my judgment, Richardson's Clarissa and Jane Austen's Persuasion may possibly be akin to each other with respect to their fundamental perspectives on life. Although the comparison is usually drawn in terms of the "light drawing-room comedy" of Sir Charles Grandison, I shall try to make a case for recognizing important similarities which may indicate a perspectival kinship between Clarissa and Persuasion.

To begin with, both novels deal with the "persuasion" theme--that is, the moral question of parental interference in a daughter's proposed marriage. McKillop points out that this question goes back at least to the sixteenth century, since which time the parental right to command obedience had been balanced against the child's rights as an individual. By the eighteenth century, this had become a deadlock: "a Parent can no more force a Child to marry against her Consent, than a Child is permitted to act contrary to the parent."²⁹ The conservative view of this question is set forth by the Rev. Patrick Delany in one of his Sermons upon Social Duties (1744), entitled "The Duty of Children to their Parents":

...there is one instance, wherein obedience to parents is of more importance to children than any other in life, and yet where they too often fail to pay it; and that is in the article of marriage: for, as long as children continue a part of their parent's family, (which must be till they think fit to dispose otherwise of them) they are absolutely in their parent's power, and have no more right to dispose of themselves than they have to dispose of the parents' fortune, or inheritance, or any of their goods....

Prudent parents well know, that such accomplishments as either arise from, or tend to establish true worth, can alone render any pair happy in an union that must last for life.

This, I say, all prudent parents very well know; and therefore are best fitted to make a right choice for their children; but still with this caution, that they do not offer violence to their inclinations, by forcing them to marry against their will. For the rest, it were infinitely better, that perverse children should actually die in the disappointment of their inclinations, than that they should make both themselves and their parents for ever miserable, by an unfortunate and undutiful marriage.³⁰

This conservatist religious view of "persuasion" forms part of the background of both Clarissa and Persuasion.

Clarissa explicitly deals with the "persuasion" theme within a traditional christian framework which views this world in light of an otherworldly, somewhat austere spiritual reality. It is explicitly didactic; as Richardson says in his Preface, Clarissa is intended

--To warn the Inconsiderate and thoughtless of the one Sex, against the base arts and designs of specious Contrivers of the other--To caution Parents against the undue exercise of their natural authority over their children in the great article of Marriage--To warn Children against preferring a Man of Pleasure to a Man of Probity, upon that dangerous but too commonly received notion, That a reformed Rake makes the best husband --But above all, To investigate the highest and most important Doctrines not only of Morality, but of Christianity, by shewing them thrown into action in the conduct of the worthy characters; while the unworthy, who set those Doctrines at defiance, are condignly, and, as may be said, consequentially, punished.³¹

Moreover, Clarissa herself has didactic force. Again Richardson says in the Preface that:

The principle [sic] of these two Young Ladies is proposed as an Exemplar to her Sex. Nor is it any objection to her being so, that she is not in all respects a perfect character....As far as is consistent with human frailty, and as far as she could be perfect, considering the people she had to deal with, and those with whom she was inseparably connected, she is perfect. To have been impeccable, must have left nothing for the Divine Grace or a Purified State to do, and carried our idea of her from woman to angel. As such is she often esteemed by the man whose heart was so corrupt, that he could hardly believe human nature capable of the purity, which, in every trial or temptation, shone out in hers.³²

Initially, it would seem that Persuasion is very far from this kind of view. However, I believe that it is possible to see a fundamental weltanschaulich kinship between Persuasion and Clarissa while acknowledging at the same time some very significant differences in their approach to these basic matters.

According to Alan D. McKillop, then, Clarissa "[tests] the principles of the conduct-books in terms of living personalities acting within the framework of society."³³ The individual case is not simply subsumed under the general rule; nor is the principle made "elastic," in the way that "natural goodness" in Tom Jones is adjusted to provide broad tolerance and legitimacy for every aspect of Tom's character, including his sensuality and generosity. Rather, says McKillop, in Clarissa, on the one hand "the principle remains rigid, and does not easily accommodate itself to the individual case," and on the other hand the case is an extreme one in which "the individual, tenacious of rights and principles, comes into mortal conflict with the whole system."³⁴ In my judgment, both Clarissa and Persuasion test the general rule in relation to a specific situation. Both novels set up a specific situation as a test case, each situation focusing on the perspective of a daughter as the object of parental "persuasion." And each daughter has personal integrity, high principles, and a desire to submit to the truth, and thus comes into conflict with the general rule in a very complex way. In holding to the general principle but also trying to do justice to the complexities of the specific situation, both novels ultimately provide a critique of the prevailing conservatist ethic and point the way to a more adequate view of morality.

Clarissa, for example, is a girl with great personal integrity and a very high view of marriage. As Robert D. Moynihan points out, Clarissa exemplifies the Puritan view of woman as the spiritual equal of man, and as valuable in her own right before God. He says that, in the Puritan writings, "...both man and woman rightfully possessed an equality of innate worth and responsibility."³⁵ On this basis Clarissa rejects marriage as simply a commercial transaction to increase the family estate and to buttress its none too secure social position. She rejects her brother's views that "'daughters were but encumbrances and drawbacks upon a family'" and that "'a man who has sons brings up chickens for his own table...Whereas daughters are chickens brought up for the tables of other men.'" (I:54)³⁶

In the last family meeting before her flight, Clarissa pleads, "'Take my estate....Only leave me myself.'" (I:406) She has asked that they honor her right to her own feelings and her right to have a say

in something so important to her future happiness. She asks for personal "space." The imagery in Clarissa suggests imprisonment or enclosure; Clarissa exclaims, "'I had rather be buried alive, indeed I had, than have that man!'" (I:127) and, before Solmes himself, "'I will undergo the cruellest death.--I will even consent to enter into the awful vault of my ancestors, and to have that bricked up upon me, rather than consent to be miserable for life.'" (II:207) Indeed, as Margaret Anne Doody says, the Harlowes are, in imprisoning her, "trying to crush her will into so small a compass that she cannot act....to render her a passive captive." (D, 191)³⁷ For Clarissa, obedience to her parents means burial alive, in that it violates her personal integrity and denies her the right to her own feelings, preferences, and decisions. Clarissa responds by locking her door and thus defending her personal "space." But on another level, such a death is actually the price of refusal to submit.

The parental "persuasion" situation is the larger frame within which the conflict between Lovelace and Clarissa gains added point. This inner conflict is a caricature of the parental situation and serves to highlight Clarissa's exemplary behavior. It is as if her conflict with Lovelace is a contest watched intently by a ring of spectators. This is yet another imprisonment and "persuasion," but it has a more sinister quality--it is like the prey trapped by the predator.³⁸ Lovelace is likened to a lion (I:257) and also to the spider who catches the fly, (III:67) and his treatment of women is the "sportive cruelty" of boys who cage birds. (IV:12-13) As Lovelace himself says:

"I once made a charming little savage severely repent the delight she took in seeing her tabby favourite make cruel sport with a pretty sleek bead-eyed mouse, before she devoured it. Egad, my Love, said I to myself...I am determined to lie in wait for a fit opportunity to try how thou wilt like to be tost over my head, and be caught again: How thou wilt like to be patted from me, and pulled to me." (IV:16)

Mrs Sinclair's house, the brothel, is yet another cage. Lovelace views this house as "a well-secured cage" in which the captured bird "beats and bruises again its pretty head and sides, bites the wires, and pecks at the fingers of its delighted tamer." (IV:13) In this house, the focus is on Clarissa's bedroom door as a symbol of her integrity and independence. Thus "Clarissa entreats not to be 'broken in upon', and the

phrase carries suggestions of physical and mental assault; it is connected with Lovelace's metaphor of the walled city besieged. Her chamber door becomes the object of Lovelace's assault and conquest." (D, 198) The "penknife scene" and the "fire scene" are both devices to make Clarissa open her door. But again Clarissa locks her own door against Lovelace, and keeps the key; although imprisoned, she still behaves with exemplary integrity. And even after Lovelace's ultimate physical and spiritual violation, she retains her spiritual independence and integrity by refusing to marry him. The nature of this situation, framed as it is by the larger situation, suggests that her earlier refusal of Solmes was based, as this one is, on her concern for her own spiritual integrity and principles.

The nature of her subsequent "imprisonments" makes it clear to the Harlowes that Clarissa is indeed a saint dying a martyr's death for a martyr's reward. Having escaped Lovelace's clutches, her next lodging is literally a prison. As Ms. Doody says, the broken state of the room and its furnishings reflects Clarissa's own brokenness; the cracked mirror and walls express what Lovelace later calls "an incurable fracture in her heart." (VII:348) (D, 206-7) There is also a "large stone-bottle without a neck, filled with baleful Yew, as an Ever-green, withered Southernwood, dead Sweet-briar, and sprigs of Rue in flower." (VI:298) Ms. Doody reminds us that "The flowers are all emblematic: the yew signifies death; southernwood (or wormwood), bitterness; dead sweet-briar, dead love; rue, remorse and regret." (D, 218) But on the other hand "In one corner Clarissa kneels, in white radiance, a figure of redemption amid universal disorder and death." (D, 217)

Finally Clarissa finds her last earthly home, her coffin. As Ms. Doody notes, "When she says she wishes to 'purchase a house', she buys a coffin (VI:23)....She calls it her 'palace' and speaks of its being sent 'when furnished' to the Harlowe family tomb. (VII:339)" At last Clarissa is able to take possession of her own house and estate. (D, 209) Ultimately, of course, Clarissa's real home is not earthly at all, but heavenly. The change is picked up in the connotations of her words "my Father's House." At one point she laments: "'O! that I were as in months past! as in the days when God preserved me! when I was in my Father's house...' " (VI:405) Later, as Ms. Doody says, "In her rid-

dling letter to Lovelace, she both deceives him and tells him no more than the truth: 'I am setting out with all diligence for my Father's House.'" (VII:189) (D, 209) The furnished coffin arrives at Harlowe Place; but Clarissa herself goes to her real Father's House in heaven. Ms. Doody points out that Richardson, following the devotional writers, has used the traditional emblematic contrast between the permanent heavenly dwelling and "our tabernacles, and ruinous houses" of flesh, the "rotten cottage" of the body itself. Moreover, "The image of Clarissa as a bird, the 'ensnared Volatile' (IV:13) in Lovelace's cage, has a wider significance: a traditional emblem of the soul is the bird in a cage, awaiting its release." (D, 213-4) This is her most cramped lodgings, her most permanent imprisonment; it is also her final release to the freedom of her heavenly home.

The cumulative effect of this intense inner story is that the Harlowes repent and acknowledge that they were wrong in abusing their right of "persuasion." Clarissa's tragic rape and death happen in part because her father curses her, and her whole family casts her off and blocks all attempts to rescue her or give her asylum. Her exemplary behavior in these tragic circumstances is a compelling critique of such cruel and unnecessary "persuasion." In my judgment, Clarissa never questions the parents' right to exercise their legitimate authority and responsibility in the question of a daughter's marriage, nor the obligation of the daughter to obey such a parental decision. Fundamentally its stance remains conservatist. But the story does suggest that parents should honor the feelings, preferences, and judgments of a daughter, and, moreover, that a daughter who obeys God can call parents back to the right way. The story also, I believe, calls into question the traditional idea that parents own a daughter and can dispose of her as they will. Both structurally and thematically, the story emphasizes the spiritual integrity and significance of each person, even a nineteen-year-old, youngest, unmarried daughter. Thus Clarissa corrects some contemporary abuses and perversions of the conservatist ethic and restores to that ethic a very real integrity.

Jane Austen, in Persuasion, also adopts the "persuasion" theme as a framing device, again with the focus on a daughter who has spiritual integrity and is able to make her own decisions for her own reasons and

accept the consequences. In this "persuasion" situation, the emphasis is on the underlying perception of the world, and on the difference between youthful views and the experienced perception and judgment which is foundational to the traditional conservatist ethic. The Elliots' selfish, fearful snobbishness is never even an option; it is Lady Russell's conservatism which "persuades" Anne. Lady Russell views the flamboyant Captain Wentworth as a dangerous, violent intrusion into a safe, orderly world. She is worried that Anne will "throw herself away" (26) and "be snatched off by a stranger," "sunk by him into a state of most wearing, anxious, youth-killing dependance." (27) Lady Russell never violates Anne's spiritual integrity; she is a "good" woman "of strict integrity herself, with a delicate sense of honour" (11) and is, moreover, a devoted friend who has taken the place of Anne's mother. Nor does Anne forfeit her own spiritual responsibility and integrity or deny the reality of her own feelings. She makes her own decision with her eyes open, for her own reasons. But she does accept Lady Russell's perception of the situation and her judgment of what would be morally right.

Of central importance, then, is the change in Anne's own perception of the world and of what is "right":

How eloquent could Anne Elliot have been,--how eloquent, at least, were her wishes on the side of early warm attachment, and a cheerful confidence in futurity, against that over-anxious caution which seems to insult exertion and distrust Providence!--She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older--the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning. (30)

Anne discovers that the world is much larger and richer than the narrow, safe, conservatist world. There is room for romance: for uncertain, risky things like adventure, enthusiasm, hard work, and falling in love. This discovery comes in the years following the original "persuasion" situation. Years too late, Anne discovers and acknowledges her own feelings on the subject.

Later, a similar "persuasion" situation arises with reference to Mr Elliot. Lady Russell listens to what he says and finds him well-judging and prudent:

Every thing united in him; good understanding, correct opinions, knowledge of the world, and a warm heart. He had strong feelings of family-attachment and family-honour, without pride or weakness; he lived with the liberality of a man of fortune, without

display; he judged for himself in every thing essential, without defying public opinion in any point of worldly decorum. He was steady, observant, moderate, candid; never run away with by spirits or by selfishness, which fancied itself strong feeling; and yet, with a sensibility to what was amiable and lovely, and a value for all the felicities of domestic life, which characters of fancied enthusiasm and violent agitation seldom really possess. (146-7)

Clearly, this is Lady Russell's own perception. It reflects her horror of "any thing approaching imprudence" and her "prejudice on the side of rank" and is essentially conservatist and moderate. Anne, however, perceives the same qualities very differently:

Mr Elliot was rational, discreet, polished,--but he was not open. There was never any burst of feeling, any warmth of indignation or delight, at the evil or good of others. This, to Anne, was a decided imperfection. Her early impressions were incurable. She prized the frank, the open-hearted, the eager character beyond all others. Warmth and enthusiasm did captivate her still. She felt that she could so much more depend upon the sincerity of those who sometimes looked or said a careless or a hasty thing, than of those whose presence of mind never varied, whose tongue never slipped. (161)

Anne is not an "objective" observer, any more than is Lady Russell. Her perception of Mr Elliot is colored by her enduring love for a very different kind of man. But the point is that Anne has learned "that she and her excellent friend could sometimes think differently." (147) This time Anne accepts her own perceptions as having equal validity. She is not persuaded this time by Lady Russell's views of the situation, or of the nature of reality in general.

Ultimately Anne's perceptions are shown to be more congruent with reality; thus Lady Russell

...must learn to feel that she had been mistaken with regard to both; that she had been unfairly influenced by appearances in each; that because Captain Wentworth's manners had not suited her own ideas, she had been too quick in suspecting them to indicate a character of dangerous impetuosity; and that because Mr Elliot's manners had precisely pleased her in their propriety and correctness, their general politeness and suavity, she had been too quick in receiving them as the certain result of the most correct opinions and well regulated mind. There was nothing less for Lady Russell to do, than to admit that she had been pretty completely wrong, and to take up a new set of opinions and of hopes.

There is a quickness of perception in some, a nicety in the discernment of character, a natural penetration, in short,

which no experience in others can equal, and Lady Russell had been less gifted in this part of understanding than her young friend. (249)

Lady Russell's perceptions have been based on her conservatist perspective, which values safety, prudence, and decorum above all else, and which judges the possible on the basis of how comfortably it fits into the existing structure of things. She judges on the basis of experience, but, in this case at least, experience serves as blinders which narrow her field of vision and limit the penetration of her judgment. Thus because Wentworth's vibrant life tends to stir things up and the wily Mr Elliot takes on a protective coloration to work his way into the family, Lady Russell makes a judgment which completely misses the deeper realities of each man. Anne, on the other hand, has discovered for herself the narrowness of the conservatist world, and also the breadth and depth and richness of the real world. Her new perspective honors both the continuity of tradition and the renewing, re-forming power of new life. Correspondingly, her "natural penetration," her "quickness of perception" has an aliveness, a fine sensitivity and intuitive insight that see through hypocrisy and dishonesty and that, eventually, correct Lady Russell's conservatist perception and judgment.

In a sense, the original "persuasion" situation is reversed. The second time around, Lady Russell must accept Anne's perceptions and judgments as more correct than her own. And this time it is Anne who bears down the opposition in order to do what she thinks is right. But this is not simply revolutionary individualism which asserts the supremacy of the unfettered will. Anne's perspective is more right, not in itself, but because it is more congruent with the true nature of reality. Nor does Anne simply break with tradition and with advice from others. On the contrary, she maintains her overriding interest in duty, and she acknowledges the need to listen to advice. For herself, it was right, when she was young and immature and unsure of her own judgment, to submit to Lady Russell's advice; but as her judgment matures, it is right to hold fast her own views. The conservatist perspective is not an evil to be violently overthrown, but a narrowed world which needs to be opened up and aired. Anne stays close to her conservatist heritage, but renews and reforms it.

Both Clarissa and Persuasion offer a critique of the traditional

conservatist conduct-book morality. Both point out its failure to honor individual feelings, preferences, and perceptions, especially in the case of a young unmarried daughter. Clarissa would grant traditional authority to parents, but would remind them to take these things into account and honor the daughter's personal integrity and "space." On the other hand, it would maintain the standard of filial obedience to parents, but ultimately to God. Obedience may be unto death, but it may also call parents back to what is right. Clarissa corrects certain contemporary abuses of conservatist morality and restores to it a living concern for the integrity of others and for right action. Similarly, Persuasion emphasizes the integrity and responsibility of the daughter as a significant individual. In this case it is the daughter who chooses to be persuaded (or not) that another perspective is more valid than her own. Later, having gained confidence in a better perspective, she can legitimately resist persuasion and can even insist on her own views. Persuasion offers a more penetrating critique, in that it questions not only the abuses of the conservatist ethic but also the conservatist ethic itself at its best. Persuasion views ethical decisions as expressive of a guiding core principle but also as sensitive to the changing realities of human situations.

Clarissa and Persuasion also portray this everyday world with a view to the underlying spiritual realities at stake in it. This is evident in their choice and treatment of the "persuasion" theme and of the characters. I believe they both take everyday situations and people, and lay bare the spiritual issues at stake and the spiritual allegiances and affinities involved. Clarissa makes this dimension explicit for the reader; Persuasion leaves it implicit, merely suggested for the reader. But, I believe that, in spite of important differences, their views are fundamentally akin.

First of all, then, the "persuasion" theme is an important issue in everyday life for these novelists. It is not simply a precious, over-refined, "delicate" situation suggestive of ladies' magazines of a certain period, but a very real, serious, contemporary problem. Margaret Anne Doody reports that:

At the age of seventeen, Mary Granville [later Mrs. Delany] was compelled to marry Alexander Pendarves, a boorish, sickly, and debauched gentleman of nearly sixty years of age. She felt

'an invincible aversion towards him', but her attempts to make that aversion clear to her suitor only made him, like Solmes, the more eager. Her uncle, Lord Landsdowne, acted a tyrannical part in the spirit of Mr. Harlowe: 'I was not entreated, but commanded.' While at her uncle's house the girl was rushed through her 'courtship' and into marriage and misery: 'Never was woe drest out in gayer colours, and when I was led to the altar, I wished from my soul I had been led, as Iphigenia was, to be sacrificed. I was sacrificed. I lost, not life indeed, but I lost all that makes life desirable...'

Lady Louisa Stuart describes Lady Mary Wortley's difficult position when her father commanded her to marry a suitor whom she disliked. Lady Mary...eloped with Mr. Wortley, but the result was not entirely happy, and her father never quite forgave her. Even when she had thus defied paternal authority, that authority had something sacred about it. Lady Bute recalled her mother's behaviour, even as a married woman, when her father entered: 'Lady Mary instantly starting up from the toilet table, dishevelled as she was, fell on her knees to ask his blessing.' A father's blessing or a father's curse were solemn things. (D, 135-6)

Thus Fanny Burney, when admonished by her father to consider seriously as a suitor the unwelcome Mr Thomas Barlow, writes, "'I was terrified to death. I felt the utter impossibility of resisting not merely my father's persuasion, but even his advice.'" ³⁹ These women are contemporaries of Richardson, and their situations manifest the strong conservative view of parents' rights, the daughters' very real fear and anxiety, and the alternatives of the desolation attending obedience or the banishment attending disobedience. By Jane Austen's time, one senses that this genuine conservative ethic is no longer a real part of life. Now there are the radical feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft, and the revolutionaries like William Godwin who urge the woman to burst out of all restraints and follow her lead. On the other hand are the extreme conservatists like Mrs West, who try to revive the traditional conservatist ethic, and urge on the woman unconditional obedience and fortitude. The debate is no longer really on the "persuasion" ethic as such, but insofar as it provides a paradigm for the larger moral and political debates surrounding the French Revolution. In my judgment, both Clarissa and Persuasion take up a difficult, controversial contemporary situation and attempt to lay bare some of the fundamental issues at stake and to chart a new course through these opposing views.

At stake, then, in both discussions of the "persuasion" ethic

is the spiritual integrity, even the identity of each individual person, regardless of status. Each person has the right to her own feelings, preferences, and judgments; moreover, each person is responsible before God for her own actions and should thus have some say in life-changing decisions like marriage. This means that no one, not even a father, can violate with impunity the personal integrity and space of even an unmarried daughter. At the same time, both novels acknowledge the importance of obedience. Disobedience is not to be taken lightly. Anne, had she disobeyed when young, "would have suffered in my conscience," and disobedience is almost unthinkable for *Clarissa*. However, obedience is due first of all to principles, to what is right, and not simply to the person with the biggest fist, or to "the way things have always been done," or to someone else's selfish desires. In this matter of obedience, both parents and children are subject; and just as parents can use their authority to call children back to what is right, so children, through obedience, can call parents back. Furthermore, in *Persuasion*, another issue at stake in the "persuasion" debate is the way in which one views the world. One can be like the Elliots and Lady Russell and view the world with blinders on, fearfully, waiting to be jumped. Closed down, almost paralyzed by fear, the Elliots are simply out for what they can get. And Lady Russell sees Anne as a "have" waiting to be exploited by the "have-nots." These people are steady and serene, like a stagnant pond. But one need not view the world like this, as Anne discovers. One can be opened up to the joy, healing, and just the richness of the world. One can be, like the Harvilles, openhearted, generous, and warm. Like Wentworth, one can be willing to work and trust Providence. One can be grateful for the past, but also confident and enthusiastic with respect to the future. At stake is viewing the world rightly or wrongly and the consequences this has for the quality of one's whole life and for one's actions in relation to other people. These are some of the ways in which *Clarissa* and *Persuasion* treat the "persuasion" theme in a morally and religiously deepened, critical way.

Similar treatment is given to the characters in these two novels. Recognizably ordinary characters are viewed from a perspective which discloses their fundamental spiritual allegiances and affinities. In *Clarissa*, this disclosure happens only gradually through the book. Initially,

Clarissa and Lovelace are portrayed as ordinary people with great potential but not without faults. Clarissa is a beautiful, high-spirited girl, with many accomplishments and a strong interest in domestic matters like raising poultry. And she finds Lovelace very attractive, both physically and morally, especially by contrast with Solmes. He has a graceful figure, is educated and tasteful, with a good reputation as a just and honest landlord; his greatest fault is sexual promiscuity.⁴⁰ In addition, Lovelace is "a sober man" whose behavior is "calm and gentlemanly," (I,74, 28) and he possesses debonnaire and assurance. (I,7,216)⁴¹ They are both exceptionally attractive people, but they are recognizably ordinary. Initially, when Lovelace calls Clarissa his "angel," says Hilles, "we accept this term in a figurative sense. She is a beautiful and attractive young girl." Likewise, early in the story Anna refers to Lovelace facetiously as the devil.⁴²

But as the story progresses, "angel" and "devil" become more than just figurative. These epithets symbolize the increasing polarity between Clarissa and Lovelace as, under extreme pressure, they show their true colors and reveal their opposing spiritual allegiances. Whereas Clarissa is repeatedly called an "angel" in all seriousness, Lovelace is called a "devil" and is compared to Milton's Satan and his fall.⁴³ Much of the imagery in the book supports and reinforces this strong polarity. F. W. Hilles says that:

The contrasts are extreme: night vs. day, fire vs. water, loathsome animal vs. delicate flower; most often they suggest height and depth. She is an "angel sent down to save" but charges her tormentor to dig a hole deep enough to conceal her unhappy body (III,140; V,371). We are bombarded with words like haughty, deep, raise, subside, exaltation, stooping, aspiring, sinking, her altitudes, his baseness.⁴⁴

Ms. Doody says that "There are few colours mentioned in the whole of the story; black and white are the predominant tones, both literally and metaphorically." (D, 238) The culmination of all this imagery is Lovelace's dream (VII:158-60) in which Clarissa ascends into a bright heaven and Lovelace drops into a black hole.⁴⁵

Similarly, the deathbed scenes in Clarissa illustrate holy and unholy dying, according to devotional books and manuals like Lewis Bayly, Practise of Pietie (1619); Jeremy Taylor, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying (1651); and John Pomfret, A Prospect of Death (1704). (D, 152ff)

The deaths of Belton and Mrs Sinclair are classic devotional-book pictures of unholy dying; Clarissa's death, coming in between them, illustrates, by contrast, the process of holy dying. (K, 157,163,166)⁴⁶ At the end of her life, Clarissa is "cheerful and serene." "'My spirits,'" she says smiling, "'will hold out purely.'" (VII:223,220,270) Lovelace, on the other hand, although he puts on "these lively airs," confesses that he is sick at his soul. He is vexed and ailing, inexpressibly miserable, and at the end considers himself "the most miserable of beings." (VI:395; VII:125,348; VIII:265)⁴⁷ On his deathbed, Lovelace calls on Clarissa to intercede for him. The spiritual allegiances of Clarissa and Lovelace have been laid bare; they can now be viewed as representatives of the underlying spiritual warfare.

In my judgment, Persuasion is very like Clarissa in its portrayal of characters. Persuasion too is interested in disclosing spiritual allegiances. Nevertheless, there are certain important differences in the manner in which this is handled. In Persuasion the characters, though presented with a clear central focus, are nonetheless complex in certain ways, and spiritual allegiances are clear but not outlined in black, so to speak, as they are in Clarissa. At times these spiritual allegiances are suggested by the connotations of abstract words like "vanity" and "excellent." "Vanity" has primarily, I believe, the everyday meaning; however, in the background is the echo of the deeper biblical meaning. Similarly, "excellent" is an ordinary word with biblical overtones. And the epithet "good," used of Lady Russell, is a solid, homely word that tells us all we need to know. These words serve to suggest, very compactly, the natures of characters important to the background and structure of the story. Anne and Frederick Wentworth we know by their actions, their responses, and what we know of their feelings and judgments. Surely they are basically good people, though often mistaken, just as Mr Elliot is basically not good, but with fine abilities and admirable qualities. In my judgment, Persuasion acknowledges the reality of absolute spiritual allegiances, but draws back from assigning them irrevocably to individual characters. This matter, like several others, is treated with a certain diffidence that is content to suggest but not to underline.

Persuasion, like Clarissa, has a deep concern for the very real, underlying spiritual dimension to actions and people. In Clarissa this

tends to become a polarity between evil and good, corresponding at times to this world and the next, or even to Lovelace and Clarissa themselves. While a similar situation is, I believe, implicit in Persuasion, this world comes more to the fore and is examined and enjoyed in its complexity and richness. In Persuasion, people in everyday life in this world find pain and sorrow and duty, but also healing and great joy. Everyday life is ordinary and yet miraculous. The process of healing and of renewed life is on the one hand as natural as the coming of spring, and on the other a surprise, an unexpected blessing. Providence overarches the world and protects men and women in their ordinary efforts, and occasionally makes it possible to be "surprised by joy." Wentworth's misguided hazel-nut emblem is a homely, everyday image that nevertheless suggests the real beatitudes and also the apostle Paul's corn of wheat. Alastair M. Duckworth comments that "A nut's destiny is not to remain whole and unharmed through the autumn, but rather--like St. Paul's grain of wheat in I Cor. xv:36-38--to be trodden under so that it will flourish in the spring as a tree."⁴⁸ To my mind, this is kept simply on the level of subtle suggestion, one which nevertheless gives fundamental contours to the fictional world. It is wholly natural and this-worldly, yet it suggests in an unconventional way the miraculousness and the larger contours of creaturely reality.

In addition, Persuasion makes no explicit effort to instruct or to teach morality. By no stretch of the imagination could Persuasion take its place beside Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Holy Dying as a devotional book, as Richardson is said to have intended for Clarissa. Persuasion is deliberately understated and kept quite ordinary and everyday. The "moral" at the end brings it firmly down to reality:

Who can be in doubt of what followed? When any two young people take it into their heads to marry, they are pretty sure by perseverance to carry their point, be they ever so poor, or ever so imprudent, or ever so little likely to be necessary to each other's ultimate comfort. This may be bad morality to conclude with, but I believe it to be truth....(248)

At the same time, the moral import of Persuasion makes itself very much felt. Likewise, the characters are extraordinarily recognizable as real contemporary people, while the nuances suggest deeper issues at stake in their characters and behavior. B. C. Southam, in examining the con-

temporary response to Persuasion, says that the reviewer in the British Critic⁴⁹ is fairly representative in warning his readers against the story's "moral": "that young people should always marry according to their own inclination and upon their own judgment." Southam goes on to say:

Why, then, this misreading? Not, I think, because the reviewer in the British Critic was an ass, but because the novels of Jane Austen called for a freedom of response which her audience, private readers and critics alike, were not yet ready to give. In particular, I suspect that Jane Austen's contemporary readers were not yet ready to accept her disconcerting account of the ways and values of their own society. Professor D. W. Harding has suggested that 'her books are, as she meant them to be, read and enjoyed by precisely the sort of people whom she disliked; she is a literary classic of the society which opinions like hers, held widely enough, would undermine'. This is an arguable contention and some modern critics have rejected it. Nonetheless, I believe that it finds support in a number of the quotations and documents presented in this volume. The failure of Jane Austen's contemporaries to identify the force and point of her satire can be attributed in part to their disquiet at its implications. Some of her readers objected to what they could recognize as her attack upon the cherished values of romantic fiction. Others surely must have recognized that the fools and villains of Jane Austen's novels were uncomfortably close to themselves, their friends and neighbours. This was clear enough to Scott: 'her dramatis personae conduct themselves upon the motives and principles which the reader may recognize as ruling their own and most of their acquaintances.' 50

Persuasion does not face a reader with an exemplar to be imitated; nor does it work traditional religious emblems into an ordinary everyday framework. Rather, it maintains a deliberately understated tone which is also uncomfortably revealing and subtly thought-provoking. Rather than providing an explicit, clear-cut example of virtue, Persuasion gives us the familiar world, suggesting deeper issues and directions for critical re-thinking.

Furthermore, in Persuasion the everyday world is a source of comic enjoyment. In this matter, I believe it is fundamentally different from Clarissa. In Clarissa, comedy takes the form of slapstick, as in the Widow Bevis or Joseph Leman, or farce, as in the Harlowes' "sour comedy of domestic life." (D, 377) This comedy seems calculated to arouse contempt, or at least a rather patronizing amusement at stupidity and lack of refinement. On another level, it surfaces in the eccentric wit of Lovelace, "an arch-humourist, an inventive wit, imaginatively willing

to dissolve and re-create, and to enjoy the process." (D, 378) For example, Lovelace plays with the credulous Hickman, stringing him along by telling him that Clarissa has thrown him over for another lover. We pick up the story in Lovelace's own words:

'Tis true, very true, Mr. Hickman! True as I am here to tell you so! And he is an ugly fellow too; uglier to look at than me.

Than you, sir! Why, to be sure, you are one of the handsomest men in England.

Well, but the wretch she so spitefully prefers to me is a mis-shapen, meagre varlet; more like a skeleton than a man! Then he dresses--you never saw a devil so bedizened! Hardly a coat to his back, nor a shoe to his foot: a bald-pated villain, yet grudges to buy a peruke to hide his baldness; for he is as covetous as hell, never satisfied, yet plaguy rich.

Why, sir, there is some joke in this, surely. A man of common parts knows not how to take such gentlemen as you. But, sir, if there be any truth in the story, what is he? Some Jew, or miserly citizen, I suppose, that may have presumed on the Lady's distressful circumstances; and your lively wit points him out as it pleases.

Why, the rascal has estates in every county in England, and out of England too.

Some East India governor, I suppose, if there be anything in it: the lady once had thoughts of going abroad. But, I fancy, all this time you are in jest, sir. If not, we must surely have heard of him.

Heard of him! Ay, sir, we have all heard of him--but none of us care to be intimate with him--except his lady--and that, as I told you, in spite to me. His name, in short, is DEATH! DEATH! Sir, stamping, and speaking loud, and full in his ear; which made him jump half a yard high. (VI:370-1)

This is a kind of humor "which shades at one end of its spectrum into macabre and grotesque distortion, and, at the other, into a kind of metaphysical wit and baroque play of images." (D, 378) Lovelace simply runs rings around his gull, and makes Hickman look very slow by comparison. But there is also irony at work: we know that a glib tongue and a brilliant sparkling wit do not make Lovelace a good man, and that the stodgy Hickman will probably wear well. Moreover, Lovelace is tragically blind to the truth of his own wit: Clarissa has nothing to fear from death, but it is Lovelace who will find death not a laughing matter. In this case, comedy reflects Lovelace's unseemly and ominous levity about serious matters.

Comedy also takes the form of a kind of stichomythia between Clarissa and Lovelace, as in Lovelace's report of an unusual meeting at breakfast:

Going abroad, madam?

I am, sir.

I looked cursed silly, I am sure. You will breakfast first, I hope, madam; in a very humble strain; yet with a hundred tenter-hooks in my heart.

Yes, she would drink one dish; and then laid her gloves and fan in the window just by.

I was perfectly disconcerted. I hemmed, and was going to speak several times; but knew not in what key. Who's modest now, thought I! Who's insolent now! How a tyrant of a woman confounds a bashful man! She was acting Miss Howe, I thought; and I the spiritless Hickman.

At last, I will begin, thought I.

She a dish--I a dish.

Sip, her eyes her own, she; like a haughty and imperious sovereign, conscious of dignity, every look a favour.

Sip, like her vassal, I; lips and hands trembling, and not knowing that I sipped or tasted.

I was--I was--I sipped-- (drawing in my breath and the liquor together, though I scalded my mouth with it) I was in hopes, madam--

Dorcas came in just then. Dorcas, said she, is a chair gone for?

Damned impertinence, thought I, thus to put me out in my speech! And I was forced to wait for the servant's answer to the insolent mistress's question.

William is gone for one, madam.

This cost me a minute's silence before I could begin again. And then it was with my hopes, and my hopes, and my hopes, and my hopes, that I should have been early admitted to--

What weather is it, Dorcas? said she, as regardless of me as if I had not been present. (IV:212-4)

If a narrator had told us this, it might reflect a sharpening of wits or a comic semi-erotic dalliance comparable to a scene by Watteau or Fielding. But it is told by Lovelace, and the comedy is his way of distorting reality. Lovelace is actually plotting Clarissa's destruction in an unfair battle; but it is part of the comic rake's code to present the woman as a "tyrant," a superior opponent against whom any stratagem is legitimate. Thus comedy is again somewhat suspect; it is part of Lovelace's delusion that he is acting in a comic piece in which he will conquer the lady. In my judgment, the comedy in Clarissa is very real and very important; but it is often suspect, with an edge of disapproval, as a manifestation of unseemly levity about serious matters.

In contrast to this, the comic spirit in Persuasion is enjoyed as a legitimate and even necessary part of life. Because it involves the narrator, either representing the voices of others or in his own

voice, the comic spirit bulks larger in Persuasion. On the one hand, the narrator represents characters' words, and often these words have a comic dimension. Sir Walter, Mrs Musgrove, Mary, and Admiral Croft are often comic characters, each in his own way. Specific situations or interactions also have a comic dimension. For example, at Lyme Mary marvels at great length at her failure instantly to recognize another Elliot:

--Do you think he had the Elliot countenance? I hardly looked at him, I was looking at the horses; but I think he had something of the Elliot countenance. I wonder the arms did not strike me! Oh!--the great-coat was hanging over the pannel, and hid the arms; so it did, otherwise, I am sure, I should have observed them, and the livery too; if the servant had not been in mourning, one should have known him by the livery." (106)

And the dry rejoinder:

"Putting all these very extraordinary circumstances together," said Captain Wentworth, "we must consider it to be the arrangement of Providence, that you should not be introduced to your cousin." (106)

What is comic here is, I suppose, the relationship between two people with such totally different styles, and the precision with which each is caught. A similar comic relationship is evident in Anne's thoughts at the time:

She would not, upon any account, mention her having met with him the second time; luckily Mary did not much attend to their having passed close by him in their early walk, but she would have felt quite ill-used by Anne's having actually run against him in the passage, and received his very polite excuses, while she had never been near him at all; no, that cousinly little interview must remain a perfect secret. (106-7)

Perhaps the comic lies somewhere around the vivid incongruity of "ill-used"; it suggests Mary's sense of being personally wronged by the circumstances of life in general. The "cousinly little interview" is also comically incongruous; it suggests the inflated importance such an incident would have for Mary. The passage also suggests Anne's long familiarity with Mary's idioms and attitudes.

In a somewhat different way, the narrator can bring out otherwise hidden comic dimensions in a scene. For example, when Louisa and Henrietta are watching for Captain Wentworth, Charles Hayter renews a topic of perennial interest to himself and Henrietta--his prospects of obtaining a living. And this is all the response he gets:

"Well, I am very glad indeed, but I always thought you would have it; I always thought you sure. It did not appear to me that--In short, you know, Dr Shirley must have a curate, and you had secured his promise. Is he coming, Louisa?" (78)

What is comic here is not necessarily Henrietta's fickleness as such, but our awareness of the way in which she has involuntarily and even unconsciously let slip her change of interest. The narrator highlights this by his careful representation of the scene. In a different situation, when Mrs Croft says "'We do not call Bermuda or Bahama, you know, the West Indies,'" the narrator tells us that "Mrs Musgrove had not a word to say in dissent; she could not accuse herself of having ever called them any thing in the whole course of her life." (70) Perhaps the comic interest lies in the interaction between the well-travelled Mrs Croft and the agreeable Mrs Musgrove, who is entirely ignorant but would rather die than admit to it or appear to disagree with Mrs Croft. Neither of these situations is necessarily or inherently comic; the narrator could simply have told us that Henrietta is absentminded or that Mrs Musgrove had no idea where Bermuda is. But the narrator chooses to highlight the comic aspect of these situations--not necessarily to make a point, but for the sake of simple enjoyment. At these times, there is often a flash of recognition, as of something ephemeral caught in the act and preserved. A single deft stroke neatly crystallizes an attitude or a situation in a way that helps us recognize something in a new and special way.

Finally, the narrator often makes his own dry comments on situations. These comments are usually pointed, but at the same time they enjoy the comic side. The narrator says of Lady Russell that:

The sight of Mrs Clay in such favour, and of Anne so overlooked, was a perpetual provocation to her there; and vexed her as much when she was away, as a person in Bath who drinks the water, gets all the new publications, and has a very large acquaintance, has time to be vexed. (146)

This comment makes a serious point about the busy triviality of Bath life and the ease with which it swamps more vital concerns. At the same time, the comic incongruity and surprise in the wording open up the nonsense and the ridiculousness of Lady Russell's somewhat inconsistent character. Or consider this comment on the Elliots' dismay at Mrs Clay's treachery:

It cannot be doubted that Sir Walter and Elizabeth were shocked and mortified by the loss of their companion, and the discovery

of their deception in her. They had their great cousins, to be sure, to resort to for comfort; but they must long feel that to flatter and follow others, without being flattered and followed in turn, is but a state of half enjoyment. (251)

This exposes the true nature of their distress: they have lost, not a friend whose trustworthiness and loyalty they valued, but a flunky in whose eyes they were important, and to whom they could be condescending. But it also reveals the comic side of this hypocrisy and self-deception. We do not lose our bearings on serious matters, but we do gain an additional, legitimate comic perspective.

The comic spirit in Persuasion plays with the vagaries of human relationships and interactions. It is a subtle, understated kind of comedy that resides more in just "a way of putting things," or a neat turn of phrase. Even the comic is part of a "condensed," finely-tuned style; it is lightly suggested through a subtle change of tone, a slight incongruity, an odd way of putting things. Part of the fun, indeed, is in noticing these things at all. Sometimes the comedy is pointed; but mostly it is for the sake of simple delight in and enjoyment of the absurd, the ridiculous, or the incongruous in our relations one with another. I am reminded of Elizabeth Bennet, who says, "I hope I never ridicule what is wise or good; Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies do divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can." Comedy in Persuasion is never suspect in itself, as somehow improper or even immoral. However, as I have suggested earlier, comedy that has a cruel edge, that shades over into ridicule, may indeed be tacitly called into question within the context of the novel as a whole. The stance taken in Persuasion, it seems to me, is that comedy can be used wrongly, but is not wrong in itself; and that, used rightly, it opens up a new dimension of ordinary, familiar human life. Thus the comic is very important to Persuasion, not only as a characteristic of some of the personae, but as part of the weltanschaulich stance of the novel.

3.3 The Personal Situation

The third dimension which I am using to understand Persuasion is what I have called its relationship to the author's particular gifts and circumstances, to her own personal surroundings. That Jane Austen

has a sense of her own limitations comes out in her correspondence with the Rev. James Stanier Clarke, librarian to the Prince Regent. Clarke writes:

...I also dear Madam wished to be allowed to ask you, to delineate in some future Work the Habits of Life and Character and enthusiasm of a Clergyman--who should pass his time between the metropolis & the Country....--Fond of, & entirely engaged in Literature--no man's Enemy but his own.⁵¹

And Jane Austen replies:

I am quite honoured by your thinking me capable of drawing such a clergyman as you gave the sketch of in your note of Nov. 16th. But I assure you I am not. The comic part of the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man's conversation must at times be on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or at least be occasionally abundant in quotations and allusions which a woman who, like me, knows only her own mother tongue, and has read very little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your clergyman; and I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress.⁵²

Whatever Jane Austen's other feelings about this suggestion, it is clear that she recognizes and accepts certain limitations, such as her lack of formal education, which she feels should likewise limit the subjects of her novels. She believes strongly that she should write about only what she herself knows. But Clarke persists, asking for "an English Clergyman after your fancy," with various specific personal details and interests thrown in as suggestions.⁵³ Later, Clarke ventures to hint that "...any historical romance, illustrative of the history of the august House of Cobourg, would just now be very interesting"⁵⁴ (because the Regent's marriage was imminent). Again Jane Austen replies:

You are very very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that an historical romance, founded on the House of Saxe Cobourg, might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I

should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other.⁵⁵

Here she acknowledges certain limitations of temperament which influence her style of writing. She mentions "my own style," "my own way," which means "domestic life in country villages" and enables her to "relax into laughing at myself or other people." Not for her the serious historical romance or epic poem.

Jane Austen's editorial advice to her niece Anna Austen likewise expresses some of her ideas about her own art. At one point she advises that:

...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 and the Foresters. There you will be quite at home.⁵⁶

A little later she writes:

--You are now collecting your People delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life; --3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on --& I hope you will write a great deal more, & make full use of them while they are so very favourably arranged.⁵⁷

Here Jane Austen intimates that she can accept her limitations because there is plenty to work on around her. Her area of expertise may be limited, but she has learned to live with it and to appreciate it; "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village" is, as she says, "the delight of my life."

On another occasion, Jane Austen commiserates with her nephew Edward Austen about the loss of several chapters of his novel-in-progress:

--I do not think however that any theft of that sort would be really very useful to me. What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited sketches, full of Variety and Glow? --How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much labour?⁵⁸

This neatly crystallizes my own sense of that in Jane Austen's art which is quintessentially her own. Her art is on a small scale with finely finished, highly significant detail. It is finely textured with a multitude of small details and nuances which compose a delicately and intricately patterned whole. It also has a diffidence or delicacy with respect to intimate moments and difficult or awkward circumstances. Nevertheless,

Jane Austen's art does not seem to have a hothouse delicacy; it is neither over-refined nor sickly. It has a robust comic spirit and is vividly aware of the foolish and the ridiculous. Her art is also tough-minded and sharp-tongued in its criticism of the sham and hypocrisy of contemporary mores. And it has moral courage; it faces up to the acknowledgement of personal sin and ignorance; it exposes socially acceptable evils, small cruelties and unkindnesses; it speaks unblushingly of duty and repentance.

Jane Austen's style in Persuasion indeed has its limitations.

In part these are consistent with her own severely limited personal circumstances. After all, she was a single woman living a very sheltered life on very limited means. Except for a brief period in Bath, she lived all her life in small-town parsonages. Not being a radical feminist like Mary Wollstonecraft, she lived within many restrictions on what could be done or written about. Her life consisted largely of domestic activities and news, and small-town society. Evidently Jane Austen acknowledged and accepted these limitations on her life and consequently on her fiction. Within her limited scope, she exploited her wide experience of people and of domestic and social situations. She brings to these things an ear for speech and dialogue, an acute sensitivity to significant detail, and a profound understanding of what makes people tick. And what I find particularly gratifying in Persuasion is that it takes the ordinary, small details of life and reveals their depth and significance. Sir Walter Scott catches this when he confides to his journal that:

That young lady had a talent for describing the involvement and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me.⁵⁹

Jane Austen uses ordinary characters and situations, ordinary words and images, and honors their integrity and significance. She reveals the comic side of life in all kinds of unexpected places. She gives us the ordinary but makes it special, and helps us to see it in a new way. I think that the particular limitedness of Persuasion has a kind of integrity, because it reflects not only an awareness and acknowledgment of real limitations, but also a cheerful determination to accept them and make the best of them. Thus Persuasion has an integrity not to be found in the works of later imitators, for whom limited scale means limited

perspective and escapism, a way of opting out of the complexity and uncertainty of contemporary life. For Jane Austen, this limited scale is contemporary life; in Persuasion she accepts it but tries to deepen and broaden it.

In the novel as a whole, these three dimensions--historical community, spiritual community, and personal idiosyncrasy--reflect on and modify each other. This results in a neoclassical spirit very different in some ways than that of Reynolds and Johnson, and very different from that of Kant or Mackenzie. The neoclassical spirit in Persuasion has a concern for duty and for universal norms that is yet not idealized and up in the air, but has its feet firmly on the ground and finds everyday life, on the whole, good. It rejoices in individual idiosyncrasy and oddity without losing sight of the general norms for human life. It does not deal with mankind in general, but with three or four families; but it deepens this to touch on larger concerns. It examines neoclassical concerns thoughtfully and critically, with careful discrimination. And although the perspective in Persuasion is morally and religiously deepened in a way similar to that of Clarissa, this is expressed with a quite distinctive subtlety and a critical but comic spirit. This perspective is implicit but deeply formative, and is expressed, not through traditional christian emblems, but through nuances which are a touch more equivocal, subtle, and suggestive. And the personal style--its small scale, with highly finished detail--is unexpectedly deep insofar as it concerns itself with issues like duty, tradition, and universal norms, and as it tries to lay bare the spiritual issues at stake in them. Persuasion is a complex and curiously oxymoronic work: it is comic but serious, delicate but hearty, small but significant, diffident but courageous, precise but suggestive. These conjunctions make it easily misunderstood; they also contribute to its distinctive style.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENTAL CONTRIBUTION OF PERSUASION

One of the most important and most difficult questions we can ask about Persuasion is this: What is its contribution to the historical development of the novel genre? This is a very complicated question, one which opens up a whole nest of interrelated problems. First of all, how do we define the "novel genre" so as to limit it to an identifiable group or kind without trying to solve all problems simply by careful definition? Then the concept of "development" is problematic. We must admit that development is not necessarily positive, and could conceivably be very wrongheaded and misdirected indeed. Do we then posit an ideal "novel" which serves as the criterion of development? For example, we could say that Tom Jones is the "ideal" novel, that to which all subsequent works must return if they are to be real novels; or we could see Ulysses as the "ideal" novel and judge previous novels according to their contribution to it. Or we could think in terms of entelechic development, the organic growth and actualization of an inherent (or potential) perfect form, as the perfect form of the oak tree is inherent in the acorn. Or we might simply speak of increasing complexity in the repertoire of technical possibilities. Or, instead of the "ideal" novel, should we not prefer to speak of "norms" for the novel? And if so, what kind of norms--structural, or perspectival? Surely we would not want to hold up as norms any exclusive, partisan views, but neither would we want to make the norms purely formal, within which "anything goes," perspectivally and technically, even to the point of, for example, deceiving or hurting the reader. Another problematic issue is the concept of "contribution." Surely we must recognize that there are many different ways of making a contribution. One could, for example, provide a clear innovation; maintain or consolidate a previous innovation; correct or reform something that has gone awry; modify or refine exist-

ing modes; and so on. In addition, there are many areas in which contributions could conceivably be made: characterization, plot, narrative, scene, relation to audience, and so on. Because the novel is complicated and multifaceted, "contribution" is difficult to assess. It is possible that one novel might make a significant contribution in one area while actually being retrogressive in other areas. This whole question is very complicated, and I do not intend, at this point in my own development, to attempt to deal with all these issues. I would like to provide a brief survey of several important views, and then suggest one specific area which might prove fruitful in assessing the contribution of Persuasion to the historical development of that species of fictional narrative which tells a story.

4.1 Survey of Contemporary Views

A standard older view of this issue is that put forward by Alan D. McKillop in Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist (1936) and, more recently, by Margaret Anne Doody in A Natural Passion (1974). Both are Richardson scholars; they view Jane Austen's novels as developments of a minor genre following Sir Charles Grandison. This minor genre is the "domestic novel of manners" and is clearly rather light and superficial. McKillop says that:

In this diffusion of interest over a large number of characters in high life, Richardson made an important if not entirely fortunate contribution to English fiction; it is the gentility of Grandison, rather than the crude portraiture of Pamela or the tragedy of Clarissa, that set the tone for the feminine novel of the second half of the century, and established the tradition in which Jane Austen triumphed. Grandison showed the way to the substitution of social embarrassment for tragic conflict, to a light transcription of manners, and to a 'delicacy' which was sometimes silly but at its best penetrating and subtle.¹

The implication seems to be that this "domestic novel of manners" is not quite a "real," "serious" novel. Nevertheless, within this inferior minor genre, both scholars would acknowledge Jane Austen's immense developmental contribution. McKillop says that:

The plight of the novel of manners in the last quarter of the eighteenth century may be described by saying that most writers were incapable of consistently holding a middle course between pseudo-genteel insipidity and melodrama, or between mechanical

sprightliness and heavy didacticism. Fanny Burney had shown the way out though she made no important advance after Cecilia; the critics of fiction were more or less clearly aware that what was needed was an anti-sentimental novel animated by a keener intelligence and a subtler wit than could be found in the ponderous comments of Hannah More and the stories of Jane West. The immediate background of Jane Austen's work is this effort, quickened by a new critical view of fiction in the 80's and 90's, to conserve and refine Richardsonian ethics and psychology.²

Thus McKillop grants to Jane Austen a keen intelligence and a subtle wit, and possibly even a critical view of fiction. But while these things are granted, her contribution as a whole is diminished insofar as it has to do with a basically inferior genre. In this spirit Ms. Doody says that:

...to those interested in exploring the niceties of female manners in a sophisticated social world, he gave a new model for the story of the female début....We would be grateful to Richardson for having pointed out paths for later novelists, such as Jane Austen, to tread, if he had done nothing else. But he had done something more, and it is distressing to think that a great writer can, once certain aspects of his work are explored and made use of by others, become neglected in favor of the later authors who have extracted single elements which once existed in a unique and vital combination. (D, 374)

This designation, the "domestic novel of manners," does recognize Jane Austen's distinctive style and scope; but it also characterizes the novels on the basis of only one aspect and ignores other dimensions that are equally if not more important. Moreover, this designation is, it seems to me, needlessly disparaging and patronizing. Jane Austen's novels are indeed different in style and scope than those of Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne; but it does not necessarily follow that they are inferior. These novels are not just bits of fluff (well done, in their way). I believe they are "real," "serious" novels and that it begs the historiographic question to begin by assigning them to a minor, dead-end genre.

Another influential view is that of Ian Watt in The Rise of the Novel (1957). According to Watt, the novel began with a dichotomy between Richardson's "realism of presentation" and Fielding's "realism of assessment,"³ a dichotomy which reflects the larger philosophical dualism of the ego and the external world.⁴ In this connection he says that:

...the two major differences of narrative method between the novels of Richardson and Fielding are by no means manifestations of two opposite and irreconcilable kinds of novel, but

merely rather clearly contrasted solutions of problems which pervade the whole tradition of the novel and whose apparent discrepancies can in fact be harmoniously reconciled. Indeed, the full maturity of the genre itself, it can be argued, could only come when this reconciliation had been achieved, and it is probable that it is largely to her successful resolution of these problems that Jane Austen owes her eminence in the tradition of the English novel.⁵

Thus Watt gives Jane Austen a very important place in the development of the novel; he asserts that:

Jane Austen's novels...must be seen as the most successful solution of the two general narrative problems for which Richardson and Fielding had provided only partial answers. She was able to combine into a harmonious unity the advantages both of realism of presentation and realism of assessment, of the internal and of the external approaches to character; her novels have authenticity without diffuseness or trickery, wisdom of social comment without a garrulous essayist, and a sense of social order which is not achieved at the expense of the individuality and autonomy of the characters.⁶

I agree with Watt in seeing Jane Austen as a major novelist within the mainline novel tradition. And I believe that Watt does recognize a very important contribution. But his analysis is far too neat--so neat, in fact, that it cannot do justice to any of these novelists. In my judgment, Richardson does not immerse the reader in the individual mind without any evaluation; he does provide evaluation, but it is very different from Fielding's evaluation. I cannot see this as a divergence which needs to be reconciled. And I think it makes too much of Jane Austen's contribution--or at least makes it too absolute and too abstract. To my mind, this analysis is too schematic, with a sense of inevitability suggestive of Hegelian dialectic; the categories need to be refined and the judgment as a whole needs to be made in terms of the specific historical situation.

The most recent, as well as the most detailed and provocative, analysis is that of Marilyn Butler in Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (1975). Ms. Butler begins by making explicit her normative view of the novel genre itself:

In broad terms the novel is associated from the beginning with the more individualistic, optimistic, and politically liberal strands in eighteenth-century thinking....Over a broad area the form of the novel itself pleads for the individual, for his innate well-meaningness and for his value....The intrinsically progressive element in the novel, which distinguishes it

from earlier forms, lies in the unique dominance over the action of the personality of the hero or heroine, for this in itself implies a subjective attitude to reality....A tendency towards relativism is present in the novel from the beginning....(B, 10-11)

Ms. Butler's view of the novel is influenced by her deep commitment to Humean psychology. This is evident in her judgment of Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling:

His psychology has deeper implications than his politics for the traditional ethical system. He goes far further than writers of any earlier generation in finding artistic expression for the authentic psychology of Hume. His presentation of human consciousness is fleeting, impressionistic, emotional rather than rational. He does not attempt to realize the social scene by objective means; truth for Mackenzie is essentially subjective... 'Plot' indeed as such ceases to be continuous, or clearly defined, since events in real life are seldom seen as the direct fruits of our endeavours. The scene is what matters, and the focus of each scene is the character's state of mind in response to external stimuli. The scene therefore becomes a vivid, isolated entity. The total movement of the book, which traditionally would have been the plot, becomes obscure, complex, perversely malign, in imitation of the real-life manner in which the environment impinges upon the individual. (B, 12,14)

On this basis, Ms. Butler makes her judgment on each of Jane Austen's novels, including Persuasion. Her evaluation of Persuasion is strongly ambivalent; on the one hand, she speaks approvingly of "the exclusively subjective viewpoint of Persuasion." (B, 277) She reads the "hazel-nut" emblem as an endorsement of the primacy of the inner life:

Anne, the hidden listener, has, as we already know, and he will rediscover, all the richness and secret strength he is attributing to Louisa. Once again the inference is that Anne's inner life has an unassailable quality and truth. Nothing like this image of the nut--richest at the kernel, made private by its strong, defensive exterior--is even suggested in an earlier Austen novel. (B, 278)

And she sees a Mackenzie-like subjectivism:

The sad scenes of autumn in the novel, the desolation of winter rain, are as they are because they are felt by Anne. The world of her consciousness is so all-absorbing that it is not clear whether the outer world (the farmer's outer world, for example) has objective existence or not. (B, 279)

But on the other hand, Ms. Butler sees evidence of the older, unprogressive attitudes; "...enveloping this nineteenth-century novel of the inner life," she says, "is an eighteenth-century novel in search of a centre." (B, 279) And further, "...even while she seems to invite the read-

er's emotional identification with Anne, Jane Austen orders other parts of her novel in terms that imply her continued acceptance of the old ethical certainties....The change of focus, or the dual focus, is awkward, and it points to the weakness of Persuasion." (B, 279)

Her analysis of the dichotomy lays bare her own categories; she says:

On the one hand, the surviving comic framework, Captain Wentworth's progress towards enlightenment, and the exemplary side of Anne, all continue to bear witness to the old certainties. On the other, Anne's deep emotional commitment to her first attachment pays unexpected homage to the truth and beauty of private experience. (B, 291)

Persuasion, then, according to Ms. Butler, is divided at its very heart. Moreover, Ms. Butler views this as a technical and artistic failure which arises from a failure of vision and even of integrity; she says that "...Jane Austen never allows the inward life of a character, growing under her hand, seriously to challenge the doctrinaire preconceptions on which all her fiction is based. Even the ambivalent Persuasion does not read like a serious attempt to question her own beliefs." (B, 293-4) On this basis, she gives us her own final historiographic judgment on Jane Austen's novels as a whole:

At some point it is necessary to come to terms with what cannot be explained away. Jane Austen is conservative in a sense no longer current. Her morality is preconceived and inflexible. She is firm in identifying error, and less interested than other great novelists in that type of perception for which the novel is so peculiarly well adapted--the perception that thoroughly to understand a character is to forgive him. But if this is true, are we right to call her a great novelist at all? (B, 298)

According to Ms. Butler, Jane Austen's novels have missed the boat, historiographically speaking. They are not merely very good in their own shallow way; they are reactionary conservatist novels and are thus irretrievably retrogressive and, possibly, not really novels at all. And, in her view, Persuasion, in trying halfheartedly, but eventually failing, to be subjectivistic and relativistic, is even more of an artistic failure than the early novels, because it misses even the unity of Jane Austen's thoroughly conservatist, reactionary vision.

In my judgment, Ms. Butler's analysis is very fruitful insofar as it faces head-on some of the big issues involved in historiographic

judgments. She does not hesitate to make explicit her own assumptions about what constitutes positive development and her own normative concepts of the novel and its task. She raises questions which need to be raised, and she moves the discussion onto an entirely new and more significant level. Moreover, her analysis is closely tied to the specific historical situation, and her judgment is relatively specific. However, in my own judgment, her assumptions are too narrowly partisan to function as historiographic norms, and her view of the novel genre is one which seriously warps her readings of specific novels. I believe that Ms. Butler is perhaps taking as her ideal the modern novel in the style of Joyce or Woolf, and working backwards from that. In so doing, she seems to lose some historical perspective. For example, I find it difficult to read The Man of Feeling as a modern subjectivist, relativist, stream-of-consciousness novel. I feel much more comfortable viewing it as similar to Kant's philosophy in its deep moral earnestness and its contrast between phenomena as they are and things as they ought to be.

Moreover, I believe that Ms. Butler's historiographic analysis of Persuasion does not do justice to the novel; it does not open it up but rather closes it down for us. It seems to me to be an inadequate reading which so casually dismisses as pointless and defective so many parts of the novel. For example, Ms. Butler can see no use for Mr Elliot (B, 280-1) whom I view as a representative of certain values and traditions, to whom Anne responds and thereby shows not only her insight and principle, but also her willingness to reform tradition. Moreover, I believe Ms. Butler misreads many things. I fail to see how the hazelnut emblem symbolizes Anne--"richest at the kernel, made private by its strong, defensive exterior" (B,278)--and becomes an emblem of the subjective inner life which imposes order on the external objective world. The point of the emblem for Wentworth is not the kernel at all, but the hard, glossy shell. And the irony is that if the shell remains intact, the kernel dries up and dies. Surely the emblem focuses, not on an inner-outer dichotomy, but on the complex concepts of weakness and strength.

On a more fundamental level yet, I cannot accept Ms. Butler's reading of Persuasion as a radical dichotomy of focus between what she calls "emotional identification" or "the truth and beauty of private experience" and "the old ethical certainties" of "doctrinaire preconcep-

tions." Firstly, I do not see in the novel this dichotomy between irreconcilable and mutually exclusive opposites; I do see a recognizable difference between, for example, the narrator's perspective and Anne's perspective, but my point will be that the two are closely related in a rather remarkable way. And I do not read Persuasion as a "nineteenth-century novel of the inner life" enveloped by "an eighteenth-century novel in search of a centre" and thus as a loss of nerve and a technical and artistic failure. While I acknowledge the differences to which Ms. Butler appeals, I read them as artistic representations of contrasting sets of people: the Elliots do in fact have a rather hard, glossy surface, and Anne is in fact much more sensitive with a great deal more depth.⁷ The difference in presentation is for the purpose of expression; thus both sides are parts of a unified artistic vision. Secondly, I do not accept Ms. Butler's evaluation of subjective inner life as constitutive of all reality or as intrinsically right and therefore progressive, in contrast to reactionary "ethical certainty." I do not believe that these are absolute, irreconcilable opposites, nor conflicting, total worldviews, but rather different, correlative dimensions of one reality. I do not accept Humean skepticism as the final truth about reality, nor the stream-of-consciousness novel as the ultimate representation of reality in the novel form. In my judgment, ethical certainties and human experience are both exceedingly important and belong together. On the whole, I am grateful to Ms. Butler for focusing our attention on this issue, and for pointing out, albeit in a backhanded way, the existence of both dimensions in Persuasion.

4.2 Suggestions Toward a Different View

In contrast to the standard approaches I have introduced, I should like to offer what I might call some notes toward an assessment of the contribution of Persuasion to the development of the novel form. I shall try to make these suggestions as specific as possible and relative to the historical situation. And while these suggestions assume a certain view of the novel genre and of its task, I am not yet prepared to articulate my views on this as thoroughly as would be necessary for a complete assessment of this particular novel and its contribution.

4.2.1 Development from Richardson's Style

I should like to suggest, then, that Persuasion significantly refines, modifies, and develops the narrative style posited by Richardson and used most successfully in Clarissa. I believe that Persuasion maintains the innovative aspect--the combination of deep sensitivity to individual feeling and perspective with strong evaluative commentary--while improving on some of the more cumbersome and difficult aspects of the style.

Richardson introduces to the novel the epistolary style which, as he is well aware, gives a new spontaneity and immediacy to the portrayal of character and situation. In his preface to Clarissa, he quotes one of his own characters:

'Much more lively and affecting,' says one of the principal characters (Vol. VII p.73) 'must be the Style of those who write in the height of a present distress; the mind tortured by the pangs of uncertainty (the Events then hidden in the womb of Fate); than the dry, narrative, unanimated Style of a person relating difficulties and dangers surmounted, can be; the re-later perfectly at ease; and if himself unmoved by his own Story, not likely greatly to affect the Reader.'⁸

John Carroll says that "Richardson immerses us in the moment-by-moment process of inner experience....We are within Richardson's main characters as principles, intentions, impulses, half-realized desires engage in a free-for-all that may continue inertia or produce action."⁹ As Elizabeth Bergen Brophy points out, the epistolary mode maintains the artless simplicity and naturalness of style which Richardson values.¹⁰ This style, then, catches intense inner conflicts as they happen, and with them the flavor of individual personality and perspective. Clarissa's letters to Anna Howe during her imprisonment at Harlowe Place effectively express her agony of indecision about the equally impossible alternatives of staying and of going away with Lovelace. We get it as it happens; and it is vividly moving.

Another aspect of Richardson's epistolary style is that it gives this deeply sensitive portrayal of character an implicit evaluative significance and a recognizable shape that makes irony possible. By this I mean, first of all, that, in the letters, a writer characterizes himself through his own language. Margaret Anne Doody shows that, in the lan-

guage of Clarissa and Lovelace, there are significant stylistic allusions to the heroic rhetoric of the seduction-plays. She has demonstrated convincingly Lovelace's resemblance to both the tragic tyrant-lover and the comic rake. (D, 107-113) Through allusion and quotation, Lovelace actually assumes the role of the tyrant-hero or -lover who is driven to impose his will on the woman. (D, 108) The situation is a conventional one:

...forced conquest leads to disaster, and the hero-villain is forced to discover that he cannot, even by violation, conquer the will of the woman he loves. The hero is defeated, remorse comes too late, and the woman is, in the strength not merely of innocence but also and primarily of opposing will, the victor even in death. (D, 109)

But Lovelace insists on viewing the situation as a comedy and himself as the comic rake, for whom everything will come out right in the end. (D, 114) The allusions to these conventional stage characters give recognizable shape to Lovelace's words. Richardson's use of the allusions gives a multilayered effect: it reveals profound aspects of Lovelace's character and personality, and also provides dramatic irony. The conventional nature of these dramatic characters and plays means that when Lovelace identifies himself this way, we know, or at least suspect, what will happen. Ms. Doody says that "He adopts self-pleasing disguises to himself, which he feels free to throw off at any moment. The irony of his situation is that he has identified himself too thoroughly, diagnosed the disease and prognosticated his own fate all too accurately." (D, 107)

Likewise, Clarissa's words relate her to the conventional tragic heroine; but her attitude differs strongly from that of Lovelace. She does not choose to be a tragic heroine; "The role of victim is thrust upon her when Lovelace, without her knowledge, chooses the part of tyrant-lover." (D, 118) And Clarissa grows far beyond the conventional tragic heroine. As Ms. Doody says, "...her reactions are always in terms of principles--and principle not as dry conduct-book rule, but living moral desire." (D, 118) Moreover, she grows far beyond the conventional heroine's aggressive self-assertion through retaliatory self-destruction. (D, 121) The tyrant-lover role and the proud violated-woman role provide standards or points of reference for our understanding of Lovelace and Clarissa. Lovelace chooses his role, thinking that he can give it

up when he will; but he ends up being locked into his role and its fate. Clarissa, originally forced into hers, grows far beyond it and transcends it. These allusions are one significant way in which Richardson provides evaluative commentary from within the character's own words.

Another avenue for implicit evaluative commentary is the characters' use of emblem and traditional imagery. Again, the content is highly significant, but so is the character's attitude toward and use of the emblem. Ms. Doody says that:

Lovelace has an image-making facility; his mind, like Hamlet's, generates one image after another....Lovelace is a romantic maker; his mind dwells in the fascinating borderland of truth and fiction, and delights in what is bizarre and startling. He plays with the workings of his own mind, and enjoys seizing upon a traditional emblem or symbol and perverting its usual meaning. (D, 220,221)

This attitude is evident in Lovelace's image of the fairground ride, which is used in pictorial art as an emblem of greedy folly and insecurity. (D, 224) Lovelace adapts this emblem as an image of sexual conquest and subverts the intent of the emblem. He pictures himself as a mere employee at the fair and Clarissa a "pretty little Miss," "delighted and delighting," who grows giddy and falls off the ride. "And if," Lovelace asks, "after two or three ups and downs, her pretty head turns giddy, and she throws herself out of the coach when at its elevation, and so dashes out her pretty little brains, who can help it?--And would you hang the poor fellow, whose professed trade it was to set the pretty little creature a flying?" (VI:108-10) Lovelace uses this emblem to justify himself and to throw the blame on Clarissa: he, as a rake, is socially acceptable as such--and if Clarissa falls for him and gets hurt, she herself (or her society which accepts such activities) is to blame, not Lovelace. As Ms. Doody says, "The whole emblematic picture sums up the plot of the novel and is a caricature of it." (D, 225) Lovelace's image calls up the original emblem, which acts as a touchstone and as evaluative commentary on Lovelace himself. The contrast between the original and Lovelace's perversion of it is also a source of dramatic irony.

Clarissa does not generally use emblems and imagery herself; she "...tends to think in matter-of-fact terms, or conventional abstractions....Much of what imagery she does use is traditional, as in her use

of fables, or her references to devotional literature. Unlike Lovelace, she is not obsessed with the desire to be original....Clarissa searches for the truthful, even the literally truthful. (D, 220,221) But emblems are used of Clarissa. She is visualized in a series of paintings. The first is a "whole-length picture, in the Vandyke taste," of which Ms. Doody says:

The association of [Richardson's] heroine and a Vandyke subject conveys an impression of the Clarissa of the world, in her health and beauty, with all her worldly prospects before her. It is this Clarissa that the Harlowes have destroyed when they take the portrait down and nail it in her closet 'to perish.'
(D, 232)

The second painting represents Clarissa indirectly. Lovelace, disguised as an old man, comes to the closet (at Mrs Moore's) where Clarissa is hidden and sees a picture of St. Cecilia. Now, Cecilia is an image of beauty and chastity, one who, in her martyrdom, brings beauty and order to the earth. The symbolism of the picture is amplified by light/darkness and angel/devil imagery, (D, 234) all of which prefigures Clarissa's imminent destruction, but also characterizes it as a saint's martyrdom and thus as a triumph. The third picture of Clarissa is in Lovelace's dream which, according to Ms. Doody, has an effect like Guido Reni's Assumption of the Virgin. (D, 238) Here "The suggestions implicit in the Saint Cecilia print are made explicit in this vision of a saint's destiny..." (D, 239) This expresses Clarissa's true glory in the midst of her humiliating and lonely downfall. These pictures, shown us through the speech of the characters themselves, give recognizable shape to the narrative. They are yet another way in which Richardson, writing in the epistolary style, provides implicit evaluative commentary.

Although Richardson uses no external narrator, Belford approaches the status of a dramatized narrator. As a reformed rake and a friend to both Lovelace and Clarissa and who moves in both worlds, he is in a position to provide information that we could not get otherwise. It is Belford who describes the deaths of Belton and Mrs Sinclair and their contrasts with the holy death of Clarissa. It is Belford who gives us the emblematic, highly suggestive details of Clarissa's last days. He is made executor of Clarissa's estate, so he is in a position to tell us what happens after Clarissa's death, and to tie up the loose ends of the story; the Conclusion is "supposed to be written by Mr Belford."

He also edits the letters, and presumably adds footnotes and cross-references where necessary. Belford is a narrator who is consistent with and integrated into the epistolary style; but he provides a more explicit evaluative commentary than any of the other major characters could give us.

But having four main letter-writers also permits direct evaluative comment on each other to surface naturally. Anna Howe and Belford, in their letters to Clarissa and Lovelace, continually criticize their behavior or attitudes, offer hypotheses, or simply ask incessantly for more information. Thus Anna Howe keeps insisting that Clarissa is indeed in love with Lovelace, although Clarissa herself denies it; however, this raises the suggestion, and later on Clarissa realizes and admits that it was indeed the case. And although Clarissa and Lovelace seldom meet or correspond directly, Belford mediates their indirect relationship by representing one to the other and the resulting responses. He gives both of them the chance to disclose and consolidate their final positions with respect to each other and to the situation. Anna Howe and Belford provide considerable explicit commentary, although Anna, in particular, is not always right; her evaluation must be juxtaposed to the other evaluative sources like emblems, and so on.

Richardson's use of the epistolary style, then, has no external narrator, but nevertheless provides a considerable amount of implicit and explicit evaluative commentary. And further, "One result of allowing the characters to present themselves in their own words," says Ms. Brophy, "was that readers were forced to use their own judgment in evaluating them, much as people do with actual acquaintances. This evaluation sometimes required readers to search 'in the crevices', as Richardson put it, to assess the candour of the characters' letters and the extent of their self-knowledge."¹¹ The hints are all there, but the reader needs considerable insight and sensitivity and must piece together, compare, and evaluate different viewpoints and judgments.

The epistolary style also provides a certain air of informality. Ms. Brophy says that, according to Richardson, they "[maintain] an artless simplicity and naturalness of style while still giving the reader variety and [include] instructive commentary and discussion which would further involve his readers in the novels by encouraging debate among

them."¹² Thus for Richardson the letters are well suited to a relaxed, genial didacticism on many topics tangential to the story, since the writer can casually deliver "moral sentiments" on a number of topics. As Ms. Brophy points out, his A Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments, Maxims, Cautions and Reflections, Contained in the Histories of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison (1755) lists, under the letter D (from Clarissa): Death, Dying; Delicacy, Decency, Decorum; Despondency, Despair; Deviation; Dignity, Quality; Double-Entendre; Dress, Fashions, Elegance; Duelling; Duty, Obedience.¹³

For all its advantages the epistolary technique has some rather prominent faults. Most noticeably, it necessarily makes the novel very long indeed. In addition, it allows for only very limited temporal and spatial background. And it can be not-too-subtle at times, because, in the absence of an uninvolved, disinterested narrator, often the hints must be fairly broad, or fairly often repeated, in order to be noticeable and effective. And still they may be missed. In fact, so many of Richardson's readers missed these hints that he had to add the footnotes to point out the hints. And finally, there can be very little direct communication between the implied author and the reader; in fact, the epistolary technique, it seems to me, has some of the difficulties found in the proscenium stage and the illusion of the fourth wall.

Whatever its faults, I think the epistolary style is clearly an innovative contribution to fictional narrative. Many novelists after Richardson used it, generally with less success. Jane Austen, in her early works like Love and Freindship (1790), burlesques the stale clichés of this form. And B. C. Southam has shown that Elinor and Marianne, an early version of Sense and Sensibility, was originally an epistolary novel. Written in 1796, it underwent two revisions in 1797 and 1809-10 before its publication, in its final form, in 1811.¹⁴ Southam speculates that First Impressions, written in 1796-7 and revised in 1809-10, 1811, and 1812, was also originally an epistolary novel before it achieved its final form as Pride and Prejudice.¹⁵ All of Jane Austen's mature novels are told by an external narrator. In my judgment, her mature style in Persuasion, although not itself epistolary, is nonetheless fundamentally akin to Richardson's epistolary style. I believe that it is a significant development of Richardson's style, and that it is

very important for the novel genre at the end of the eighteenth century.

The narrator of Persuasion is remarkably flexible and subtle in his presentation of the story. Most conspicuously, he speaks directly in evaluative description or commentary. Speaking directly, the narrator gives us more temporal and spatial background, in a highly concentrated, efficient manner. The opening chapters of Persuasion, short and entertaining as they are, provide a remarkable amount of information. They give a vivid picture of the Elliots in action at a crucial period which shows their attitudes toward the past, the future, and the estate tradition; they give a detailed history of Anne's relationship with Frederick Wentworth and her subsequent conclusions; they suggest Anne's strong principles, emphasis on duty, and emotional deadness; and they hint at her lingering feeling for Frederick Wentworth and the possibility of renewing her acquaintance with him. The descriptions are compact and precisely nuanced, as in the opening description of Sir Walter reading the Baronetage, or the description of the Great House and Uppercross Cottage. And the explicit commentary is often a precise rendering of a very complex, highly nuanced evaluation. That is, the commentary may be direct and explicit, but it is not necessarily simplistic. The narrator's treatment of Anne's parallel love affairs makes fine distinctions and does justice to the complexity of her feelings and the issues involved. In my judgment, this explicit, direct evaluative description and commentary by the external narrator give the spatial and moral coordinates which anchor the story and provide a firm foundation for the finer details and judgments. Moreover, this often creates something of an intimate Fieldingesque camaraderie, rather like the actor who winks at the audience or lets them in on parts of the action.

In addition to this direct commentary, the narrator also gives us the words of the characters themselves, to provide a different sort of understanding. These words provide subtler, implicit evaluative commentary. They rarely come in large chunks, but in pungent bits which are sharp and to the point. They are vividly illustrative and characteristic of attitudes or relationships. In addition, the form in which the words are presented is also expressive. Thus direct quotes give us the color and vitality of a vivid or important character, like Sir Walter or Admiral Croft. Their turn of phrase is highly individual and

significant. The "oblique" quote, indirect with respect to verbs and pronouns but enclosed in quotation marks, represents a certain obliqueness in the speaker--for example, Sir Walter's combination of arrogance and anxiety or Mr Shepherd's conflicting desires to direct and to stay on the right side of Sir Walter. Thus by representing the character's own words, the narrator admits the character's viewpoint, but maintains his own evaluative stance by modifying the way in which those words are represented.

The narrator also includes a few letters, exploiting their unique expressive values. The letter from Mr Elliot to Mr Smith serves to characterize Mr Elliot, and to suggest an aspect of his character that is not readily apparent. Interestingly, Anne qualifies its proof value, on the basis that "no one ought to be judged or to be known by such testimonies....No private correspondence could bear the eyes of others ..." (204) For Anne, the letter is unguarded and casual, a private communication to be understood by a confidante. Because it is so private, it does not stand up well when read by an outsider, particularly a hostile or prejudiced outsider. Consequently, we understand that this particular letter provides considerable, but still limited, insight into Mr Elliot's character. What it does suggest is that, at one point, Mr Elliot was more spontaneous and less cautious than he is now; it is difficult to imagine the present discreet, prudent Mr Elliot writing letters like this, lest they indeed be read by the wrong person. At the same time, the spontaneity of the letter suggests what still may be Mr Elliot's character. The letter does confirm Anne's judgment in contrast to that of Lady Russell; but at least as important is Anne's divided response to it. The second letter in Persuasion is from Mary to Anne, telling her of Louisa's engagement to Captain Benwick. Significantly, the letter is between Mary and Anne; Elizabeth does not write letters. She is interested only in her present conquests in Bath, not in anyone outside of Bath or her own ambitions. She cannot even spare time or attention to it when it is read to her. The letter itself is characteristic of Mary's style; but more importantly it gives Anne information which she can receive and respond to in private. It also points out her uniqueness within her circle in Bath: only Anne maintains an interest in old friends and their affairs. The limited perspective of the letter-

writer also prolongs Anne's suspense and uncertainty about Wentworth's feelings, and sets up the later complications. The final letter is from Frederick Wentworth to Anne. Here, the narrator lets Wentworth speak completely for himself. This is the crucial breakthrough in the stalemate between Anne and Wentworth; but it is also important as an image. It crystallizes the tension in the novel between crowd and individual and the difficulties of achieving sincere, honest communication. It is a thoroughly spontaneous, direct expression of immediate feeling; at the same time, it is curiously oblique. Anne speaks to Captain Harville about "woman" but really about herself, her own feelings palpable but veiled in abstraction. In speaking to Harville, she is obliquely, indirectly, and unintentionally speaking to Wentworth. And Wentworth, hearing her words, is so deeply moved that he must speak; but the situation makes it impossible. Then having written the letter, he needs an elaborately indirect way of getting it to her. Such a letter in this situation seems, to me, to crystallize both the difficulties of the situation and the direct heart communication that cuts through them.

The narrator uses few letters, but exploits for expressive purposes every possible nuance of the letter form. The letters reveal certain things about their authors; both their possibilities and their limitations in this respect are explored. These are real letters--they are written, sent, opened, read in private, read to others, locked away in boxes. They are casual, newsy, or urgent. Moreover, characters' attitudes toward letters are significant. Some characters frequently write and read letters, and others do not; this is suggestive of the degree of their spontaneity and communicativeness and of their interest in people and situations not immediately before them. The letters are included in order to do justice to individual feeling and perspective, but also in order to provide different nuances of implicit description and commentary.

So the narrator speaks directly in explicit evaluative description and commentary; and he represents the words of the characters themselves. In addition, he narrates while at the same time suggesting individual idiom, and thereby feelings, perceptions, and perspectives. This keeps us in touch simultaneously with the individual characters and with the narrative presence. It keeps the narrative going, but not at

the expense of the characters' individuality. We are never uncritically immersed in a character's consciousness; the narrative keeps its grip on the story while giving a very genuine sense of the way in which the character himself would perceive and respond to these things.

Dorrit Cohn describes the German erlebte Rede as "the rendering of a character's thoughts in his own idiom, while maintaining the third-person form of narration. By maintaining the person and tense of authorial narration, it enables the author to recount the character's silent thoughts without a break in the narrative thread."¹⁶ Further, he says that

...the reflecting mind is presented in the third person and in the customary epic tense of narration, the preterite. But at the same time the syntactical structure is that of direct discourse, with the rhythms of spoken language rendered through exclamations, rhetorical questions, repetitions and exaggerated emphases. (C, 97)

According to Cohn, erlebte Rede is "somewhere between direct and indirect discourse, more oblique than the former, less oblique than the latter." (C, 104) He labels it "narrated monologue": "The second term...expresses the immediacy of the inner voice we hear, whereas the first term expresses the essential fact that the narrator, not a character in the novel, relays this voice to us; the fundamental ambiguity and complexity of this stylistic device would thus be maintained..." (C, 104) Thus Cohn clearly intends to distinguish between "narrated monologue" and "stream of consciousness." In my judgment, Dorrit Cohn is getting at what I have tried to describe in Persuasion as narrative that is translucent to or suggestive of individual perception and idiom, and yet maintains a light but firm narrative grip on the story.

This mode provides a sense of immediacy: the very texture of vivid but inarticulable feeling and perception is made present for the reader. And because all this is represented by the narrator and not by the character himself, we get insight into deep feelings and perceptions that the character may not be able to articulate, or even to recognize or acknowledge--and without a sense of abnormal introspection and self-consciousness. Says Cohn:

With the narrated monologue we move closer to the possibility of rendering such thoughts and feelings of a character as are not explicitly formulated in his mind. Since the figural voice is not quoted directly, as it is in the interior monologue, this technique lends itself better to the twilight realm of

consciousness. It can give a more nearly convincing presentation of that part of the psyche which is hidden from the world and half-hidden from the censoring self; it can also more readily show the mind as recipient of passing images and "sensory impressions" than the more rhetorical first-person monologues. But as the narrator departs from the character's formulated train of thoughts, the narrator's own voice is heard more and more frequently interjecting phrases of the type "It seemed to him" or "he barely heard." In this manner, the narrated monologue shades into internal analysis, where the author reports--no matter how unobtrusively--on the inner life of his figures, making the haziest thoughts accessible to language, translating an unorganized inner world into a communicable idiom. (C, 110)

And as Cohn suggests, the "narrator is in a sense, the imitator of his character's silent utterances"; (C, 110) thus the perspective of the narrator is never completely submerged, and there remains a "degree of association or dissociation between an author and his creature..."

(C, 112) On the one hand, the narrator can be sympathetic toward the character; on the other, he can provide "a mock-identification that leads to caricature." (C, 111) Cohn says that the distance between narrator and character is immediately apparent (through exaggerated expressions, false analogies, and the like), yet "no matter how devastating the picture, the attempted empathy...is not entirely canceled, and the story leaves one with the feeling of having understood the type 'from within.'" (C, 112)

In my judgment, what Cohn describes so perceptively as erlebte Rede is precisely what happens in certain passages in Persuasion.¹⁷

For example:

Yes,--he had done it. She was in the carriage, and felt that he had placed her there, that his will and his hands had done it, that she owed it to his perception of her fatigue, and his resolution to give her rest. She was very much affected by the view of his disposition towards her which all these things made apparent. This little circumstance seemed the completion of all that had gone before. She understood him. He could not forgive her,--but he could not be unfeeling. Though condemning her for the past, and considering it with high and unjust resentment, though perfectly careless of her, and though becoming attached to another, still he could not see her suffer, without the desire of giving her relief. It was a remainder of former sentiment; it was an impulse of pure, though unacknowledged friendship; it was a proof of his own warm and amiable heart, which she could not contemplate without emotions so compounded of pleasure and pain, that she knew not which prevailed. (91)

As I have pointed out, the language is clearly that of the narrator; it has the tripartite structure characteristic of the narrative voice. But it moves in and out, with almost cinematic effect, from narrative analysis of Anne's feelings (from the outside in), to a mimetic suggestion of her own perceptions (from the inside out, so to speak). I believe it succeeds in articulating for Anne, and in her own idiom, a complex web of feeling, perception, and judgment which she cannot, in the immediacy of the situation, articulate for herself. This mode gives a vividness impossible to the same emotion recollected in tranquillity; and at the same time it has a precision and clarity which enable us to contrast it with what we know (or at least suspect) of Wentworth's feelings and to sense the dramatic irony inherent in her limited perspective. Some ambiguity arises out of the dual perspective and remains in, for example, the last sentence which modulates from Anne's perspective to the narrator's description, so that the reader must judge where one ends and the other begins. Is this Anne's perspective, or the narrator's analysis? This sort of ambiguity seems deliberately structured to involve the reader, not only through empathy, but also through the exercise of discerning judgment.

This sort of ambiguity is even more prominent in the parallel accounts of Anne's and Wentworth's reactions to their first meeting in eight years:

'Altered beyond his knowledge!' Anne fully submitted, in silent, deep mortification. Doubtless it was so; and she could take no revenge, for he was not altered, or not for the worse These were words which could not but dwell with her. Yet she soon began to rejoice that she had heard them. They were of sobering tendency; they allayed agitation; they composed, and consequently must make her happier.

He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill; deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity.

He had been warmly attached to her, and had never seen a woman since whom he thought her equal; but, except for some natural sensation of curiosity, he had no desire of meeting her again. Her power with him was gone for ever. (60-1)

The phrases "Doubtless it was so," "they...must make her happier," and "Her power with him was gone for ever" carry a slight uncertainty: is

the character or the narrator speaking? This is a delicate balance which combines suspense and dramatic irony. And it also locates the suspense, not simply in the question, "What will happen?" but also "How accurate are their judgments of themselves and of each other, and how will they discover the truth?" The technique is very sophisticated, combining as it does the sensitivity to feeling and perspective with the external reality necessary to dramatic irony.

An example of this technique used in an ironic mode is the narrator's presentation of Mary's speech and feelings:

When the plan was made known to Mary, however, there was an end of all peace in it. She was so wretched, and so vehement, complained so much of injustice in being expected to go away, instead of Anne;--Anne, who was nothing to Louisa, while she was her sister, and had the best right to stay in Henrietta's stead! Why was not she to be as useful as Anne? And to go home without Charles, too--without her husband! No, it was too unkind! And, in short, she said more than her husband could long withstand... (115)

The narrator's words (particularly the phrase "in short...") and his mimetic presentation of her own noisy objections leaves no doubt that Mary is a pain to have around, especially in a difficult situation. But it stops just short of caricature by its sensitivity to her. We cannot approve of her, but we can begin to understand and perhaps even pity her, even as laughter mellows into amusement rather than ridicule. The dual focus of the technique makes possible this complexity of response. And later:

Mary had had her evils; but upon the whole, as was evident by her staying so long, she had found more to enjoy than to suffer. --Charles Hayter had been at Lyme oftener than suited her, and when they dined with the Harvilles there had been only a maid-servant to wait, and at first, Mrs Harville had always given Mrs Musgrove precedence; but then, she had received so very handsome an apology from her on finding out whose daughter she was, and there had been so much going on every day, there had been so many walks between their lodgings and the Harvilles, and she had got books from the library and changed them so often, that the balance had certainly been much in favour of Lyme. She had been taken to Charmouth too, and she had bathed, and she had gone to church, and there were a great many more people to look at in the church at Lyme than at Uppercross,--and all this, joined to the sense of being so very useful, had made really an agreeable fortnight. (129-30)

Again, there is the mixture of amused contempt and pity. By arranging it in this way, the narrator points out the contrast between Mary's view

of herself (the way in which she would like to be, and actually thinks she is, viewed), and her own words which devastatingly expose the reality of her little hypocrisies and superficialities. The dual focus of the technique explores the nature of Mary's perception of herself and of others' views of her, and does it so subtly that it becomes much fuller than caricature and applicable to more than just Mary.

Jane Austen's use of this erlebte Rede technique has definite historiographic significance. Dorrit Cohn says that isolated examples appear in La Fontaine and the medieval epics, but that "The first writer who made more extended use of the style is Jane Austen....[who] renders the rhythm of inner debate (rhetorical and highly self-conscious, to be sure) without letting the narrator's voice interfere." (C, 107) He says that, in the twentieth century, erlebte Rede "has become a standard style," and that "with the works of Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Joyce, Mann, Kafka, and Broch we have arrived at the very center of the narrated stream." (C, 107-8) However, Cohn very astutely points out that the modern novel uses a "stream-of-consciousness" technique which is related to but distinct from "narrated monologue." Cohn says that the stream-of-consciousness technique attempts to "render the consciousness directly, without the presence of a narrator" and to "render not the speech, but the 'prespeech' level of consciousness." (C, 108) What it actually does, however, is to "present the material of...consciousness in more or less logical order," disrupting "organized speech" in favor of an associative sequence of thoughts, disconnected words and phrases, or the fragmentation and regrouping of words themselves. (C, 109) Although perhaps not acknowledged or intended, the narrator is still very much present in the stream of consciousness novel. Thus Jane Austen is an early innovator of a technique which does not receive attention for a century, and then is taken in a somewhat different direction.

Willi Bühler views erlebte Rede as a manifestation of the Romantic interest in the inner life, in opposition to the "scientific-historical" attitude of the eighteenth century and its formal and moralistic predilections. Thus Bühler says of Jane Austen that:

Die E[erlebte Rede] tritt nun gerade bei einem Autor auf, dessen Grundhaltung wohl klassisch-rationalistisch ist, der mehr zur wissenschaftlich-empirischen Seite neigt, aber doch in der Zeit einer romantisch-bestimmten Neuorientierung des künstlerischen

Weltbildes lebte. Wenn Jane Austen nun auch im Gegensatz zu einer Grundhaltung ihrer Zeit schrieb und anfänglich eine bewusste Reaktion gegen Uebertreibungen der vorromantisch gefärbten Richtungen darstellte, so stand sie doch unter dem Bedürfnis des Zeitalters nach einer feiner differenzierten Kunst, welche besonders das tiefere und rascher pulsierende Innenleben wiedergeben und ästhetisch eine freiere Haltung einnehmen wollte. Um aber die Reichhaltigkeit und grössere Intensität des Lebens ihrer Gestalten in möglichster Stärke wiederzugeben, griff sie zu einem Darstellungsmittel, das die schon bekannten an künstlerischer Ausdruckskraft übertraf. Indem die E. den Stoff scheinbar vom Autor unabhängig macht und verselbständigt, tritt das Dargestellte dem Leser unmittelbarer gegenüber und ist von stärkerer Wirkung begleitet.¹⁸

Bühler credits Jane Austen with what amounts to innovation in the use of erlebte Rede. First, he says she takes it further than any previous writer: "Die Darstellung der E. bei Jane Austen zeigt die ganze Mannigfaltigkeit dieses Stilmittels und seine Ausbildung zum bewussten Stilelement. Aus unscheinbaren Anfängen sich entwickelnd, weist diese neue Ausdrucksart bei ihr schon die vielseitigste Anwendung auf."¹⁹ Bühler concludes with this acknowledgement of Jane Austen's enduring contribution to the art of fictional narrative: "Es bleibt aber das Verdienst Jane Austen's, zum ersten Male der reichen Möglichkeiten dieses Stilmittels gewahr worden zu sein und für seine Verwendung ein bestimmendes Vorbild gegeben zu haben."²⁰

I think it very likely that Jane Austen is indeed an innovator in the use of erlebte Rede or "narrated monologue" or whatever we wish to call it. I disagree, however, with Cohn's view of Jane Austen as simply an isolated example of a style that really begins in the twentieth century. This makes her seem like an isolated, ahistorical oddity who accidentally stumbled onto something. I also disagree with Bühler's view of erlebte Rede as an inherently Romantic phenomenon, and with his contention that there is a sharp disjunction in Jane Austen's oeuvre between eighteenth-century "scientific-historical" techniques and the Romantic tendency toward erlebte Rede. It is my own view that Jane Austen's use of erlebte Rede in fact combines evaluation and deep sensitivity to individual feeling and perception in the mode of presentation.

Ultimately, I prefer to view erlebte Rede as one aspect of Jane Austen's total narrative style in Persuasion, and as a way of developing Richardson's epistolary style. Erlebte Rede is of a piece with Jane Aus-

ten's narrative style as a whole; every aspect of it, like narrated monologue, fuses deep sensitivity to individual characters with strong evaluative commentary. Even represented speech catches individual idiom and personality, but also, through the mode of presentation--whether direct, or oblique, or epistolary--expresses the narrative perspective on the character. This style, though different in form, has many of the same concerns as are evident in Richardson's epistolary style. It manages to combine sensitivity and evaluation without sacrificing the integrity of either; it explores the limitations of and differences between individual perspectives; and it makes possible a deep analysis of character, with the focus on the complexities and conflicts of feeling, perception, and motive. In addition, Jane Austen's narrative style involves the reader in the immediacy of a character's situation, and also requires the exercise of perception and judgment. The extensive use of direct speech and letters requires sensitivity to the nuances of speech and to the evaluation implicit in them. And the ambiguity of narrated monologue requires considerable sensitivity and judgment. The reader must be sensitive to subtle indications of distance between the character's perceptions and those of the narrator. He must be able to compare the perspectives in order to sense the truth of a situation and to appreciate the dramatic irony. The reader is given considerable help in making the larger judgments about characters and actions; but there are many small details scattered about which the perceptive reader must piece together in order to fill in the richly nuanced dimensions of the story and the characters. It is on the basis of these common concerns and qualities that I suggest a significant relationship between Jane Austen's narrative style and the epistolary style of Richardson.

These similarities notwithstanding, Persuasion is told by an external narrator; this produces some different effects and, I believe, overcomes many of the problems involved in the epistolary style. The narrator serves as the central focus for a number of different modes of representation and expression. This makes for greater compactness, because the narrator, through direct, explicit speech, can set up background, describe, and provide firm moral coordinates and guides for judgment. This leaves room for nuances without making Persuasion dismayingly long. This focus on the external narrator also opens up more possible

modes of representation and expression, and exploits their distinctive expressive nuances. For example, the external narrator in Persuasion is free to represent speech directly, or obliquely, or through letters. He is able to mime and give shape to unarticulated thoughts, feelings, and perceptions through narrated monologue. This variety strikes me as a great advance over the use of letters alone, in which all the characters' words are presented in basically the same straightforward manner which minimizes the nuances expressed by the mode of presentation. With a central narrator, all of these different modes come into their own as modes of expression which have distinctive nuances of their own. A narrator who himself represents the characters' speech or feelings has the option of modifying the mode of representation so that the mode itself adds nuances of the narrator's own attitude or perspective to the character's words or feelings. And since letters in Persuasion are not the central technical device, but are used only occasionally within their personal and social contexts, they retain their distinctive quality as letters and can be exploited therein for unique expressive purposes.²¹

Finally, I believe that Persuasion gains in subtlety because of these modifications in technique. It seems to me that because the characters' words need not bear the whole responsibility for providing evaluative commentary, that because they have a narrator to tell their story and even to speak for them on occasion, the characters themselves can be more ordinary, more "mixed," and can speak ordinary language and be in ordinary situations. And their words, when they do speak, can contribute to other, more subtle aspects of characterization. It also seems to me that evaluation and judgment can be more subtle; the narrator can give us the highly nuanced, complex major judgments that must not be misunderstood, and other judgments can be more subtly given. In addition, the narrator-reader relationship gains in subtlety. The "narrated monologue" is a very sophisticated way of combining suspense and dramatic irony, of combining sensitivity and evaluation. The narrator can provide guidelines while leaving room for the reader's own judgment, and can ask for a relatively complex response to a character or situation.

In my judgment, then, Jane Austen achieves in Persuasion a combination of sensitivity and evaluation comparable to the epistolary style, with enormous precision, compactness, and flexibility. Jane Austen's

narrative style begins, I believe, as a conservation or consolidation of Richardson's innovative achievement; but it in fact goes far beyond this and constitutes an innovation in its own right.

4.2.2 Contribution to the Historical Situation

It is also possible to view Persuasion, with respect to this achievement in narrative style, as relevant to its contemporary novel context. As I have suggested earlier, I believe that Godwin uses the novel as a "vehicle" for popularizing his political/moral philosophy and getting it to that large, ordinarily-inaccessible group, the middle-class novel-readers. In Caleb Williams he uses the characters and the story "to teach a lesson" and to provide "a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism" which are to be overcome; although he tries to do this "without detracting from the interest and passion, by which a story of this sort ought to be characterized," the novel is still a "vehicle," a means to an end. Likewise, Mrs West uses the novel as a vehicle for illustrating the horrors attending Godwin's ideas and the benefits of conservatist morality. And like Godwin, who uses the novel to reach "persons, whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach," Mrs West uses the novel to oppose Godwin and his fellows, the stakes being the moral condition and allegiance of that sizeable, increasingly important group of novel-readers. If my evaluation is accurate, these novelists subordinate the story and characters to the expression of moral and political ideology. On the other hand, the gothic novelists, like Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe, "dwell upon the sensations of their central characters, and Mrs. Radcliffe especially learns to present her narrative subjectively, every scene tense because it is permeated by the irrational terror experienced by the heroine..." (B, 30) These novelists exploit current interests in abnormal psychology within an essentially conservatist moralizing framework.

In my judgment, Persuasion offers a viable alternative whose distinctive nature is suggested by its complex narrative style. To put things crudely, I believe that this style avoids both a narrative stranglehold that manipulates characters like stick-puppets or marionettes, and also an uncritical immersion in a character's psyche or perspective.

In Persuasion, Jane Austen draws us into an intimate relationship with the characters, so that we know them and care about what they feel, think, and do, and about what happens to them. At the same time she guides our perception and judgment toward understanding and evaluation. The dual focus of "narrative monologue" facilitates sympathetic, involved evaluation that enables us to understand and evaluate a character from inside. The cumulative effect of explicit and implicit evaluative suggestions and of the shaped and patterned structure is a sense of the deeper significance and implications of the characters and their actions. I believe this narrative style honors the integrity and artistic identity of the characters and the story. At the same time it makes us think about the deeper meanings and implications of everyday experience in a way that makes contact, on a deep level, with the contemporary discussions of moral and political issues. Without mentioning the French Revolution or the various debates surrounding it, Persuasion speaks to many of the issues, not as a moral conduct book or as a political pamphlet, but as an art work, with the pregnant and nuanced indirectness of metaphor.

NOTES

CHAPTER I: THE CONTEXTS OF PERSUASION

- 1 Harald Høffding, A History of Modern Philosophy, 2 vols., tr. B. E. Meyer (London: Macmillan, 1900; reprint ed., 1924), I:375-376. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by H, followed by the volume number and page number.
- 2 G. S. Rousseau, "Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres: Towards Defining the Origins of Sensibility," in Studies in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. III: Papers Presented at the Third David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, Canberra 1973, ed. R. F. Brissenden and J. C. Eade (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 145.
- 3 R. F. Brissenden, Virtue in Distress (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 40.
- 4 Brissenden, pp. 42-43.
- 5 Susan G. Auty, The Comic Spirit of Eighteenth-Century Novels (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1975), pp. 9-10.
- 6 Auty, p. 9.
- 7 Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, tr. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 105-106,
- 8 R. L. Brett, The Third Earl of Shaftesbury: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1959), pp. 81-82.
- 9 Cassirer, pp. 17, 99-100.
- 10 R. F. Brissenden, "Authority, Guilt, and Anxiety in The Theory of Moral Sentiments," Texas Studies in Literature and Language XI No. 2 (Summer 1969): 946.
- 11 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 954.
- 12 Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (London and Edinburgh, 1792, the seventh edition), Pt. VII, Par. III, Ch. II, Vol. II, 336-338, quoted by Brissenden, "Authority," p. 955.
- 13 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 955.
- 14 Richard Kroner, Kant's Weltanschauung, tr. John E. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 70-71. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by K, followed by the page number.
- 15 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 956.

- 16 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 962.
- 17 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 948.
- 18 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 949.
- 19 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 949.
- 20 Brissenden, "Authority," pp. 949-950.
- 21 Brissenden, "Authority," pp. 954-955.
- 22 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 951.
- 23 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 961.
- 24 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 958.
- 25 Brissenden, "Authority," p. 961.
- 26 William Hogarth, The Analysis of Beauty (1753) (Menston, Yorkshire: Scholar Press, 1971), p. vii. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by page numbers in parentheses.
- 27 Ronald Paulson, Emblem and Expression (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), p. 211. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by P, followed by the page number.
- 28 Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourses on Art, ed. Robert R. Wark (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975). Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by the number of the discourse and the line numbers.
- 29 "Neoclassical" is a slippery term. Relevant literature includes Ronald Paulson, Emblem and Expression (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975); R. S. Crane, "English Neoclassical Criticism: An Outline Sketch," in Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern, ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952: 372-388; R. S. Crane, "On Writing the History of English Criticism, 1650-1800," The University of Toronto Quarterly XXII (April 1953): 376-391; Robert Rosenblum, Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); Hugh Honour, Neoclassicism (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968); William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Book, 1978), Vol. I: Classical and Neo-classical Criticism.
 Rosenblum, in trying to define this term, takes as the central characteristic allusion to or imitation of Greco-Roman antiquity. He refutes the common idea that "Neoclassic artists were content to produce slavish and hence stillborn imitations of Greco-Roman antiquity. With retrospective nostalgia, they presumably copied a past they believed greater than the present, and were willing even to submerge their own artistic personalities in this veneration of the antique." (3) Rather, he maintains that "...that art of the late

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which offers allusions to Greco-Roman antiquity in terms of subject matter and of borrowed classical forms is fully as various and contradictory, if not more so, than the art subsumed under such other broad categories as Gothic, Mannerist, or Baroque." (4) Thus Rosenblum finds Neoclassic Erotic, Neoclassic Archaeologic, Neoclassic Stoic, and so on, denoting the way in which these motifs are used.

I would like to view "neoclassicism" as a real period; but I prefer to define it according to traits in artworks themselves, not according to sources, which seems to focus on a not-very-important similarity and to smoothe over some very important differences. And Rosenblum points out that many neoclassical painters did not go back to antiquity, but painted contemporary history. (37) I would like to construe the matter in a slightly different way. If we take Winckelmann's edle Einfalt and stille Grösse as a kind of neoclassic credo, this might explain the neoclassical interest in antiquity (along with, say, Romantic artists, in their own way) but also in anything else which can be taken to manifest these qualities. Thus they may take deathbed scenes, whether classical or contemporary, to express "grave and simple pathos." (39) The interest in antiquity may also be just one example of a deep consciousness of history and tradition. Painters like Winckelmann, Mengs, and Reynolds are very aware of where they stand historically; I believe that they are interested in gathering together "the best that has been said and done" from past times and working off of it themselves. Thus they may view antiquity as an example of normative art; but they also take Raphael in this way. I suggest that, regardless of source, neoclassic art is concerned with a deeply moral edle Einfalt and stille Grösse and culls the best of art history to conserve and develop it.

In addition, I should like to suggest that neoclassicism is not a single trait, but a cluster or configuration of several traits, not all of which must be present, or present in the same way, in all neoclassical artworks. Thus Wimsatt and Brooks speak of the "neoclassic universal" and the "grandeur of generality." (331) Honour speaks of "sobering lessons on the more homely virtues, stoic exemplars and unspoilt and uncorrupted simplicity of abstinence and continence, of noble self-sacrifice and heroic patriotism" (19) and says that "an equally severe and chastened style was required for the expression of these noble and edifying themes; an honest, straightforward anti-illusionistic style capable of blunt uncompromising statements--of sober clarity and archaic purity...." (20) Furthermore, Honour notes the Neoclassic "firm and unequivocal contours... the rigorously frontal view...the elementary clarity of a simple perspective box....sombre colours which tended towards the primary and eventually, in the interests of truth and honesty, to the elimination of colour altogether in favour of the most rudimentary linear techniques. There could be no visual deception with pure unshaded outline." (20) If we take neoclassic to be a cultural "spirit" of Zeitgeist, then we need not attempt the impossible, i.e. a tight definition by which to include some and absolutely exclude others, but a cluster of traits surrounding a general attitude or interest.

30 Frederick W. Hilles, "Sir Joshua's Prose," in The Age of Johnson: Essays Presented to Chauncey Brewster Tinker, ed. Frederick W. Hilles

(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 53.

- 31 Hilles, pp. 55, 57.
- 32 Hilles, p. 55.
- 33 Hilles, p. 58.
- 34 Hilles, p. 59.
- 35 W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, Anchor Book, 1972), p. 96. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by W, followed by the page number.
- 36 Mary Lascelles, Jane Austen and Her Art (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939; reprint ed., Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 109.
- 37 Ian Watt, "Defoe and Richardson on Homer: A Study of the Relation of Novel and Epic in the Early Eighteenth Century," Review of English Studies, New Series III No. 12 (October 1952): 325.
- 38 Watt, p. 339.
- 39 Alan D. McKillop, "Richardson, Young, and the Conjectures," Modern Philology XXII No. 4 (May 1925): 393.
- 40 R. F. Brissenden, "Sterne and Painting," in Of Books and Humankind: Essays and Poems Presented to Bonamy Dobrée, ed. John Butt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 98.
- 41 Brissenden, "Sterne," p. 99.
- 42 Brissenden, "Sterne," p. 99.
- 43 Brissenden, "Sterne," p. 99.
- 44 Arthur Heiserman, The Novel Before the Novel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 221.
- 45 Heiserman, p. 221, note 2.
- 46 Heiserman, p. 221, note 2.
- 47 Heiserman, p. 222, note 3.
- 48 Heiserman, p. 222, note 3.
- 49 Auty, p. 5.
- 50 Auty, p. 4.
- 51 Brissenden, "Sterne," p. 107.

- 52 Roger Robinson, "Henry Fielding and the English Rococo," in Studies in the Eighteenth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), Vol. II: Papers Presented at the Second David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, Canberra 1970, ed. R. F. Brissenden, p. 108.
- 53 Robinson, p. 111.
- 54 Brissenden, "Sterne," p. 107.
- 55 Robinson, p. 108.
- 56 Robinson, p. 108.
- 57 Auty, p. 181.
- 58 C. S. Lewis, "Addison," in Eighteenth-Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. James L. Clifford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 145,146.
- 59 Auty, p. 54.
- 60 Andrew Wright, Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), p. 72.
- 61 Auty, p. 39.
- 62 Auty, p. 53.
- 63 Auty, pp. 39-40.
- 64 Auty, p. 39.
- 65 Auty, p. 40.
- 66 John Traugott, "The Shandean Comic Vision of Locke," in Laurence Sterne: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. John Traugott (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 138.
- 67 Traugott, p. 136.
- 68 Traugott, p. 136.
- 69 Traugott, p. 137.
- 70 Traugott, p. 142.
- 71 Auty, p. 122.
- 72 Auty, p. 103.
- 73 Auty, p. 103.
- 74 Lewis, pp. 155-156.

- 75 Lewis, p. 155.
- 76 Lewis, p. 155.
- 77 Lewis, p. 153.
- 78 Henry Mackenzie, The Man of Feeling (London: Printed for W. Strahan and T. Cadell, new edition, 1778), p. 220.
- 79 Kenneth L. Moler, Jane Austen's Art of Allusion (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), p. 193.
- 80 Moler, p. 194.
- 81 Moler, p. 194.
- 82 Moler, p. 204.
- 83 Moler, pp. 195-196.
- 84 Moler, p. 198.
- 85 Mackenzie, pp. 269-270.
- 86 Mackenzie, p. 211.
- 87 Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 124. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by B, followed by the page number.
- 88 Mackenzie, p. viii.
- 89 William Godwin, Caleb Williams: or, Things as They Are (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. xxiii.
- 90 Gary Kelly, The English Jacobin Novel 1780-1805 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 16.
- 91 I have chosen to classify these novels according to "period" traits. I am aware that the terms "sentiment" and "sensibility" are often used to classify these novels. The enormous amount of relevant literature includes R. F. Brissenden, Virtue in Distress (London: Macmillan, 1974); E. A. Baker, History of the English Novel (London, 1930), Vol. 5; Edith Birkhead, "Sentiment and Sensibility in the English novel," Essays and Studies XI (1925): 92-116. Also of related interest are A. R. Humphreys, "'The Friend of Mankind' (1700-60)--An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility," Review of English Studies XXIV No. 95 (July 1948): 203-218; Jean H. Hagstrum, "'Such, Such Were the Joys': The Boyhood of the Man of Feeling," in Changing Taste in Eighteenth-Century Art and Literature, by Robert E. Moore and Jean H. Hagstrum (University of California, Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1972); Anita Brookner, Greuze: The Rise and Fall of an Eighteenth-Century Phenomenon (London: Paul

Elek, 1972); R. S. Crane, "Suggestions Toward a Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling,'" English Literary History I, No. 3 (December 1934): 205-230; Louis I. Bredvold, The Natural History of Sensibility (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962); R. F. Brissenden, "'Sentiment': Some Uses of the Word in the Writings of David Hume," Studies in the Eighteenth Century: Papers Presented at the David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, ed. R. F. Brissenden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968); G. S. Rousseau, "Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres: Towards Defining the Origins of Sensibility," Studies in the Eighteenth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), Vol. III: Papers Presented at the Third David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, Canberra 1973, ed. R. F. Brissenden and J. C. Eade; (Donald Greene, "Latitudinarianism and Sensibility: The Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling' Reconsidered," Modern Philology 75 (November 1977): 159-183; Erik Erämetsä, A Study of the Word 'Sentimental' and of Other Linguistic Characteristics of Eighteenth Century Sentimentalism in England (Helsinki, 1951).

These studies have been enormously helpful in exploring and clarifying important aspects of eighteenth-century thought. The terms are richly connotative and highly nuanced; they are in some ways core concepts that provide great illumination on the age. But precisely because the terms are so rich, I find it difficult to limit their meanings enough to be able to use them as categories for historiography. What are we to make of a term like "the sentimental novel" that is used of such diverse phenomena as Clarissa, A Sentimental Journey, and The Man of Feeling--especially when this term now has, in addition, deep pejorative connotations? The term seems to pick up a general similarity like "feeling" (whatever that means), but to obscure deep differences; for example, Clarissa's deep psychic and moral sensitivity to nuances of right and wrong differs from Yorick's psychic-moral-sexual tenderness and vulnerability, and both differ from Harley's idealizing other-worldly feeling for what is moral--but all are called "sentimental." In addition, there are the second-rate tear-jerkers, which are also called "sentimental." And if the category overlooks some differences, it also ignores some similarities. Tom Jones is generally not considered a "sentimental" novel, although, as Ronald Paulson has pointed out, feeling is exceedingly important in Tom Jones. Often "sentimental" seems to become the antonym of "tough-minded" or the like, which confuses the issues. Thus if one feels that Tom Jones is tough-minded, one is likely to oppose it to "sentimental" novels and to overlook real similarities. The problem is complicated tremendously by the similar problem with "sensibility."

The most helpful attempt to use "sentiment" as a category is R. F. Brissenden's Virtue in Distress. He articulates the problem: it is "...rather odd that Richardson and Sterne should both be regarded as sentimental novelists. What could we mean by 'sentimentalism' or the 'novel of sentiment'?" (xi) Clarissa, he concludes, is a "novel of sentiment" with "sentiment" meaning "thoughts, opinions or judgments of a specifically moral or philosophical character" (99)--and thus "a thoughtful, moral work, and one which presented human passion in a sober and realistic rather than a fancifully romantic manner." (101) "Novel of sentiment" is a very general term, one "which could

be applied just as validly to The Portrait of a Lady or to Ulysses, La Recherche du temps Perdu, Malone Dies, or any other novel where the emphasis is not on physical action but on reflection, on the inner lives of the characters." (98) On the other hand, "It is after the publication of A Sentimental Journey in 1768 that the mildew begins to spread across the surface of the novel. It is from this time on that novels with titles like The Delicate Distress, Excessive Sensibility, and The Curse of Sentiment begin to appear in their dozens....The novel of sentiment...gives way to the novel of sensibility." (115) Brissenden's categories seem, to me, to confound different issues: the distinction between "period" or Zeitgeist and individual perspective, and the distinction between first- and second-rate works. Thus "novel of sentiment" has a distinctly Richardsonian flavor that by definition excludes Tom Jones; on the other hand, it is so general that it includes Ulysses. And "novel of sensibility" writes off The Man of Feeling along with all the second-raters so that its integrity and genuine social concern cannot be appreciated.

The exploration of "sentiment" and "sensibility" does help, as Bredvold says, to correct "Matthew Arnold's dictum that the eighteenth century was an age of prose and reason," without feeling. (5) Moreover, the Crane/Greene debate and the article by Hagstrum compare and contrast eighteenth-century sentiment and sensibility with their seventeenth-century and Romantic counterparts. I think they are getting at the fact that feeling is a creaturely reality with which thinkers and writers in every age must come to terms. Thus feeling can be seen as an axis in terms of which we might be able to compare, for example, Rococo, Neoclassical, and Romantic sensibility. I would like to use the terms as heuristic devices; but I am hesitant to use them as historiographic categories because I am not certain about the problematics I might inherit along with them.

CHAPTER II: THE ANALYSIS OF PERSUASION

- 1 At this point in my development, I find helpful the work of some so-called structuralist critics: Roger Fowler, Linguistics and the Novel (London: Methuen, 1977); E. L. Epstein, Language and Style (London: Methuen, 1978); Seymour Chatman, Story and Discourse (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978). I find congenial Fowler's exploration of two elements other than content: "text (the shape of the message) and discourse (the speech participation and attitudinal colouring imparted by the author)." (72) Text is "...a sequence of phrases and sentences leading a reader's attention along the left-to-right 'information structure' of a passage--working progressively or disruptively to allow him to retrieve the meaning from the surface structure in an ordered (or disordered!) sequence." (49) This is a very concrete, physical way of viewing the text which opens up, I think, some qualities of a text other than its referent. And for Fowler discourse is "...the property of language which mediates the interpersonal relationships which must be caused by any act of communication. In fiction, the linguistics of discourse applies most naturally to point of view, the author's rhetorical stance towards his assumed readers." (52) By "point of view" Fowler has in mind

not only "the aesthetic-perceptual angle from which the object of representation is to be seen" (72) but also "attitude" or "world-view." (45) I do not mean to call myself a structuralist. I have several problems with this approach, and I do not, in any case, accept it as my total view of literary narrative; but it does open up for me some neglected aspects of the text. I also find helpful Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Patrick Cruttwell, "Makers and Persons," Hudson Review XII (Winter, 1959-60): 487-507; and Walker Gibson, "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," College English XI (February 1950): 265-269. Particularly helpful is Booth's highly refined critical apparatus of real author, implied author, narrator, and reader (151-165). I also add Fowler's term, "assumed reader," to take care of what Booth and Gibson tentatively call the "mock reader." I have just become aware of Seymour Chatman's Story and Discourse, which combines these two approaches, and which I think deserves attention.

- 2 The Novels of Jane Austen, 5 vols., ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), Vol. 5: Northanger Abbey and Persuasion. All the quotations from Persuasion in this paper are from this edition; subsequent references will be indicated in the text by page numbers in parentheses.
- 3 The information, here and elsewhere, about streets and lodgings in Bath comes from Christopher Gillie, A Preface to Jane Austen (London: Longman, 1974), pp. 169-171.
- 4 Norman Page, The Language of Jane Austen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), pp. 104, 109.
- 5 C. S. Lewis, "A Note on Jane Austen," in Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Ian Watt (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 28.
- 6 K. C. Phillipps, Jane Austen's English (London: Andre Deutsch, 1970), p. 71.
- 7 Phillipps, p. 200.
- 8 Phillipps, p. 200.
- 9 Phillipps, p. 111.
- 10 Phillipps, p. 112.
- 11 Page, p. 79.
- 12 Page, p. 196.
- 13 Page, p. 197.
- 14 In using masculine pronouns with reference to the narrator's persona, I do not mean to imply 1) that I am, or that Jane Austen is, sexist; or 2) that the narrator is a male or speaks from a distinctly mascu-

line point of view. I do mean to differentiate between the implied author and the narrator. Beyond this, I shall say merely that the narrator's judgments and evaluations do not appear to me to bear a distinctly masculine or feminine stamp. "She" seemed to me to make this an issue, and, since I do not wish to call the narrator "it," I have chosen the masculine pronoun as (traditionally, at least) the more generic and the least emphatic. I do realize that it might be taken differently these days, and I shall be sorry if I have unwittingly created an artificial and unnecessary problem.

- 15 Warren Roberts, in Jane Austen and the French Revolution (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 115, helpfully conflates a number of passages in the letters which, he says, show her "capable of brutal irony": "Describing a ball that she had attended in 1800, Austen said that there were only a 'very few beauties'. One acquaintance had not looked well, leaving the field to a married woman, Mrs Blount. 'She appeared exactly as she did in September, with the same broad face, diamond bandeau, white shoes, pink husband, and fat neck.' (L,91) Among the other guests was a 'vulgar, broad-featured girl,' another girl who was 'a queer animal with a white neck,' a married woman who had 'got rid of some part of her child, & danced away with great activity looking by no means very large,' a girl with 'a good deal of nose,' two sisters who were dressed 'all in black' and had 'bad breath,' a husband who was 'ugly enough, uglier even than his cousin,' and a general and his wife who had, respectively, 'the Gout', and 'the jaundice.' (L,91-2) The following year she described a 'stupid party' that she had attended the previous evening. She respected Mrs Chamberlayne for 'doing her hair well,' but she 'could not feel a more tender sentiment.' Miss Langley was 'like any other short girl with a broad nose & wide mouth, fashionable dress and exposed bosom.' Admiral Stanhope was 'a gentlemanlike Man, but then his legs are too short, & his tail too long.' In a masterpiece of understatement she summed up her feelings about these people by saying 'I cannot anyhow continue to find people agreeable.' (L,128-9)"
- 16 #84 To Cassandra Austen, Thursday 23 September 1813, Letters to Her Sister Cassandra and Others, coll. and ed. by R. W. Chapman (London: Oxford University Press, 1932; second ed., 1952), p. 330.

CHAPTER III: THE KINSHIPS OF PERSUASION

- 1 These are my own attempts at non-philosophical designations of concepts which are argued philosophically by Calvin G. Seerveld in "Towards a Cartographic Methodology for Art Historiography," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 39 No. 2 (Winter, 1980): 143-154.
- 2 cf. Reuben A. Brower, "From the Iliad to Jane Austen, via The Rape of the Lock," in Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975; reprint ed., 1977): 43-60. Brower says that "Jane Austen is also in her way a poet: her control of sentence rhythm, of ironic play on words, is often

almost as precise as Pope's," and that certain dialogues from Pride and Prejudice are "almost as full of ironic ambiguities as any of the wittiest passages in The Rape of the Lock." (54) Later, he says of The Rape, "This world of parodied crises and of deeper and more permanent moral and emotional concerns lightly implied in an ironic surface approaches closely to the fictional creations of Jane Austen." (59) This last may be too strong for my taste; I am not certain that Jane Austen is all this light and ironic. I sense that the deep moral concern is much more up front in her novels, and that this is indicative of a "period" shift from rococo to neoclassical. For the rest, however, I sense that indeed there are similarities between Jane Austen and Pope, especially in the precise use of words and rhythms.

- 3 Page, p. 101.
- 4 Page, p. 97.
- 5 Page, pp. 109-110.
- 6 Lewis, "Jane Austen," p. 28.
- 7 Page, p. 82.
- 8 Philipps, pp. 151-152.
- 9 Lascelles, p. 109.
- 10 "Julia Kavanagh on Jane Austen," in Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, ed. B. C. Southam (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 194-195.
- 11 Virginia Woolf, "Jane Austen," in Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Ian Watt (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 22-23.
- 12 Marvin Mudrick, Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 224.
- 13 The novel most likely to be contrasted with Persuasion in this way is Sense and Sensibility. But Susan Morgan, In the Meantime (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), says that "sense" does not exclude "sensibility"; rather, as in Elinor Dashwood's case, it means "...having both deep affections and the willingness to control the desires of her own heart for the sake of the people she loves," (115) or in the case of Anne Elliot, it means "the interdependence of lucid vision and deep emotion." (175) "In Austen's work," she says, "intelligence is always a matter of the heart. There is no sense without sensibility...there is no clarity without involvement." (172) Likewise, in his very sensitive reading of Sense and Sensibility, Jean H. Hagstrum, Sex and Sensibility (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), says that "...the sister who possesses sense does not thereby become cold, dry, unemotional....Austen is of course not opposed to feeling, only to the excess of it, only to lack of control, only to the abandonment of the whole being to its dominance."

(272) In my judgment, there is a fundamental continuity in all of Jane Austen's novels, including Persuasion. This is not to say that there is not a difference of emphasis or a deepening of feeling in Persuasion. It still values control, but also acknowledges that feeling at times bursts out and will not be controlled. For example, after meeting Wentworth again, Anne "began to reason with herself, and try to be feeling less" but "with all her reasonings, she found, that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing." (60) As she sits at the piano, in spite of her intentions, "her eyes would sometimes fill with tears." (71) And after Wentworth takes young Walter off her back, "She was ashamed of herself, quite ashamed of being so nervous, so overcome by such a trifle; but so it was." (81) Wentworth, too, writes his letter "under the irresistible governance" of his feelings and thus "had seized a sheet of paper, and poured out his feelings." (241) As I have pointed out, words like "burst," "poured," and so on, used of feeling, seem to indicate a realization that feelings are primal and cannot, indeed must not, always be controlled. This emphasis may be somewhat new, but it is more of a deepening of awareness than a sharp break.

- 14 William A. Walling, "The Glorious Anxiety of Motion: Jane Austen's Persuasion," The Wordsworth Circle VII No. 4 (Autumn 1976), p. 338. This entire number is dedicated to Jane Austen. Gene W. Ruoff says in his introduction that "...omitting Jane Austen from our general discussions of English Romanticism impoverishes our understanding of that phenomenon." (290)
- 15 Walling, p. 337.
- 16 Walling, p. 336.
- 17 Gene W. Ruoff, "Anne Elliot's Dowry: Reflections on the Ending of Persuasion," The Wordsworth Circle VII No. 4 (Autumn, 1976), p. 344.
- 18 Ruoff, p. 345.
- 19 Stuart M. Tave, "Jane Austen and One of Her Contemporaries," in Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 66.
- 20 Tave, p. 67.
- 21 Tave, p. 67.
- 22 Tave, p. 68.
- 23 Tave, p. 69.
- 24 John Wiltshire, "A Romantic Persuasion?" The Critical Review No. 14 (1971), p. 11.
- 25 Wiltshire, p. 13.
- 26 Wiltshire, p. 16.

- 27 Wiltshire, pp. 15-16.
- 28 Wiltshire, p. 15.
- 29 Athenian Oracle, 3rd ed., III (1728), p. 193, quoted by Alan D. McKillop, Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 135.
- 30 Reprinted in Family Lectures (1815), p. 706, 'quoted by McKillop, Samuel Richardson, p. 135.
- 31 Samuel Richardson, Author's Preface to Clarissa, 8 vols. (London, 1785), I:ix-x.
- 32 Richardson, Preface, I:vii-viii.
- 33 McKillop, Richardson, p. 135.
- 34 McKillop, Richardson, p. 127.
- 35 Robert D. Moynihan, "Clarissa and the Enlightened Woman as Literary Heroine," Journal of the History of Ideas XXXVI (January-March 1975), p. 160. Moynihan says: "Ruth and Abigail became the new heroines of the Puritan preachers in the seventeenth century, for both revealed independence, strength of spirit, and equality of soul. Given values which emphasized the importance of mind and soul, women would understand that 'no lover should come courting unless he meant to offer marriage....' With such expectations, Protestant society dictated the change from the marriage of convenience and the double standard. Indeed, the 'vessel of man' could for the first time expect to exercise her own will, refusing, in Defoe's phrase, to enter into 'Matrimonial Whoredom,' finding Milton's requisite of 'mutual consent' more commonly accepted: 'The consent of parents, if living, should not be wanting....But the mutual consent of the parties themselves is naturally the first and most important requisite; for there can be no love or good will, and consequently no marriage, without mutual consent.' The theory and practice of greater spiritual equality left little confusion about the integrity of conscience and soul, whether defined by Milton or his more liberal theological and philosophical successors."
- 36 Samuel Richardson, Clarissa, 8 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, The Shakespeare Head edition, 1930). In this chapter, the numbers (roman and arabic) in parentheses in the text refer to volume and page numbers of this edition.
- 37 Margaret Anne Doody, A Natural Passion (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), p. 191. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by D, followed by the page number.
- 38 The animal imagery is used of fallen human nature in general, and suggests that Lovelace is victorious only as a predator in this lower, natural realm. Ms. Doody says that "The animal imagery in Clarissa is harsh and frightening. Even the animals of farm and barnyard

are used to suggest ugliness, lust, or stupidity. The cock gives the hen a grain of corn, a 'dirty pearl', so that he may tread her. The greedy, stupid Joseph Leman looks forward to his marriage with Betty, his 'pretty Sowe', and the happy time to come when they will keep 'the Blew Bore' as his master promises....

Man in general is an animal, and one of the worst of animals:

Lords of the Creation!--who can forbear indignant Laughter!

...For what has he of his own, but a very mischievous, monkey-like, bad nature? Yet thinks himself at liberty to kick, and cuff, and elbow out every worthier creature: And when he has none of the animal creation to hunt down and abuse, will make use of his power...to oppress the less powerful and weaker of his own Species!

Human beings are by nature cruel: 'There is more of the Savage in human nature than we are commonly aware of'....Man shares in the universal savagery of creation. 'All the animals in the creation are more or less in a state of hostility with each other', as Anna Howe notices, illustrating her point with her own fable drawn from the behaviour of her game chickens: 'Peck and be hanged said I...for I see it is the nature of the beast.' (340-1)" The contrast with Clarissa is striking. She is not a predator, but a victim. She is not an animal at all, but a martyred saint, like Saint Cecilia, or an angel. Incidentally, this sort of imagery makes Clarissa different from the benevolent optimism of Fielding, for example.

39 McKillop, Richardson, p. 136.

40 Elizabeth Bergen Brophy, Samuel Richardson: The Triumph of Craft (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974), p. 99. Ms. Brophy says that "Clarissa marvels that Lovelace has not been detected in his various disguises, 'for it is impossible that any disguise can hide the gracefulness of his figure' (I 446), and she later confesses to Anna Howe that 'had not my foolish eye been too much attached' (II 277) she would never have begun to correspond with him. Clarissa, commenting on her situation, exclaims, 'How, my dear, am I driven on one side, and invited on the other!' (I 409)....Solmes is mean and grasping, but Lovelace is generous and just. He is a good landlord who manages his estates with both kindness and skill. His learning, judgment, and taste, his epistolary style (and ability to spell) all contrast with the vulgarity and ignorance of Solmes. Lovelace's greatest fault is his sexual promiscuity.... but Clarissa clearly states that in her eyes 'virtue' encompasses many qualities, not merely sexual purity. When Solmes offers to prove Lovelace's vice to her by tales of his amorous exploits, she replies, 'Mr. Lovelace may have vices you have not. You may have others, which he has not' (I 395)."

41 Frederick W. Hilles, "The Plan of Clarissa," in Samuel Richardson: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. John Carroll (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 87.

42 Hilles, "Plan," p. 87.

43 Hilles, "Plan," pp. 87-88. Hilles says: "Belford discovers 'a kind

of holy love for this Angel.' Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lovick know that they have an angel in their house, as does the clergyman who sees her there (VI,328,390; VII,214). Even Mrs. Sinclair and young James Harlowe agree on this point (VIII,59,282). 'In short, Ladies, declares Lovelace (VI,243f), 'in a word, my Lord, Miss Clarissa Harlowe is an Angel....What then, Lovelace, are you?--'....Just before and just after the rape [Anna] calls him devil in all seriousness (I,76;V,267,VI,158). The maid at Mrs. Moore's could not keep her eye from his foot, 'expecting no doubt, every minute to see it discover itself to be cloven' (V,89). After the rape his best friend asks him if he be not the devil, while Clarissa writes: 'O Lovelace, you are Satan himself' (V,317,335). When Lovelace compares himself to Milton's devil it is to Satan the hero (V,88). Just as Milton's Satan is degraded, metamorphosed into a reptile, so is Richardson's. It is not the gay and dashing hero who sees Clarissa after the rape. 'Lips trembling, limbs quaking, voice inward, hesitating, broken--Never surely did miscreant look so like a miscreant!' 'The Angel, as soon as she found her wings, flew from me. I, the reptile kneeler, the despicable slave, no more the proud victor, arose' (V,348;VI,27). And after he learns of her death he 'sits grinning like a man in straw; curses and swears, and is confounded gloomy; and creeps into holes and corners, like an old hedghog hunted for his grease' (VII,468)."

- 44 Hilles, "Plan," p. 90.
- 45 Doody, p. 238. Says Ms. Doody: "The dream is part of the novel's symbolic structure. It is a parallel to Clarissa's dream at the beginning of the novel, when she too dreams of suffocation, falling into a pit, death. (II,283) It is a focal point for the symbols of the book: Clarissa, metaphorically always an 'angel', is now visibly and explicitly a saint, soaring heavenward, whereas Lovelace, shrouded in black, is fallen, damned. Clarissa has always been elevated; Lovelace has felt her superiority to him. Lovelace has always been 'base', 'low', a 'devil'. Their true relationship is expressed once for all. From the beginning, he has been desiring to dig a pit for her, (III,183) and he is the ultimate prey of the everlasting pit, 'a hole more frightful than that of Elden'....The effect is of a picture of the heavens and middle space electrified by light; only the figures at the foreground remain in darkness, gesticulating, heavily massed and sombrely coloured, an effect like that in, for example, Guido Reni's Assumption of the Virgin." (238)
- 46 With respect to this incident, Ms. Doody makes an observation that is, I believe, extremely helpful for understanding the novel as a whole. She says: "Clarissa orders her coffin, to the dismay of her household. She keeps it in her room: 'It is placed near the window, like a harpsichord, tho' covered over to the ground. And when she is so ill, that she cannot well go to her closet, she writes and reads upon it, as others would upon a desk or table.' This 'shocking and solemn whimsy', as the apothecary calls it, stands out as one of the most bizarre and surprising things in the novel--particularly surprising to find in a work written as late as 1748. It reminds us abruptly of the seventeenth-century use of the memento

mori, of John Donne wearing his winding sheet....Taylor and Donne would have understood her working upon her coffin; it is difficult to imagine such an idea occurring to Addison." (174-5) I think it might help to view Clarissa as on some level having an affinity to writers like Taylor and Donne and on another to Sterne and Fielding. I find some of the qualities ascribed to Sterne and Fielding equally applicable to Richardson, in a somewhat different way. For example, the Hogarthian "wanton kind of chace," or "composed intricacy of form" is applicable to Clarissa on a structural level. The plot has a sinuousness to it and a lavish breadth that make it rococo-spirited, and the easy-going, genial didacticism possible in letters seems close to the spirit of Addison's essays in the Spectator. This combination may help us understand more clearly how Clarissa is similar to and yet different from novels like Tom Jones and Tristram Shandy.

47 Hilles, "Plan," p. 87.

48 Alistair M. Duckworth, The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), p. 195.

49 According to Patricia Hodgart and Theodore Redpath, eds., Romantic Perspectives: The Work of Crabbe, Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge as seen by their Contemporaries and Themselves (London: George G. Harrap, 1964), p. 57, the British Critic was founded in 1793 "to represent an anti-revolutionary standpoint and an Anglican orthodoxy in religion." The British Critic was not simply a witch-hunting conservatist rag, but is remarkable for some excellent reviews of Wordsworth's poetry, by the Rev. Francis Wrangham. According to Hodgart and Redpath, "Wrangham's series of reviews of Wordsworth's work, though little known to-day, were among the best contemporary criticism of Wordsworth's work....Moreover, they may have contributed considerably to the firm establishment of Wordsworth's poetic reputation, and there is, in any case, direct evidence that the poet himself was deeply grateful to Wrangham for the understanding he showed." (63) Perhaps Persuasion just got a bad reviewer; but B. C. Southam says that novel-reviewing was not yet considered important. According to Southam, "...a work of fiction really could be dismissed in a phrase--'it is only a novel!'" (Critical Heritage, p. 6) Moreover, he says that Jane Austen's novels "revealed to the early nineteenth-century reading public that fiction was to be taken seriously as a form of literature, and that criticism of the novel could itself be a serious activity." (1) At the same time, the position taken by Persuasion with respect to the morality of "persuasion" is so complex and nuanced in its critique and in its positing of norms that misunderstandings are to be expected. In addition, as Southam says, Persuasion may have an extra critical bite and may be a bit too close to home for comfort.

50 B. C. Southam, Introduction to Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, ed. B. C. Southam (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 18-19. I agree that a deeply critical quality in Persuasion may indeed have made contemporary readers uncomfortable. The characters were so very recognizable, so close to people they knew, that the

little barb in it came home with added force. Certainly some of these things make me uncomfortable! However, I think Harding may be overstating the point when he attributes calculated malice to this critical aspect. Certainly it is penetrating, even ruthlessly so, at times; but, as I try to suggest in Chapter 2, in the section entitled "Fictional Personae and Interrelationships," I believe that Persuasion itself tempers and criticizes the malice that certainly is there. Such malice is tempered by a self-critical awareness of it.

- 51 #113a From J. S. Clarke, Wednesday 15 November 1815, Letters, p. 430.
- 52 #120 To J. S. Clarke, Monday 11 December 1815, Letters, p. 443.
- 53 #120a From J. S. Clarke, Thursday? 21 December 1815, Letters, pp. 444-445.
- 54 #126a From J. S. Clarke, Wednesday 27 March 1816, Letters, p. 451.
- 55 #126 To J. S. Clarke, Monday 1 April 1816, Letters, pp. 452-453.
- 56 #98 To Anna Austen, Wednesday 10 August 1814, Letters, p. 395.
- 57 #100 To Anna Austen, Friday 9 September 1814, Letters, p. 401.
- 58 #134 To J. Edward Austen, Monday 16 December 1816, Letters, pp. 468-469.
- 59 Journal Entry, Edinburgh, Tuesday 14 March 1826, The Journal of Sir Walter Scott, ed. W. E. K. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 114.

CHAPTER IV: THE DEVELOPMENTAL CONTRIBUTION OF PERSUASION

- 1 McKillop, Richardson, pp. 212-213.
- 2 McKillop, Richardson, p. 247.
- 3 Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957, reprint ed., Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1981), p. 331.
- 4 Watt, Rise, p. 335.
- 5 Watt, Rise, p. 337.
- 6 Watt, Rise, p. 338.
- 7 Not only in Persuasion, of course. K. C. Phillipps sees examples of it as early as Sense and Sensibility. (138-9) Ms Butler points out examples of it in Sense and Sensibility (190) and particularly in Emma. (261-2) Nevertheless, I believe that this particular technique is most sophisticated in Persuasion. Certainly it is used more often and in more ways, because of the nature of the story itself.

- 8 Richardson, Preface to Clarissa (1785 ed.), p. ix.
- 9 John Carroll, Introduction to Samuel Richardson: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. John Carroll (Englewood, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 8.
- 10 Brophy, p. 41.
- 11 Brophy, p. 48.
- 12 Brophy, p. 38.
- 13 Brophy, p. 46.
- 14 B. C. Southam, Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 54-55.
- 15 Southam, Literary, p. 58.
- 16 Dorrit Cohn, "Narrated Monologue: Definition of a Fictional Style," Comparative Literature XVIII No. 2 (Spring, 1966), p. 98. Subsequent references to this work will be indicated in the text by C, followed by the page number.
- 17 Cf. Joseph M. Duffy, "Structure and Idea in Jane Austen's 'Persuasion,'" Nineteenth-Century Fiction VIII No. 4 (March 1954), p. 273: "... this tale, in outline so unsophisticated, is for comic effect distorted with brilliant irony, is in its love scenes rendered poignant and tender by the skillful indirection of its writing, and is sunk in a cultural and moral setting as complicated and ambiguous in its ramifications as that of a late play of Shakespeare. Persuasion, appearing when it did, is a miraculous event in the history of English fiction."
- 18 Willi Bühler, Die „Erlebte Rede“ im Englischen Roman: Ihre Vorstufen und ihre Ausbildung im Werke Jane Austens (Zürich: Max Niehaus Verlag, 1937), pp. 177-178.
- 19 Bühler, p. 176.
- 20 Bühler, p. 178.
- 21 By the way, I think Jane Austen makes a notable improvement by omitting Richardson's miscellaneous "moral sentiments" from the letters. Nor does she include them anywhere else. That this is deliberate is evident in her tongue-in-cheek criticism of Pride and Prejudice in a letter to Cassandra dated 4 February 1813: "The work is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story; an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparté, or anything that would form a contrast, and bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness and epigrammatism of the general style. (Letters, pp. 299-300)

This seems to apply equally well to the Richardsonian miscellaneous "moral sentiments" and to lengthy digressions in the manner of Fielding--both, most probably, abused at the hands of second-rate would-be imitators at the end of the century. At any rate, Jane Austen evidently prefers to focus on the important issues implicit in the story, and not try for miscellaneous instruction, shotgun-style.

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