

Imagining Publics, Negotiating Powers:
The Parallel Evolutions of Romantic Social Structure and Jane Austen's Free Indirect Discourse

by

Lindsey Marie Seatter

Master of Arts, Simon Fraser University, 2014
Bachelor of Arts, Simon Fraser University, 2013

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We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Supervisory Committee

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Robert Miles (Department of English)
Supervisor

Dr. Lisa SurrIDGE (Department of English)
Departmental Member

Dr. Simon Devereaux (Department of History)
Outside Member

Abstract

The Romantic era, from roughly the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, was a period of rapid and revolutionary social change. Progressing in parallel was the form of the novel, which rose from relative disrepute to the foremost literary genre. While neither a prolific writer nor one that was very popular during her lifetime, I argue that Jane Austen and her inimitable style can be figured at the nexus of these two transitions. This dissertation presents a comprehensive study of Austen's style across her body of work, from her early manuscripts through her published novels and ending with her unfinished draft. Using historical, digital, sociological, and narratological methods, I interrogate Austen's style on three interrelated levels—moving from the most insular effects to the broadest applications of her narrative technique. First, I explore the progression of Austen's style across her canon, particularly focusing on the development and maturation of her free indirect discourse. Second, I locate Austen's style in the evolution of the novel. I begin with constructing her literary lineage, which I argue is tied to female writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and move towards understanding how her use of free indirect discourse was necessary for the emergence of the novel's modern form. Third, I consider Austen's style as a means of imagining and critiquing the changing social spaces of her contemporary moment, specifically in terms of how the layered vocalicity of her narrative technique reflected Britain's movement from the rigid structures of rank and honour to the fluid categories of class and dignity.

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For Morgan and Kendal

Thank you for being part of my narrative.

R.W. Chapman on Jane Austen:

“The subject of her art is not individuals but their interaction”

(The Times Literary Supplement 151)

Introduction: Imagining Publics, Negotiating Powers

In the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, over 500 authors penned a single title, and nearly twenty published ten or more volumes (Garside 63). At the top of the list—publishing twenty-two novels, or a staggering seventy-seven volumes, in his lifetime—sits Sir Walter Scott, an author whose productivity was only rivalled by his popularity. Unlike Scott, Jane Austen was not a prolific or prominent author during the period. Publishing only four novels in her lifetime, Austen paled in comparison to contemporary women writers like Barbara Hofland who wrote twenty-one novels, or Elizabeth Meeke who wrote nineteen novels (64).¹ Austen was not a productive literary powerhouse and, therefore, the “incompleteness and opacity of Austen’s personal record” may be understood as incongruent with her position as a giantess in the subsequent canon of British literature (Poovey 173). However, to this day, Austen’s fame, both within and beyond the academy, is unsurpassed; she “has remained one of the great anomalies of literary history” (Johnson xiii). For decades, scholars have conjectured about how and why Austen came to occupy such a prominent place in the canon: Was it her subject, her style, her authorial persona, or a mixture of all three? (Johnson xiii; Rigberg 5).

This dissertation grapples with this question by investigating how Austen’s distinct narrative style and inimitable narrative voice reflected the stories of “3 or 4 families in a Country Village” in a manner and form that resonated with her contemporary audience (Austen, Letter to Anna Austen Lefroy n.p.). By uniting the history of the novel, sociological theory, and narratology, I present a systematic study of the evolution and impact of Austen’s style. I explore why Austen’s development and command of the free indirect discourse was necessary for the progression of the novel and interrogate how this stylistic innovation catalyzed the emergence of the genre’s modern form. In sum, I claim that it was Austen’s particular, polyvocal narrative style that allowed her to imagine the shifting social structures of her era and negotiate the

¹ Elizabeth Meeke is referred to as Mary Meeke in Peter Garside’s publication. New scholarship has since established that this author should be referred to under a different name.

conflicting ideals of Romantic publics, thereby establishing an intimate connection to the changing lives of her readers and earning her an early place in the literary canon.

It is important to note that Austen's contributions to the novel came during the genre's most formative years. Peter Garside traces the novel's ascendance from cultural obscurity, before the turn of the century, to the 1820s when there was "every indication that fiction had become the dominant imaginative literary genre" (48). During this period, the novel moved from the margins to the centre as a literary means of exploring national identity: the culture's understanding of the genre sharpened and narrowed; production became professional and increasingly focused on capital gains; and the novel eventually replaced poetry as the most respected form (Garside 15, Sutherland, "Jane Austen" 247).² In what Garside refers to as the pre-Scott years, the bulk of novels were produced using cheap materials and were largely "borrowed [from circulating libraries] rather than individually purchased" (18).³ Because novels were regarded as a form of cheap entertainment and not a vessel of cultural capital, they were not prized as objects worth owning and displaying in a gentleman's study. However, once again, Scott altered the literary marketplace. His historical fictions were published in the expensive octavo format normally reserved for volumes of poetry (92). The quality of the paper was superior; the type was small and distinct (92). Following Scott's lead, nearly twenty-one percent of the novels published in the 1820s were produced in this manner (92). Of course, these changes in medium dramatically affected the cost of fiction: prices tripled in a decade from an average cost of 10s 6d to 31s 6d (93). The characteristics of this material product, and their effect on the *true* "rise of the novel," evidences a cultural shift in understanding the novel's place as a literary

² Although, contrary to some popular opinions, the rise of the novel was not "an uninterrupted path" rather an undulating journey that, eventually, resulted in the novel being taken seriously as a literary form and dominating the literary market (Garside 38).

³ Reference to Sir Walter Scott, who had tremendous influence and celebrity during the period, and whose adoption of the novel as a genre had a profound impact on the Romantic literary environment. Prior to the publication of *Waverley* in 1814, fifty percent of novels were penned by women (or individuals assumed to be women given their pen name) and more than twenty-five percent of novels were anonymous (Garside 74). The population of identifiably male writers hovered somewhere around twenty-five percent for the majority of the early 1810s. However, when Scott—a distinguished poet—was discovered to be the author of the popular *Waverley* historical fiction, the tide changed. By 1819, the percentage of novels penned by men surpassed the number penned by their female counterparts (Garside 75).

genre. Garside recognizes that this rise of the novel was not the effect of a single cause, but rather a multitude of seemingly unrelated changes that resulted in a substantive cultural transformation, including the rise of women's engagement in literature, both as readers and writers. The novel provided a space for women to express themselves and participate in public exchange; women exploited the flexibility of the form "as a vehicle for ideological contestation and subversion" (Mellor 328). The image of the active, subversive female writer, recovered and popularized over the past four decades by feminist criticism, emphasizes the agency of the woman writer and understands her writing as a form of cultural engagement. In terms of public discourse and public space, women embraced the novel as a Trojan horse to "smuggle in their social criticism" (Johnson xxiii). As Claudia Johnson argues, women often used writing as an appropriate vehicle to take on "urgent social, political, and theological questions" (xv). No female author of this period achieved the complex task of engaging female readers while negotiating the barriers of propriety quite so successfully as Austen.

The rise of the novel, I argue, was connected to a second palpable shift: the replacement of rigid, rank-based social structures with a fluid, class-based organization. The Romantic era, from roughly the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, was a period of "rapid and inescapable social change" in Britain (R. Williams 12). The French Revolution brought a sense of newness to Europe and, as Asa Briggs and Patricia Clavin argue, in many ways the second half of the eighteenth century captured the historical divide between humanity past and humanity present (1). Harold Perkin argues that the Industrial Revolution, which ushered in this period of history, was much less about technology and was instead a "social revolution with profound social causes and profound social effects (ix). In fact, historian Boyd Hilton argues that referring to the period as "the first Industrial Revolution" is a problematic misnomer, "if only because it suggests that there was an inevitable and integrated process of transition" (3). Instead, he evokes Karl Polyani's term "The Great Transformation" and Kenneth Pomeranz's referent "The Great Divergence" as these more aptly describe the shifting social organization of the period and characterize the pluralization of society. Industry

did catalyze changes in the function and composition of society, but the era's greatest transformation was the birth and growth of a new social structure where "the old vertical connections of dependency or patronage" were replaced by the "horizontal solidarities of class" (Perkin x). As Britain tiptoed towards the turn of the nineteenth century, the term *class* "became synonymous with the traditional concepts of rank, degrees, and orders" (26). Suddenly, a country that had for centuries operated on the principles of divine order was compelled to consider capital, in the forms of income, education, and relationships, as the driving forces of social position. This "qualitatively different mode of classification" opposed the previously ascribed, fixed nature of status (Delany 536). Class categories relied on achievements generated through the perception of culture. The old money and gentility of the established gentry class satisfied what Paul Delany terms "prestige culture" and thereby secured their place in the new social order (536). However, the emergence of "material culture," sought after by successful merchants who accumulated wealth and generated financial capital through various business ventures, meant that individuals previously considered inferior in the social order could readjust their position in the social sphere (536).

I argue that Delany's definition of "material culture" can be likened to, and further expanded by, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of powers. Bourdieu argues that the values of modern society are determined by evaluating three different categories of power, or forms of capital: economic, cultural, and social ("What Makes a Social Class?" 4). Economic capital equates to financial solvency; cultural capital is comprised of non-financial assets, such as education, that demarcate a particular taste; and social capital is the value of your network, or who you know. Individuals are classified into particular social groups based on the volume, composition, and trajectory of these powers (4). What is most revolutionary about the ranking of powers is that, while the old world predetermined your social rank and, therefore your values, Britain's shift to a class-based society "allowed men to embrace ideals other than that which sprang from their own source of income" (Perkin 220). In other words, the values of a farmer, a merchant, and a gentleman could be aligned—equal within this newly defined social space—as long as they

possessed equivalent powers. Likewise, the capital of an individual at the beginning of their life was not necessarily equal to the capital at the end of their life, as was the case in a rank-based hierarchy. Instead, society embraced the fluidity that accompanied a modern economy by facilitating the opportunity for self-made men.

Charles Taylor demonstrates how, with the emerging importance and influence of the individual, competing values and negotiated ideals came to replace the fixed and rigid order of the old world (*Multiculturalism* 28). As discussed earlier, the turn of the century witnessed a fundamental shift in the social building blocks of society: a movement from the rigid social hierarchy of rank to the more fluid categorization of class. This meant that where the old world before the rise of democracy was centred on the value of honour, the new world was concerned with dignity. Honour is defined by its inequality: it is possessed by some and not by others. In the hierarchical society of the past, honour was passed down through birthright and upward mobility was virtually impossible. In most western cultures, honour was commuted through ancestry and inherited titles, which demarcated an individual's place in society. Importantly, the definition of honour, in this case, does not refer to personal values or intrinsic self-worth, but rather to rare, recognizable rewards given to exceptional individuals. Taylor uses the example of bestowing the Order of Canada, which he argues would be worthless if it were suddenly given to every Canadian (27). Honour is recognizable and desirable simply *because* it is possessed by some and not by others; this inequality was at the foundation of honour as a societal value.

However, as capitalism began to stimulate and control the marketplace, the predestined categories of honour and social rank failed to encapsulate the shifting values and aspirations of modern society. Instead, in the wake of “the decline of hierarchical society,” “the modern notion of dignity” and the value of authenticity moved to the forefront as signifiers of social capital and respect (31, 27). Dignity, unlike honour, is not singular; it is unshaped and unscripted. Dignity is universal and can be possessed by anyone who adheres to the rules and regulations that govern its value—boundaries and characteristics that are corporately determined by participants in a particular society. Taylor gestures to the common trope of “human dignity” as accurately

modelling this form of recognition: dignity, in this egalitarian sense, is considered an inherent part of human existence. Fundamentally dialogic in character, dignity is defined through constant negotiation by autonomous individuals who, regarded for their unique self-identity and difference, work collectively to determine what should be valued, respected, and sought after in their social domain (32). Where previously, honorifics were used as formal markers of recognition that categorized individuals based on their social worth, dignity eschewed this rigid idea and replaced it with intensified individual identity. The uniform, monologic social model of honour that previously dictated how individuals were perceived and valued in society was subsequently replaced with the diverse, dialogic model of dignity. This newly established “understanding that identities are formed in open dialogue” is what Taylor refers to as the “politics of equal recognition” (36). The politics of equal recognition relies on a series of competing frameworks within which voices are continually acknowledging, evaluating, and assessing one another to determine if and how their essential values relate. This symbiotic relationship between the classified and the classifiers is recognized by Bourdieu as one of the complicated realities of a class-based culture: the agents that define the politics of equal recognition are also the individuals who are subject to its boundaries (“What Makes a Social Class?” 2). Knowing that Austen was a close and acute observer of social interactions, as is evidenced by both her fiction and in her letters, it seems both obvious and appropriate to read her narrative style through the lenses of Taylor’s and Bourdieu’s reciprocal social theories.

I argue that Austen’s writing “functions as a marker of transition” through the equal attention to, and masterful merging of, “psychological skill” and “sociological scope” (Thompson 276, 296). This is evidenced in the way her texts easily move between spaces of literary critique and popular culture; her ability to blend the minds and styles of contemporary literary masters; and that that her life spanned a turn of a century. Deidre Lynch argues that Austen also responded to “her era’s reorganization of reading” in her novels’ simultaneous articulation of both the “individuated language” of her heroine and the “impersonal language of the commonplace” (*Economy* 210). Through this, I assert that Austen’s texts are

characteristically binary: able to achieve the intimacy of the first-person narrative while effectively responding to the “sociocentric world” of the new nineteenth-century (Lynch, *Economy* 212). This doubling of narrative perspectives is echoed in Austen’s style, where free indirect discourse layers the voices of her heroines, narrator, and fictional publics.

Free indirect discourse “is a mode of reporting thought and speech” that relies on blending the narrator’s voice with the voice of a given character, or characters, in the text (Case and Shaw 199). This style of narrative negotiates the balance between direct discourse, or first-person narration, and indirect discourse, or third-person narration, by combining the voices into one. Conceptualizing the presentation of narrative on a sliding scale, Joe Bray argues that free indirect discourse sits perfectly between a narrator’s reporting or representation and direct writing, thought, or speech (*Language* 34, 58, 84). This highlights the liminal position of the free indirect style: caught between the observant position of the narrator and the subjective perspective of the character(s). Free indirect discourse slips “inside a character’s consciousness” by possessing their “perspective, tone, and inner reality” while maintaining the syntactical distance (Bray, “The Source of ‘Dramatized Consciousness’” 19; Miller 4). While technically speaking free indirect discourse still employs a third-person narrative style, as it only approaches first-person narration, it still possesses the singular greatest advantage of a first-person narrator: psychological intimacy with the reader (Bray, *Language* 18; Fletcher and Benveniste 3; J. Williams 155). Free indirect discourse has been characterized as a contamination, an interference, a concealing, an intrusion, an ambiguity, and an utterance (Mezei 67). These descriptors underpin the widely varied interpretations of the style’s grammatical structure, usefulness, vocality, and its effect on the triangulated relationship between “writer, reader, and text” (Lanser 5). While not the first recorded instance of free indirect discourse, Austen’s canon marks the first “prominent and continuous” employment of the style in a novel (Pascal 34). Roy Pascal’s argument for Austen’s “rich and sure” use of free indirect discourse is further supported by Louise Flavin, who quantifies the presence of free indirect discourse in *Sense and Sensibility*,

Pride and Prejudice, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Mansfield Park* (Pascal 59; Flavin 143).⁴ I argue that, quantity aside, it is demonstrable that the complexity and nuance of Austen's free indirect discourse evolves across her body of work—especially when it comes to her rendering of voice.

The most debated principle of free indirect discourse is the theory of “dual voice.” On one side of the debate, theorists Monica Fludernik and Ann Banfield oppose the notion. Banfield asserts that free indirect discourse is the narrator's dramatization of the character's speech or thoughts. By this logic, free indirect discourse can be seen as a mimicry of character language but, fundamentally, it is presented in the single voice of the narrator. Using Banfield's argument as a launching platform for her research, Fludernik advocates for the “univocality of free indirect discourse” (323). Fludernik argues that free indirect discourse is *either* the narrator's exclamation or the utterance of a character (444). She asserts that “the dual voice hypothesis [...] has some serious drawbacks,” such as lacking a terminological definition and having insufficient linguistic evidence to support its claims, which effectively negate the validity of its theoretical underpinnings (351). In opposition to Banfield and Fludernik, Pascal and Mikhail Bakhtin argue in favour of free indirect discourse's dual voice. For Bakhtin, free indirect discourse presents the voice of the character “permeated with the ironic intonation of the author” (318). Bakhtin argues that free indirect discourse is defined by presenting “two utterances, two speech manners, two styles”—one that is a representation of the character's words and the other that reflects the intonation of the author (qtd. in Gunn 42). Pascal echoes this same argument when he claims that a text's “double intonation, that of the character and that of the narrator [...] is, in fact, a dual voice” (18). Considering Austen's canon, I argue that the theory of dual voice is conclusively upheld. Especially when Austen's texts are re-read and examined in light of the plot details and character development revealed through a first reading, it is clear that in many instances the voice of a character and the voice of the narrator are intermingled. Further, as Austen's use of

⁴ Flavin breaks free indirect discourse into free indirect speech and free indirect thought. She claims that free indirect speech is evident twenty-two times in *Sense and Sensibility*, twenty-five times in *Pride and Prejudice*, forty times in *Northanger Abbey*, and sixty-nine times in *Mansfield Park*. She claims that free indirect thought is evident thirty-nine times in *Sense and Sensibility*, forty-four times in *Pride and Prejudice*, forty-five times in *Northanger Abbey*, and 153 times in *Mansfield Park* (143).

free indirect discourse matures and she masters the nuances of voice, it becomes evident that she is often layering more than two voices in a single statement. In these cases, as will be demonstrated through the latter portion of this dissertation, I argue that Austen moves beyond the linguistic theory of the dual voice to present truly polyvocal narratives. The polyvocality of Austen's free indirect discourse is what facilitates its dialogic quality by layering distinct narratorial and figurative voices in single statements.

Free indirect discourse has been known by various names since it was first recognized as a narrative technique in the early twentieth century: "style indirect libre," "narrated monologue," "represented speech and thought," "empathetic narrative," and, of course, the enduring term "free indirect discourse." (Bray, *Language* 16). This dissertation will use two terms interchangeably: free indirect discourse and free indirect style. The first, free indirect discourse, was selected over the more specific categories of free indirect speech, free indirect thought, or free indirect writing because it is understood as the umbrella term that captures references to "the representation of either spoken words, thoughts, or written words" (Bray, *Language* 16). I have chosen this more general and widely accepted term because my argument is not concerned with the nuances of whether Austen used the technique to represent speech, thought, or writing, but rather how this narrative approach impacted her overall style. Hence, the use of the second reference: free indirect style. While a more unconventional term, free indirect style goes to the heart of this dissertation's purpose, which is to demonstrate how Austen's use of a particular narrative approach was integral to the development of her style.

Lynch argues that Austen's development of free indirect discourse was, in part, a response to the mass market (*Economy* 212). Because the burgeoning literary economy was the result of a growing cultural desire for individualism, free indirect discourse's ability to feign psychological depth and fuel the desire for a singular human experience, increased the novel's popularity (Lynch, *Economy* 213). For Lynch, the popularization of free indirect discourse was driven by a dynamic link between cultural and financial capital. Despite her astute Marxist reading, Lynch's argument is less cogent when you consider Austen's contemporary position as

a relatively obscure writer. As Kathryn Sutherland asserts, Austen's novels "languished in relative popular neglect" for much of the nineteenth century ("Jane Austen" 244). While Lynch argues Austen herself drew people in, I assert that Austen's style set her apart as an author. I argue that the free indirect style was a necessary evolution in narrative technique that facilitated Austen's response to the changing nature of social experience in her contemporary moment and prompted the foundation of the modern novel. Her use of narrative to negotiate the lived experience of her readers appealed to their need to understand the individual's position in an increasingly modern world. Free indirect discourse is not an illusion of individualism but rather a mediation of social values that replicates the reality of Romantic publics.

Austen's moment in history was marked by Britain's movement away from the customary and rigid boundaries of a rank-based organization to a social system governed by the individual and motivated by capital. As society shifted from a rigid rank structure to a fluid class structure, the predetermined values of the collective ruptured and were replaced by the conflicting values of the individual. This necessitated space for debate. Echoing the thoughts of Patrick Brantlinger, I argue that Austen's development and use of free indirect discourse proves that novels, like the increasingly modern British society, are not "unified, coherent ideological constructions" but are rather "intrinsically pluralistic" spaces that dramatize and democratize competing values (560). Space in Romantic Britain was defined by repurposing and repositioning: communal land becoming enclosed estates; fortunes from business and military profiteering being converted into real and cultural capital; and a rising *nouveau riche* interlocking with the stratification of agrarian capitalism and inherited titles.⁵ In all of this change, Austen's eye was keenly focused on *how* relationships triggered, permeated, and resulted from this vast and rapid social change (Thompson 278). And, she used her narrative style to imagine the shifting society in her fiction. Free indirect discourse allowed Austen to reconstruct her contemporary social spaces: the figurative arenas where individuals determine their position in society and their relationships to one another. My

⁵ Enclosure is defined as the "action of surrounding or marking off (land) with a fence or boundary; the action of thus converting pieces of common land into private property" ("enclosure, noun").

conceptualization of social space can be most closely linked to Bourdieu's *habitus*. *Habitus* is defined as the environmental conditions that structure social practices, dictate social decision-making, and influence social strategies, despite not being "the product of obedience to rules" or "strategic intention" (Bourdieu, *Outline* 72-73). *Habitus* is a "system of objective potentialities" that prescribes "things to do or not to do, to say or not to say" in accordance with the embedded social reality (73). Under the principles of *habitus*, Bourdieu argues that interpersonal relations are "never, except in appearance, *individual-to-individual* relationships;" instead all interactions are underpinned by the "collective rhythms" of the wider society, who together mandate the social and spatial structures of their reality (81, 163). This connects Bourdieu's *habitus* back to Taylor's politics of equal recognition as both concepts rely on the collective orchestration of social standards. Austen uses free indirect discourse in her fiction as a way of imagining social space and portraying the bewildering and rapid change of *habitus* in her contemporary moment. By bringing Taylor's politics and Bourdieu's powers to bear on literary criticism, I demonstrate that Austen's narrative style was not a function of the literary marketplace but rather a technique that created space to imagine the new social structures of Romantic Britain. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that it is Austen's persistence in the evolution of free indirect discourse that awards her the ability to conform to, while also confronting, contemporary social norms by providing a narrative space where multiple voices can exist simultaneously.

Unlike traditional Austen-centric monographs that dedicate a single chapter to each of her major works, my dissertation moves through the texts thematically, pairing her works according to how they characterize class, voice, and social space.⁶ The chapters that follow use historical, narratological, sociological, and digital methods to explore Austen's elusive yet ever-present style; this "eclectic approach" is necessary and keeps with most scholarship in the discipline of stylistics (Bray, *Language* 6). By tracing the evolution of Austen's style, my dissertation privileges Austen's construction of the modern novel as her works moved from the parodic manuscript and

⁶ Bray similarly argues that structuring a study on Austen "according to stylistic topic or critical debate" is a significant departure from the "novel-by-novel" approach most commonly seen in the discipline (*Language* 7).

epistolary form, to a blend of psychological and sociological storytelling to, finally, polyvocal narratives that embrace the complexity of competing powers and malleable publics. I argue that the shape of Austen's writing career—specifically her development of free indirect discourse—parallels the historical re-imagining of social space and the structure of my dissertation reflects this argument by constructing the chapters following the arc of Austen's writing, not publishing, career.

The first chapter lays the groundwork for discussing the influence of Austen's oeuvre by establishing her narrative lineage. Particularly, this chapter will argue that the foundation of Austen's style can be observed in the writings of Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Mary Brunton. This chapter begins with the understanding that Austen read these female novelists and then moves beyond current scholarship to interrogate how she read them and how her style was impacted by, and extended, their shared narrative techniques. I argue that Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton can be understood as precursors to Austen's free indirect discourse because they demonstrate successful focalization but lack the specific language characteristics of Austen's style. While these earlier writers did not create the double voicing of Austen's later free indirect discourse, their ability to focalize through their characters must be interpreted as a necessary part of Austen's education in her development of this style. This chapter provides a snapshot of women's writing before Austen's intervention and assembles the foundation of Austen's style.

The second chapter constructs a comprehensive overview of Austen's canon using distant reading and computational stylometry. While traditionally Austen's works have been dichotomized, this chapter attempts to place her entire oeuvre on a narrative arc that demonstrates the intimate and impactful relationship between the style of her early draft fiction and the use of free indirect discourse in her published novels. I argue that the "sparkling wit and subtle humour" indicative of the tone and style of Austen's novels was developed through her experimentation with parody and voice in the juvenilia (Bray, *Language* 4). Specifically, I assert that there is a clear and demonstrable connection between her parodic writings and her development of free indirect discourse. Using digital methods to compile quantitative evidence,

this chapter adds nuance to the scholarly understanding of Austen's employment of language to dictate her style, showing that Austen's works are better understood as existing on a spectrum rather than in two distinct categories and that the roots of Austen's free indirect discourse are in her early writings.

The third chapter focuses on the progression of Austen's style by analyzing her pre-Chawton novels, or the novels she began composing before relocating to her final home in Hampshire: "Lady Susan," *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Northanger Abbey*. I argue that these texts demonstrate Austen's persistent practices of revision and present an evolution of her writing, both in terms of form and technique. This chapter begins by tracing the relationship between Austen's epistolary works and her later transition to third-person narratives. The purpose of this is to examine how Austen recreates the perspective and the identifiable idiolects of her characters when a movement is made between narrative forms. Next, with specific attention to its nearly two-decade-long composition and publication history, I situate *Northanger Abbey* as an example of an Austenian "betweenity" that represents elements of both her early and mature styles. Overall, this chapter underscores how Austen's evolution and experimentation as a writer paralleled the emergence of the modern novel form.

The fourth chapter takes up *Mansfield Park* and unpacks how Austen uses her narrative approach to create a miniature social world inside the walls of the novel's estates. Rather than focusing on the ethics of *Mansfield Park*, this chapter studies the novel in terms of its commentary on place, space, money, and class. I argue that by paying close attention to the novel's physical places, a quality not often integral to Austen's published works, Austen is able to capture the shifting social spaces of the contemporary British society. Further, this chapter focuses on why Austen's use of free indirect discourse was necessary for her to effectively imitate these remarkable changes in the social order. In this way, *Mansfield Park* is figured as the first example of how Austen's free indirect style facilitates her emergence as a keen social critic.

The fifth chapter centres on *Emma* and its display of Austen's growth and mastery of the free indirect style. Specifically, I contend that *Emma* demonstrates Austen's movement beyond

the accepted dual voiced nature of free indirect discourse towards a truly polyvocal presentation on this narrative style, which blends the voice of the narrator with the voice of the heroine and the voice of the community. By representing voices in chorus, *Emma* ventriloquizes the competing ideals of the gentry, pseudo-gentry, and emerging middle classes. Relying on the very particular and precise historical and economic contexts of *Emma*, this chapter demonstrates how changes in industry and capital impacted the era's social texture. In sum, I argue that Austen's attention to the social intricacies of Highbury and, in effect, the real market towns of the Regency period, is facilitated by her deft use of free indirect discourse.

The sixth chapter examines Austen's last completed novel, *Persuasion*. I position *Persuasion* as the most advanced and most successful example of Austen's use of free indirect discourse, particularly in terms of the way the novel embodies voices and negotiates values. Drawing on Taylor's politics of equal recognition, I argue that *Persuasion* demonstrates how the formation of individual identity is an oscillatory process—partly reliant on an understanding of self and partly constructed by recognition from others. Austen's nuanced use of free indirect discourse manifests this dialogic quality in her final completed novel. In its recreation of competing publics and the representation of a new social era, I argue that *Persuasion* stands as Austen's most modern publication.

Finally, in the conclusion, I touch on Austen's unfinished novel fragment, "Sanditon," as a symbol of Austen's final stylistic evolution. Here, I argue that Austen unites the parodic sensationalism of her juvenilia with her command of free indirect discourse to propel her narrative in a new direction. While Austen's aims for "Sanditon" are, of course, uncertain I contend that she was intentionally uniting the style of her past with the style of her present to construct the style of her future. In conclusion, I frame Austen's fiction as emerging alongside the new social structures of the Romantic period while simultaneously sharpening the rising genre of the novel.

Chapter 1: Lineage

The foundation of Austen's style can be traced to before she penned a manuscript or published a novel in what I argue is Austen's literary lineage. In her article "Romantic Intertextuality," Jacqueline Labbe theorizes literary lineage and adaptation through the metaphor of weaving. Labbe argues that the "warp and weft of literary cross-reference" is exemplified in how the writings of one author are meshed and manipulated into the work of another (44). This deep intertextuality frames literary patterns as "a kind of collaboration" that, while not usually direct or contemporaneous, is integral to the works' production (46). Labbe characterizes Romantic authorial interaction as "multiple, multiplied, non-linear"—an understanding that, I argue, is helpful when considering the literary networks of influence and exchange among Romantic female novelists (47). The theory of collective, adaptive weaving stands as a female counterpart to the common conception of individual Romantic genius applied to authors such as William Wordsworth. Labbe's metaphor of textile arts and communal creation draws on historical female labour and production. It is not coincidental that the most suitable examples for her argument come from female literary exchanges as many Romantic women developed into mature writers by participating in manuscript exchange and communal writing practices.⁷

Labbe argues that it was through Austen's reading of Charlotte Smith that she envisioned "the future of the novel and began to write her own place in it" (47). Building on Labbe's theory and the metaphor of literary weaving, I propose that the foundation of Austen's style—the threads of her texts—can be observed in the writings of Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton. For decades, scholars have described Austen's writings as the meeting and "solution" to Samuel Richardson's psychological novel and Henry Fielding's sociological novel. It was Ian Watt, in his seminal work *The Rise of the Novel*, who first suggested this notion, claiming that Austen

⁷ Both Jane Austen and Dorothy Wordsworth would circulate their fiction works among friends and family in order to solicit feedback (Bree, Sabor, and Todd 12; Levin xvii). Further, it was Mary Brunton's relationship with her neighbor, Mrs. Izett, that encouraged her writing. Brunton and Izett would often read and work together—exchanging opinions and discussing literature (McKerrow 79).

owes her “eminence in the tradition of the English novel” to reconciling these two narrative styles (298). Watt’s characterization of Austen as the meeting point of Richardson and Fielding’s styles has since become an accepted truism. Of course, experts know that Austen was a great fan of the eighteenth-century greats and enthusiasts can attest to her works’ blend of interiority and social commentary (Lynch, *Economy* 4). Today, Austen’s harmonization of these two forefathers is considered her literary inheritance and a catalyst for her imprint on the development of the modern English novel.

However, I argue that the foundation of Austen’s narrative tradition did not wholly emerge from her converging the styles of two popular *male* writers, but also from Austen’s *female* literary education. Particularly, where Watt points to the influence of Richardson and Fielding, I assert that the seeds of Austen’s style were sown in the writings of Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton. As Sutherland reminds us, in the infamous defense-of-the-novel passage in *Northanger Abbey* “the novels chosen to exemplify the genre’s power are Burney’s *Cecilia* and *Camilla* and Edgeworth’s *Belinda*” not publications by Richardson or Fielding (“Jane Austen” 251).⁸ By investigating the narrative practices of Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton and studying how they communicate their stories, we can better understand the tradition out of which Austen’s unique narrative style—free indirect discourse—blossomed. The free indirect style can be observed through a number of linguistic, grammatical, and stylistic markers. The major signifiers found in Austen’s literature are emphasized typescript, punctuational pauses, and focalized, idiomatic language. These markers manifest on the handwritten or printed page in recognizable and significant ways. For example, emphasized typescript is generally rendered as underlined text in the manuscript and as italicized type on the printed page. The term punctuational pauses refers to the author’s use of commas, full stops, and, particularly, the em dash to create a cadence and rhythm in the narrative. Finally, focalized, idiomatic language suggests that particular choices in vocabulary indicate a character’s perspective and bias rather

⁸ This passage from *Northanger Abbey* can be found on pages 58-60 of the Broadview edition listed in the bibliography.

than a neutral, narratorial point of view. Focalized, idiomatic language can also create space for dramatic irony and humour, which in turn fosters an exceptional narrative style. While Austen is recognized as the master of the free indirect discourse, early women writers such as Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton must be acknowledged as precursors to this style of writing. Weaving together stylistic elements of the literary past with her keen understanding of the social future, Austen's corpus is "something new and comprehensive and yet visibly the product of many strands" (Labbe 44). By working closely with the corpora of these three female novelists, this chapter provides a snapshot of women's writing before Austen's intervention and will reveal how Austen assembled the foundation of her style.

Katie Halsey argues that "Austen's novels bear the allusive traces of her own reading" (5). I would expand Halsey's claim and assert that all of Austen's writings—including her early draft tales and unfinished manuscripts—are layered with the themes and techniques of her female predecessors. Austen's access to her father's library gave her considerable advantage when it came to her literary self-education, especially given her limited position as a woman and lack of any significant formal schooling. His extensive library contained 500 volumes, many of which Austen read (17). Along with reading her family's personal library, Austen borrowed many volumes from friends and neighbours; frequently utilized the library at Chawton House, the home of her brother Edward Austen Knight; and was a member of at least one fiction subscription list (Steeves 342).^{9, 10} Given the breadth of Austen's reading and the scarcity of any reliable records, it is impossible to fully and particularly reconstruct her reading experience. We can, however, confidently conclude that her reading was both intensive and extensive (Halsey 18).

⁹ Edward Austen Knight was adopted by Thomas and Catherine Knight (distant relatives of the Austen family) in 1783 when Edward was 16 years old. Thomas Knight died in 1794 had left the estates (Abbots Barton, Godmersham Park, and Chawton) to Catherine and, upon her death, to Edward. Four years after her husband's passing Catherine decided it was better for Edward to take over the running of the estate immediately rather than waiting for her death. Austen was aware of this transaction, as is evidenced by a letter written to Cassandra on 8 January 1799 (Grover). Austen, Cassandra, Mrs. Austen, and Martha Lloyd moved in Chawton Cottage on 7 July 1809.

¹⁰ Austen's name appears on a list of subscribers for Burney's *Camilla*.

Further, Austen was an “appropriative reader” and, consequently, her canon expertly evidences the theory of Romantic intertextuality (10). Whether through involuntary osmosis, intentional adaptation, or a mixture of both, Austen’s writings manifest the future of the novel by reinventing and reinvigorating its past. From a very young age, Austen became “obsessively interested in the form and language of the novel, and in its relationship with its readers” (Waldron 16). The impact of Austen’s concentrated reading can be seen in her reproduction of novelistic tropes in various tales from the juvenilia, such as title pages, dedications, and chapter headings. As Austen transitioned away from drafting short tales and chose to firmly root herself in the extended form of the novel, she began to “synthesize and bring to fruition the various techniques developed in the genre during the eighteenth century” and, in doing so, demonstrate the purpose and practices of the novel (Konigsberg 213). Austen’s novels use the techniques and traditions of her female forerunners, specifically their use of syntax, language, and focalization to create narratives that traverse the first-person and third-person perspectives.

The first “influential contemporary” I want to consider is Burney: a novelist who is certainly “more like Jane Austen than is generally appreciated” (Galperin 88, 105). While it is commonly accepted that Austen read Burney’s publications, little is made of the specific archival documentation that bolsters this claim. Notably, the name “Miss Austen” appears on a book subscription list for *Camilla* (1796), and a letter from Austen’s niece, Caroline, describes her reading *Evelina* (1778) aloud—a habitual act and fond pastime of the Austen family (Steeves 342, Halsey 19). As Mary Waldron argues “[t]here is no doubt that Austen very much admired Burney;” I want to advance this argument by claiming that Austen not only appreciated Burney but that her own subject and style were significantly shaped by Burney’s body of work (38). In opposition to Watt and in line with Brian McCrea, I assert that “Austen learned more from Burney than she did from Fielding and Richardson” (162). Burney’s intervention in the genre of the novel, specifically the female novel and the novel of manners, prepared the way for Austen. Specifically, Burney’s synthesis of interiority and exteriority—balancing the individual and society—is reflected in Austen’s works (Konigsberg 216). However, as McCrea argues, it is

significant that Burney was writing before Austen—not just chronologically, but also epistemologically: Burney’s writing does not celebrate individualism in the same way as Austen’s and steers away from unmediated representations of her characters’ thoughts (161). In addition, when comparing Burney and Austen in her article on 1814 novels, Elaine Bander argues that where Burney uses stock scenes and conventions of the novel of sensibility uncritically, Austen “challenges readers to rethink it altogether” (117). I argue that Austen completes the work that Burney began by drafting novels that use narrative methods to represent shifting contemporary social experiences and structures while simultaneously capturing the critical nuances of dialogue and value negotiation.

Where Austen’s “comedy of manners” was arguably influenced by Burney, her “comedy of characters” reflects the works of Edgeworth (Steeves 342-43). During the first two decades of the nineteenth century—at the peak of Austen’s writing and publishing career—Edgeworth was the “most highly regarded Irish writer of the day, as well as being the most highly regarded woman writer in both Britain and Ireland” (O’Gallchoir 1). As James Chandler argues, Edgeworth’s popularity across the British Isles gave way to her influence, which can be traced upon “the most important British fiction writers of that period: Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen” (88). While there is little archival evidence documenting Austen’s interaction with Edgeworth’s publications, her single remark in an 1814 letter to Anna Austen Lefroy is generally considered to be admiring (Waldron 65).¹¹ Harrison Steeves highlights the particular parallels between Edgeworth’s *Belinda* (1801) and Austen’s novel canon; the balance between “sympathetic-satiric characterizations” and narrative verve that are demonstrated in *Belinda* can also be observed in the openings of *Northanger Abbey* (1818) and *Emma* (1816) (327). Further, Austen’s presentation of “the concept of sensibility” in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) echoes and builds on

¹¹ Here is Austen’s remark from the letter in full: “I do not like him, & do not mean to like Waverley if I can help it – but I fear I must. – I am quite determined however not to be pleased with Mrs. West's Alicia de Lacy, should I ever meet with it, which I hope I may not. – I think I can be stout against any thing written by Mrs. West. – I have made up my mind to like no Novels really, but Miss Edgeworth's, Yours & my own”

the writings of Edgeworth (Waldron 65-66). These thematic and structural similarities indicate Edgeworth and Austen's shared literary lineage. However, in opposition to Steeves, I argue that the similarities between Edgeworth and Austen run deeper to include humour, style, and syntax. It is Edgeworth's ability to focalize the narrative through her dynamic characters that most closely resembles Austen's style. While Edgeworth does not master the control of perspective that Austen captures through free indirect discourse, the composition of their sentences is comparable. These syntactical similarities filter into a stylistic connection that, I argue, makes Edgeworth's influence on Austen even more palpable, measurable, and consequential than Burney's.

While the 1810s marked the denouement of Burney's and Edgeworth's authorial careers, for Austen and Brunton their writings flourished and are, therefore, inextricably linked and framed by the decade (Mandal, *Jane Austen* 26). Publishing their first novels in 1811, Austen and Brunton both make use of the social space of the novel to explore "the contemporary anxieties facing women forced to the margins of polite society, with particular sensitivity to the psychological and social rhythms of female existence" (Mandal, "Introduction" xiv). Like Austen, Brunton comes out of the "literary tradition of moral etiquette novels" associated with Burney and her work (Maitland ix). Too, Austen and Brunton oscillate their narratives between a compelling study of interiority and relevant social criticism (Mandal, "Introduction" xiv). These thematic threads demonstrate that these women were responding to a shared cultural moment in a shared manner. However, despite the extraordinary parallels in their biographies and bibliographies, Austen and Brunton occupy entirely different places in our current cultural and literary landscape. As Fay Weldon so evocatively puts it: if the annals of English literature are re-envisioned as a Georgian manor house, then Jane Austen is comfortably inside while Mary Brunton is still "timorously on the doorstep" (vii). However, in 1811, it was Brunton's *Self-Control* (1811) that was met with critical success and republication throughout the nineteenth century. Contrastingly, today, it is Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) that is issued in dozens of critical editions and has made its way to several silver screen adaptations. In the case of

Brunton, the once overnight bestselling author has since been “consigned to obscurity” (Mandal, “Introduction” xiii).

Austen’s relationship to Brunton’s work, specifically *Self-Control*, is a complicated one. There are three separate occasions where Austen mentions *Self-Control* in her letters: twice to her sister Cassandra, on 30 April 1811 and 11 October 1813, and once to her niece, Anna Austen Lefroy, in November or December 1814. The dates of these remarks suggest Austen’s interest in and repeated return to Brunton’s novel. The letter sent on 30 April 1811 notes Austen’s unsuccessful attempts to track down a copy of the novel. The 1818 Godmersham Park Catalogue housed at Chawton House Library lists Brunton’s novel as within the library’s collection and Austen likely read her brother’s copy on visits to his property. The 11 October 1813 letter was sent to Cassandra from Godmersham Park and Austen writes that she is looking over *Self-Control* “again” (Austen, Letter to Cassandra Austen n.p.). Austen describes the novel as being “excellently-meant, elegantly-written work, without anything of nature or probability in it” (Austen, Letter to Cassandra Austen n.p.). Anthony Mandal describes the comment as “faint praise with toothy sarcasm,” which, I argue, very effectively captures the witty tone, comedic ambiguity, and veiled appreciation reflected in the statement (“Introduction” xxxiii). It is at this juncture that my chapter intervenes, considering the stylistic similarities that contextualize and illuminate the authors’ complicated, uncertain, and transitory relationship.

While scholars surely agree that Austen read these late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century female novelists, a detailed evaluation of how she read them, and how her fiction absorbs and extends their techniques, has not been completed. This chapter will fill this gap by interrogating the influences of Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton on the fiction of Austen—particularly, the presence of stylistic signifiers such as emphasized typescript, punctuational pauses, and focalized, idiomatic language. This chapter will pay attention to archival traces of reading, through letters, libraries, and loans, as well as conduct a comparative

close reading of their works in order to demonstrate how these four women writers form a network of literary influence.^{12, 13}

The use of emphasized typescript, specifically the italicization of operative words, can be observed in the works of Burney, Edgeworth, Brunton, and Austen. This stylistic signifier stresses select words or phrases and gestures towards an embodied vocalization of the text through its appearance on the printed page. In studying the implications of font style, it is important to recognize the various agents involved in the production of textual documents, whose stylistic flair and professional judgement could have impacted the transcription of authorial manuscripts. As demonstrated by Robert Darnton's communications circuit, book production is stimulated by human interaction of multiple literary and artistic agents.¹⁴ Between the author and the reader, book publishers, printers, suppliers, shippers, sellers, and binders engage with the intellectual and physical form of the book, often leaving traces (intentional or unintentional) on the object. Foundational work by scholars such as Terence Allan Hoagwood, Kathryn Ledbetter, and Kate Ozment has illuminated the professionals—many of whom were women—who existed in the margins of our pages and who importantly interceded in the transformation of great Romantic works from manuscript to print (Hoagwood and Ledbetter 75).

¹² These four women writers—Burney, Edgeworth, Brunton, and Austen—were selected because they demonstrate substantive similarities in their literary theme and writing style. Further there is archival documentation (letters, book lists etc.) that evidence Austen's particularly attention to their texts. While they are certainly not the only writers whose works exhibit the characteristics discussed in this chapter, their canons demonstrate some of the most significant and extended use of these stylistic signifiers. It is not coincidental, either, that they are all women. cursory explorations of the works of Richardson, Fielding, and Henry Mackenzie show that they do not use the discussed techniques as often, in the same way, or towards the same ends as the included women writers.

¹³ In many Romantic contexts, the term "network" is used to describe a collective of people who knew and commonly associated with one another. This physical network stands in contrast to the intellectual network implied here. In this instance, the term "network" is used to describe the women writers who informed Austen's literary imagination and who affected her stylistic evolution. It is out of this diverse sisterhood that Austen emerges—a writer formed by a network of literary influence.

¹⁴ While Darnton's circuit remains the most widely recognized and applicable diagram of book history communications, I acknowledge its resistance to diversity and, as Kate Ozment puts it, its isolation from "critiques of gender, race, postcolonialism, and sexuality" (Ozment 2017). The majority of dominant book history theories, including Darnton's model, are based on the production of works by a single demographic: white male authors. As Ozment suggests, by broadening the foundational texts used to construct bibliographical theories, we may in fact find that our current models are insufficient to account for the diversity of book history. While I believe that Darnton's circuit is still a useful way of visualizing and understanding the social interactions underpinning the production of the book, I also echo Ozment's call for the need to broaden the bibliographic framework of book history.

Recognizing this intervention makes reading the presence of emphasized typescript as authorially and materially significant complicated because it is possible that this choice was not made intentionally by the author but was rather inserted by another agent, likely a typesetter, somewhere along the text's journey to publication. However, I argue that the repeated, yet judicious, use of emphasized typescript, specifically the use of italicized fonts, across these women writers and their publications demonstrates purposeful and thoughtful use of this subtle communicative medium. While one or two instances could easily be determined as coincidence, error, or the result of editorial decision making, the numerous examples detailed in this chapter point to the authors' particular use of this stylistic signal by representing voice through orthographic means. Of course, without the manuscript documents, this argument is inconclusive, which is part of the reason why this chapter's example from Austen's manuscript "Catharine" is such strong evidence. Importantly however, it is not just in "Catharine" that we see Austen specifically noting emphasis in this manner. In all of Austen's extant manuscripts—the juvenilia, "Lady Susan," "The Watsons," "Sanditon," and the cancelled chapters of *Persuasion*—we observe Austen underlining operative words as a way of communicating meaning and underscoring importance. While we do not have the complete novel manuscripts to reference for the published texts, I argue that the consistent and visible underlining demonstrated across her extant manuscripts evidences her intention and attention to this form.¹⁵ Particularly, the cancelled chapters of *Persuasion* show that Austen's working novel manuscripts arrived at the printer with "erasures, insertions, and other signs" composed by her hand (Sutherland, *Textual Lives* 124). Therefore, I argue that we can reasonably assume that Austen drafted her other novels in a like style with the same care towards emphasis, as there is no indication that her process drastically changed. The underlining visible in her manuscripts, later translated into italics in the printed texts, note Austen's purpose to emphasize particular phrases. The effect of this emphasis is to highlight a perspective and create decipherable voices in the text. This same

¹⁵ It was common practice for printing houses to destroy copies once set in type (Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives* 154).

result is also demonstrated in each of the following examples from Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton. Again, while not all of Burney's, Edgeworth's, and Brunton's literary manuscripts are extant and available for consultation, the key here is that Austen was emulating what she saw in print. She was learning, practicing, and perfecting her craft through a reading education of these women writers; I argue that Austen was responding to their use of emphasized typescript and then mirroring this technique across her print and manuscript works.

In Burney's oeuvre, emphasized typescript is used to characterize voice and perspective in two ways: first as a way of signalling the repetition of spoken text in a narrative passage, and second, as a way to highlight words or phrases that are connected to the point of view of a particular character. The following passage from *Cecilia* (1782) demonstrates the repetition of spoken text as it recounts the heroine's uneasy reaction to a conversation between Mr. Harrel and Sir Robert: "At the words *what do you think I lost*, Cecilia, half starting, cast her eyes uneasily upon Mrs. Harrel, but perceived the least change in her countenance" (Burney 50). The phrase "*what do you think I lost*" is spoken by Mr. Harrel during his exchange with Sir Robert only a few sentences earlier. Here, Burney's use of emphasized typescript is a repetition of the character's speech. This technique is captured again in this passage only a few pages later when Cecilia offers help to a poor woman outside the home of Miss Lorelles: "Cecilia, struck with the words *he little thinks of our distress, because he has been afflicted with none himself*, felt again ashamed of the smallness of her intended donation" (72). Again, the italicized text replicates speech that appears directly above this passage. Burney uses the typescript to echo embodied, spoken text as it appears in its new, narrative form. As a physical imprint of the ephemeral voice, Burney uses italics as a way of marking the existence of multiple perspectives in a single passage. While the third-person narrative is in both cases focalized through Cecilia, the emphasized words spoken by other characters in the text creates a meaningful interplay of voices. Turning to Burney's second manner of using emphasized typescript, the following example, also from *Cecilia*, demonstrates how specific vocabulary is italicized in order to stress a particular character's voice or perspective: "Before breakfast was quite over, Miss Larolles, out

of breath with eagerness, came to tell the news of the duel, in her way to *church*, as it was Sunday morning!” (149). The emphasis on the word “*church*” draws on the perspective of Miss Larolles, who is both astonished by what she witnessed and where she witnessed it. The combination of “*church*” with the phrase “out of breath with eagerness” and the culminating exclamation point work towards embodying the feelings and views of an individual character.

Edgeworth uses emphasized typescript similarly as a means of signaling sentiments that belong to a particular character. For example, in the novel *Patronage* (1814), Edgeworth uses emphasized typescript to indicate this passage’s intimate link to the scheming character Mrs. Falconer: “She had purposely introduced the gallant Colonel Spandrill to the Miss Percys, in hopes that Caroline’s head might be *affected* by flattery; and that she might not then retain all that dignity of manner” (Vol. 3, 29). By using distinct typescript, Edgeworth is alerting the audience that the narrative attitude belongs to Mrs. Falconer. The passage draws attention to Mrs. Falconer’s intention of influencing Caroline Percy by underscoring the word “*affected*.” Further, the use of language such as “gallant” or “all that dignity of manner” highlights Mrs. Falconer’s biased opinions. In another example from *Patronage*, Edgeworth focalizes through Buckhurst Falconer, as indicated by the italicized type:

Upon all occasions, afraid of being supposed to be subject to any restraint as a clergyman, or to be influenced by any of the *prejudices* of his profession, he strove, continually, to show his *liberality* and *spirit* by daring, both in words and actions, beyond what others dared (Vol. 3, 233)

Here the emphasized words—“*prejudices*,” “*liberality*,” and “*spirit*”—all reflect Buckhurst Falconer’s understandings of his profession and character. The use of phrases “afraid of being” and “to be influenced” place him at the centre of this passage and amplify the subjective perspective. The emphasized typescript used in both these passages underscores their interiority and creates an intimacy between the reader and the character in the text. Similarly, Edgeworth’s “Manoeuvring,” from the collection *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809), uses typescript to emphasize passages focalized through the heroine, Mrs. Beaumont: “indeed our heroine had

trusted too much of some expressions, which had at times dropped from her son, about *learned ladies*, and certain *conversaziones*” (Vol. 3, 164). The italicized words inscribe a tongue-in-cheek quality to the passage, as well as reflecting Mrs. Beaumont’s own point of view. By using emphasized typescript, Edgeworth draws the readers’ attention to Mrs. Beaumont’s social elitism. While the narration does not fully embody the idiomatic language or perspective of the characters—thereby taking a step towards, but falling short, of free indirect discourse—the use of particular vocabulary and emphasized typescript approaches the free indirect style and demonstrates Edgeworth’s choice to present focalized narration while employing third-person syntax.

Equally, in Brunton’s *Self-Control*, italicized text is used to signal the focalization of a specific character in a specific section of text. In this passage, the italicized type indicates that the narrative is focalized through the perspective of Montague De Courcy: “De Courcy had that morning resolved, *firmly resolved*, that while Laura was his guest at Norwood, he would avoid a declaration of his sentiments” (Vol. 3, 32). The emphasis placed on the word “resolved”—both through repetition and italicization—conveys De Courcy’s willpower to conceal his affections for Laura. The italicized statement acts as a reminder of the personal commitment made by De Courcy and is, therefore, intimately connected to his character. This same technique of embodied perspective can be observed in this passage, which centres the voice of the novel’s heroine, Laura Montreville: “Laura had more than once felt her deficiency in these fashionable arts, on seeing them exhibited by young ladies, who, to use their own expression, had returned from *finishing themselves* at boarding school” (Vol. 2, 124). Like the example from Edgeworth’s “Manoeuvring,” the italicized text has a sarcastic tone. This passage uses “*finishing themselves*” ironically as it echoes the fashionable young ladies’ “own expression” of their education. The italics gesture towards an interplay of perspectives: the pompous position of the young ladies, the irritated position of the “deficient” heroine, and the tongue-in-cheek position of the narrator, who presents the term “*finishing themselves*” in a facetious manner. Another example of layering can be found in this later passage where the reader encounters both the perspective of Lady Pelham

and the voice of the narrator: “She judged (for Lady Pelham often *judged* properly) that it would be indelicate thus to proclaim to him the extent of his power” (Vol. 2, 293). In this example, the parentheses indicate a shift in perspective from the character to the narrator and then back to the character. This dual perspective is further marked by the repetition of language—“judged”—and the use of italicized type. On the surface, the sentence is focalized through Lady Pelham, but the specific punctuation adds an additional layer—an additional voice—to the passage. Again, the narrator is introduced as a reasonable, albeit biting sarcasm, force that tempers the drama and misrepresentation in the novel. The use of the word “often” paired with the emphasis on “judged” highlights Lady Pelham’s hypercritical nature and sometimes bloated sense of self-importance. Each of these examples demonstrates Brunton’s effort to reflect multiple voices to the reader by highlighting syntactical characteristics attached to a single narrative perspective—a stylistic technique copied and, arguably, improved upon by Austen.

One important difference between Brunton and Austen is that Brunton’s focalization moves freely among characters whereas Austen often privileges the perspective of her heroine, particularly in her early draft work and first published novels. This can be observed in the following lengthy example from “Catharine” in the juvenilia when Catharine realizes her affection for Edward Stanley:

It is true that she had not yet seen enough of him to be actually in love with him, yet she felt greatly disappointed that so handsome, so elegant, so lively a young Man should be so perfectly free from any such Sentiment as to make it his principal Sport. There was a Novelty in this character which to *her* was extremely pleasing; his person was uncommonly fine, his Spirits and Vivacity suited to her own, and his Manners at once so animated and insinuating, that she thought it must be impossible for him to be otherwise amiable, and was ready to give him Credit for being perfectly so [...] The more she had seen of him, the more inclined was she to like him, and the more desirous that he should like *her*. She was convinced of his being naturally very clever and very well disposed, and that his thoughtlessness and negligence, which tho’ they appeared to *her* as very becoming to *him*, she was aware would by many people be considered as defects of his Character, merely proceeded from a vivacity always pleasing in Young Men, and were far from testifying a weak or vacant Understanding (Austen, *Jane Austen’s Manuscript Works* 200-201).

Austen not only employs emphasized vocabulary to signal her attempts at free indirect discourse, but she also uses punctuation and idiomatic language to help recreate the voice of the heroine. The emphasized pronouns—“*her*” and “*him*”—appear underlined in the fair copy manuscript of the text (Sutherland, *JAFM* n.p.). Here, represented in italics, the repeated emphasis of these words makes explicit the connection between the narration and Catharine’s point of view by repeatedly drawing the reader back to focus on “*her*.” This typographical emphasis tracks as a characteristic of Austen’s free indirect style and can be observed in her later published works. Further, the adverbial use of “so” and “very” strengthens the connection between the passage and Catherine by underscoring the emotion of her perspective, as exemplified in the phrases “so handsome, so elegant, so lively a young Man” and “very clever and very well disposed.” In fact, “so” and “very” are used as modifiers five times and three times, respectively. The abundant use of adverbs in the passage has the same effect: Edward is not just pleasing, he is “extremely pleasing;” Edward is not just fine, he is “uncommonly fine” (Austen, *Jane Austen’s Manuscript Works* 200). The descriptors shift the passage away from the omniscient narrator and place them in the mind of the text’s heroine. Glimpses into the heroine’s feelings, understandings, and opinions also make clear the connection between Austen’s narration and her characterization of Catharine. This echoing is exemplified through vocabulary like “convinced” and “aware” (200). Finally, the passage charts Catherine’s evolution of feelings while situating her as separate from the rest of the company. The “thoughtlessness and negligence” that Catherine is aware “many people” consider as defects of Edward’s character are only, to her, qualities of his vivacity and youth.

In the works of Burney, Edgeworth, Brunton, and Austen, emphasized typescript is thus used as a means to communicate voice and perspective. Particularly, the choice of specific vocabulary and phrasing is often indicative of a singular character’s point of view. While Austen’s manuscript example demonstrates certain intentionality, overall the consistent and selective use of the emphasized typescript across these authors’ works evidences their deliberate decision to deploy the technique.

Burney, Edgeworth, Brunton, and Austen also use particular sequences of punctuation to mimic vocal expression and stream of consciousness in their writing. Sutherland argues for the significance of these accidentals—punctuation, spelling, capitalization, italicization, and contractions—in Austen’s writing as a means of communicating the essence and importance of the text (102, 113).¹⁶ Rather than reading unconventional grammar as the result of the “ill-equipped female writer,” Sutherland launches a feminist argument that frames these lexical and syntactical units as communicators of aural traces in written text (114-115). While irregular punctuation is “normally used in the transcription of spoken discourse,” it is also characteristic of Austen’s narrative discourse (114). The precursors to Austen’s adoption of this technique can be observed in the novels of Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton. As the narratives of these women writers attempt to encroach, simulate, and amplify voice, they also create intimacy and facilitate stream of consciousness. Stream of consciousness is identified by a particular blend of jointedness and separateness, where thoughts at once belong together and stand alone. While as a narrative mode the stream of consciousness in Austen, Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton does not achieve the same persistent and habitual form as is found in modernist writing, we can observe that these women were developing a technique approaching that later style. By using em dashes, ellipses, question marks, and exclamation points, these writers masterfully represent disjointed thoughts. Further, by tangling third-person narrative structures with the internal emotions of a character, these women writers create a layered vocal expression. This blending of voices—the psychology of the first-person perspectives with the sociology of the third person—foreshadows the form of free indirect discourse that is found in the works of Austen.

Burney’s *The Wanderer* (1814) is primarily focused through the perspective of the novel’s lonesome, incognito, wandering heroine Ellis/Juliet. While the novel is narrated in the third person, Burney uses punctuation to express the thoughts and emotions of her protagonist.

¹⁶ It is important to note that the term “accidentals” does not suggest that the punctuation, spelling, capitalization, italicization, or contractions were used on accident but is rather “accidentals” is term for referring to this category of literary device.

This can be observed in the following passage where Ellis/Juliet is disturbed by Miss Arbe's entreaty for her to perform in public: "Yet there was no one else to whom she could apply. Alas! she cried, how wretched a situation!—And yet,—compared with what might have been!—Ah! let me dwell upon that contrast" (Burney, *The Wanderer* Vol. 2, 227). Burney's use of the em dash generates stream of consciousness. The disjointed flow of the passage mimics hurried, unfinished thought patterns, which in turn creates an intimate connection between the narrator and the character. The sense of urgency evoked by the em dashes is bolstered by the inclusion of exclamation points, which underscore the heroine's overwhelming emotions. By coupling this punctuation with dramatized language that is distinctly tied to Ellis/Juliet, such as "alas" and "wretched," the passage mimics the intimacy of a first-person perspective despite being narrated in the third person. This same technique can be observed in this later excerpt, which narrates Ellis/Juliet's distress upon finding herself sought through a newspaper advertisement: "To find herself advertised in a newspaper!—the blood mounted indignantly into her cheeks.—Perhaps to be described!—perhaps, named! and with a reward for her discovery!" (Vol. 4, 245). Here, the em dashes act as transition points between the character's intellectual and corporal reactions to the news. While the passage begins with the heroine's thoughts, it quickly shifts to a description of her changing physical appearance: "the blood mounted indignantly into her cheeks." The persistent repetition of exclamation points further characterizes this passage as a description of passionate internalized thoughts and emotions. As with the previous example the unpolished, unfinished, and uninhibited qualities of the text link it closely to the perspective of Ellis/Juliet.

In "The Absentee," from the collection *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809), Edgeworth uses the em dash to signal a turn inward towards a single character. The majority of the story is filtered through the perspective of Lord Colambre, who is the novel's sensitive hero. Lord Colambre falls in love with his cousin, Grace Nugent, despite his family's wishes that he marries the heiress, Miss Broadhurst, in order to secure its place in London's high society. The following passage narrates Lord Colambre's response to reuniting with Grace: "He leaned on the table and fixed his eyes upon her—years ago, he had seen as her handsome, pleasing, graceful—but now,

he saw a new person, or he saw her in a new light—” (Edgeworth, “The Absentee” Vol. 5, 233). Here, the em dashes separate Colambre’s reactions in the moment from his reminiscing on past feelings. While he always found Grace “handsome, pleasing, [and] graceful,” Colambre’s present perspective is defined by newness: “a new person [...] in a new light.” This oscillation between the narrated moment and the character’s memory is made clear through the punctuational pauses. Similarly, the em dashes in this passage manifest the disjointed procession of Colambre’s thoughts: “Grace Nugent—Beautiful! in elegant and dignified simplicity—thoughtless of herself—yet, with a look of thought, and with an air of melancholy” (Vol. 5, 266). The contradictory phrase “thoughtless of herself—yet, with a look of thought” is aided by the em dash, which draws attention to the character’s shifting opinion of Grace. Further, the use of an exclamation point highlights the personal expressiveness of this statement; Colambre is delighted by Grace’s beauty, which reinvigorates a relatively dull party. The pairing of the em dash with the exclamation point narrates a progression of thought and feeling from his first noticing Grace’s presence to his being overcome by her appearance to him analyzing her mood and manner. The intimacy between the narration and the character’s point of view mimics the intimacy created by free indirect discourse. This same use of punctuation can be observed in the following passage, which uses both the exclamation point and the em dash: “In peace!—Never was our hero’s mind less at peace than at this moment” (Vol 6, 305). Here, the em dash separates the dual perspectives present in the passage. The first part stresses the emotions of the character through the use of an exclamation point. By using this punctuation, the statement shifts from a neutral reporting of emotion to a charged expression. Following the em dash, the statement switches to the viewpoint of the narrator. This is made clear through the use of the possessive pronoun “our,” which places Colambre as an outside subject being observed by the narrator and the reader. Overall, while the repetition of the word “peace” ties the perspectives together, this statement is incohesive.

Like those of Edgeworth, the works of Brunton use punctuation to communicate emphasis and interiority. Further, Brunton uses the em dash to signify internalized thought and

reflect speech patterns. The following example from *Self-Control* reflects the disjointed, tangled, unfinished thoughts of Colonel Hargrave through the use of punctuation. Here, the narration moves between internal thoughts and external reactions: “Laura would return to conduct him to her father; feared that she would not—hoped that she would—thought he heard a footstep—listened—sighed” (Brunton Vol. 2, 44). All of the phrases in this statement are erratic and unfinished. The beginning of the passage demonstrates Hargrave’s internal debate regarding Laura’s reactions. Brunton’s use of the semicolon and the em dash creates a hurried and exasperated tone. This matches the progression of Hargrave’s thoughts from a certainty that Laura will bring him to her father, to a fear that she might not, to a hope that she will follow through. At the midpoint in the passage, the perspective shifts from internal to external. Suddenly, Hargrave is in tune with the action around him; his mind changes course from reflection to reaction. Brunton’s employment of the em dash marks his responses: “—thought he heard a footstep—listened—sighed.” Brunton also often forms characters’ fleeting, haphazard thoughts as questions to mimic how humans process information and includes exclamation points to communicate emotion. This technique is exemplified in the following passage focalized through Hargrave:

Had he then deceived himself? had she never really loved him?—the suggestion was too mortifying to be admitted. Had resentment given rise to her determination? She had spoken from the first with calmness—at last with tenderness. Was all this but a scene of coquetry, designed to enhance her favours? The simple, the noble, the candid Laura guilty of coquetry?—impossible! (Vol. 1, 36).

This passage traces Hargrave’s emotional thought patterns as he deciphers Laura’s intentions. The questions reflect an internal dialogue, despite being written in the third person. The pairing of distinctive punctuation, question marks, and exclamation points, with subjective language, “deceived,” “mortifying,” “resentment,” “guilty,” firmly situates this passage in the mind of the character. Further, the use of the em dash creates that same disjointed, tangled train of thoughts depicted in the previous example.

A very similar use of punctuation can be found in the writing of Austen. For example, this passage from *Emma* appears immediately after Mr. Elton proposes to the heroine, Emma Woodhouse:

she was immediately preparing to speak with exquisite calmness and gravity of the weather and the night; but scarcely had she begun, scarcely had they passed the sweep-gate and joined the other carriage, than she found her subject cut up—her hand seized—her attention demanded, and Mr. Elton actually making violent love to her: availing himself of the precious opportunity, declaring sentiments which must be already well known, hoping—fearing—adoring—ready to die if she refused him; but flattering himself that his ardent attachment and unequalled love and unexampled passion could not fail of having some effect, and in short, very much resolved on being seriously accepted as soon as possible. It really was so. Without scruple—without apology—without much apparent diffidence, Mr. Elton, the lover of Harriet, was professing himself *her* lover. She tried to stop him; but vainly; he would go on, and say it all (Austen, *Emma* 149).

The internalized chaos of the scene is communicated through the em dashes, which reflect Emma's emotions. Rather than providing the reader with a full stop, Austen uses the punctuation as a brief pause amidst a hurried proceeding of disconnected thoughts. The narration starts by describing the action of the scene: "her subject cut up—her hand seized—her attention demanded." Emma is the central figure in each of these disjointed phrases; the action revolves around her character and perspective. Not only do the em dashes signal Emma's point of view, but the selection of vocabulary is so keen and clever that Emma's perspective is almost undeniable. In particular the use of the word "actually" highlights the excerpt's exaggerated, almost humorous tone and, coincidentally, mimics popular "valley girl" speak by using a superfluous adverb.¹⁷ When the passage shifts from actions to emotions, it is clear that the narration is filtered through Emma and her perception of Elton's proposition: "hoping—fearing—adoring—ready to die if she refused him." The exaggerated tone immediately reflects Emma's character and can be observed again in the following passage, which appears only a few pages later: "Emma sat down to think and be miserable. —It was a wretched business, indeed! —Such an overthrow of every thing she had been wishing for! —Such a development of every thing most unwelcome! —Such a blow for Harriet!"

¹⁷ This is one of the many reasons why *Clueless* (1995) is such an astute adaptation of the novel.

(152). Here, the passage is introduced with the character's name before immediately shifting into free indirect discourse. As with the examples from Brunton's *Self-Control*, Austen uses the em dash to express stream of consciousness. The passage begins with Emma's general reflection on Elton's proposal, shifts to her self-centered disappointment and dismay, and finishes with condolences for her friend. Coupling the use of the em dash with exclamation points heightens the emotional impact and clearly ties the narration to Emma. Finally, the repeated use of "every thing" captures Emma's hyperbolic nature and her tendency to view the world in black and white. Unlike Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton, Austen focalizes continually through the perspective of her heroine—as is exhibited in these cases with Emma.

Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton use punctuation, specifically em dashes, exclamation points, and question marks, to reflect internalized thought and speech patterns. This use of punctuation embodies the disjointed non-linearity of thought by oscillating between the perspective of the character and that of the narrator. This same use of punctuation can commonly be observed in the works of Austen, where it is used to mimic stream of consciousness and to develop a narrative intimacy between the reader and the focalized character. Instead of consistently using transitional or introductory phrases to signal shifts in interiority to exteriority and vice versa, Burney, Edgeworth, Brunton, and Austen use particular punctuation to convey perspective.¹⁸

Finally, the most pervasive and notable feature of those writers' specific narrative approach is the use of focalized, idiomatic language. Burney, Edgeworth, Brunton, and Austen use particular, nuanced vocabulary to signify perspective. In their novels, idiomatic language is defined as the emotionally charged, focalized vocabulary that marks the perspective of an individual character or group of characters, rather than that of an outward-looking, omniscient narrator. Using stylistic expressions that represent natural modes of speaking and thinking, the narrative techniques displayed by these authors work to embody their fictional characters.

¹⁸ Examples of introductory phrases include "she thought" or "he wondered."

Burney, Edgeworth, Brunton, and Austen demonstrate keen and careful attention to voice by using vocabulary and speech patterns to differentiate particular speakers. Despite being written from a third-person perspective, the language present in the following excerpts highlights individual characters' emotions and creates narrative intimacy common in first-person texts.

Instances of such idiomatic language can be found in Burney's *Camilla* (1796). The majority of the novel's plot circulates around the life and times of the Tyrold family and the narrative is chiefly focalized through the heroine and protagonist, Camilla. This excerpt narrates Camilla's reaction following a heated exchange with her fifteen-year-old sister, Eugenia, over her scarred appearance: "Camilla, terrified, besought her to form no such plan, bewailed the unfortunate adventure of the proceeding day, inveighed against the inhuman women, and pleaded the love of all her family with the most energetic affection" (Burney, *Camilla* 294). This passage begins by revealing Camilla's emotional state: "terrified." This glimpse into the character's fear does not have a bearing on the procession of the plot but does disclose intimate details that draw the reader closer to the heroine. The passage's inclusion of exaggerated, passionate language, "unfortunate," "inhuman," and "energetic affection," draws together the narration and her perspective. Finally, the use of the verbs "bewailed," "inveighed," and "pleaded" further emphasize the passion and poignancy of Camilla's exchange with her sister—a tenderness not attributable to the novel's narrator. Similar focalization can be observed in this later excerpt, which describes Camilla's reaction after finding out that Miss Margland's is openly attempting to woo Edgar Mandlebert, despite Camilla's attachment to him:

Camilla now felt wholly sunk; the persecutions of Miss Margland seemed nothing to this blow: they were cruel, she could therefore repine at them; they were unprovoked, she could therefore repel them: but to find her secret feelings, thus generally spread, and familiarity commented upon, from her own unguarded conduct, exhausted, at once, patience, fortitude and hope, and left her no wish but to quit Cleves while Edgar should remain there (350).

This passage captures Camilla's emotions while carefully chronicling her internal evaluation of the circumstances. Beginning with the phrase "wholly sunk" immediately transports the reader

into the character's psyche. The use of punctuation, specifically semicolons and commas, creates a narration that parallels stream of consciousness. As discussed earlier, this technique of using punctuation to string together disparate or unfinished thoughts mimics the character's internal dialogue. Further, this punctuation is paralleled by idiomatic language that channels Camilla's perspective: "persecutions," "cruel," "repine," "unprovoked," "repel," and "exhausted". The excerpt ends with Camilla's dark wish to leave Cleves despite, in turn, having to leave her lover. Because this wish is not vocalized, the fact that the reader is privy to this desire is only a result of the narration being focalized through Camilla. Overall, while this passage approaches free indirect discourse, it does not capture the essence of the method given that the language, while emotional and expressive, does not wholly, or only, reflect Camilla's perspective. While the majority of the novel focalizes through her character, there are instances where the narration shifts perspective and channels a different character in the text. For example, this passage, focalized through Mrs. Tyrold, describes her encounter with Camilla upon returning to a daughter swallowed in sadness and a family on the brink of ruin:

Bending then over her, she folded her in her arms; where Camilla, overpowered with the struggles of joy and contrition, sunk nearly lifeless. Mrs. Tyrold, seeing now her bodily feebleness, put her to bed, with words of soothing tenderness, no longer blended with retrospective investigation; conjuring her to be calm, to remember whose peace and happiness were encircled in her life and health, and to remit to her fuller strength all further interesting discourse (882).

This passage begins by describing a series of actions—a mother holding her daughter and daughter collapsing easily into her arms—before turning inward and expressing Mrs. Tyrold's thoughts and feelings. The excerpt notes Mrs. Tyrold's observation of Camilla's "bodily feebleness" and uses vocabulary like "soothing tenderness," "peace," and "encircled" to capture the gentleness of their interaction. Despite Camilla often fearing her mother, this passage provides a glimpse into the care and love at the foundation of their relationship. The construction of these passages showcases Burney's budding ability and desire to bring the voices and

perspectives of her characters to the fore—despite being conveyed through the third-person narrative structure.

In Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), focalized language is used as a means of communicating and collating multiple characters' perspectives in a single text. The narrative's shifting points of view highlights the dissonance of the novel's different voices. Allowing the reader to access the minds of the characters—through the employment of particular language and phrasing—creates narrative intimacy. The following excerpt, focalized through Clarence Hervey, reveals the character's genuine opinion of his two potential love interests:

In comparison with Belinda, Virginia appeared to him but an insipid, though innocent child; the one he found was his equal, the other his inferior; the one he saw could be a companion, a friend to him for life; the other would merely be his pupil, or his plaything. Belinda had cultivated tastes, an active understanding, a knowledge of literature, the power and the habit of conducting herself. Virginia was ignorant and indolent, she had few ideas, and no wish to extend her knowledge (Edgeworth, *Belinda* 379).

This passage is laden with evaluative language that signals a direct link between the narrated text and Hervey's mind. The passionate vocabulary creates a dichotomy: where Virginia is characterized as "insipid," "innocent," and "inferior," Belinda is described as "equal" and a "companion" with "cultivated tastes." The use of biased, emotionally charged language establishes this text as deeply personal. The language is considered and careful; it reflects a very specific point of view. Further, the excerpt's consistent switching back and forth between envisioning Virginia and imagining Belinda mimics Hervey's internal, evaluative thought processes. The reader is transported into his mind as he thinks through the advantages and shortcomings of the two women. Edgeworth's word choice enlivens the text with Hervey's voice. However, he is not the only character through which Edgeworth focalizes the narration. Unlike Austen, who generally privileges focalizing through the heroine, Edgeworth moves between the minds of different characters, which dilutes the potency of the technique. For example, the following passage focalized through the charming and compelling character of Lady Delacour: "Whenever lady Delacour's suspicions of Belinda were suspended, all her

affections returned with double force; she wondered at her own folly, she was ashamed that she could have let such ideas enter her mind” (189). In this brief quotation, the reader is given access to Lady Delacour’s private thoughts and feelings. Particularly, the excerpt’s use of the verbs “suspended,” “wondered,” and “ashamed” indicates the text’s interiority. This is bolstered by the phrase “enter her mind,” which draws a direct link between the narration and Lady Delacour’s psyche. Further, the contrast of “suspicions” and “affections” demonstrates the volatility and vulnerability of her emotions. While not the title heroine, Lady Delacour is a central figure in the text, and her fluctuating relationship with Belinda drives the plot. Much of the narrative’s focalization oscillates between the perspectives of Lady Delacour and Belinda. This quotation captures Belinda’s astonishment upon hearing about Lady Delacour’s history: “At a distance, lady Delacour had appeared to miss Portman the happiest person in the world; upon nearer view, she discovered that her ladyship was one of the most miserable human beings” (69). The exaggerated descriptions—“happiest person” and “most miserable human”—reflect Belinda’s imagination of Lady Delacour and are not necessarily universal or impartial judgements of her character. The juxtaposition of appearance “[a]t a distance” and discovery “upon nearer view” is a compelling metaphor for Edgeworth’s narrative style and draws the reader’s attention to the novel’s contrasting techniques of narration and focalization. While the third-person narrative style can be described as appearance at a distance, Edgeworth’s use of focalization as a narrative technique ventriloquizes the thoughts and voices of the characters, thereby providing the reader with discovery upon nearer view.

Finally, in *Self-Control*, Brunton uses select vocabulary to create distinct, opposed narrative voices. This is evident in the following example that portrays the heroine, Laura, taking a solitary walk after attending her mother’s funeral:

She turned to proceed; —and the moist eye sparkled with pleasure, the faded cheek glowed with more than the flush of health, when she beheld springing towards her the elegant, the accomplished, Colonel Hargrave. Forgotten was languor; forgotten was sorrow; for Laura was just seventeen, and Colonel Hargrave was the most ardent, the most favoured of lovers. His person was symmetry itself; his manners had all the

fascination that vivacity and intelligence, joined to the highest polish, can bestow (Vol. 1, 13).

This passage reflects the perspective of Laura through its language and insights. First, the characterization of Hargrave iterates Laura's personal opinion. The use of enthusiastic, descriptive vocabulary—"elegant," "accomplished," "vivacity," "intelligence," and "highest polish"—sets this passage apart as favourably biased and carries a distinct tone of admiration. This excerpt details Laura's intimate feelings and emotions: it is explained that the sparkle in Laura's eye is the result of pleasure in seeing Hargrave and that her blushing cheek is more than a sign of her good health. The passage also describes Laura's forgetting. The recalling of languid and sorrowful emotions creates an intimate connection between Laura and the reader. This intimacy is bolstered by the value statement that Hargrave was the "most ardent, the most favoured of lovers." The use of the word "most" positions Laura as the authoritative voice in this excerpt. While on one hand the overemphasized and dramatic verbiage suits Laura's character, it borders on sounding forced and overly literary which exposes Brunton as a writer who has not quite grasped the emerging narrative technique of free indirect discourse. In this next example, Brunton's focalization captures the heroine's range of emotions, as is demonstrated in the following quotation: "With horror unspeakable she considered his incorrigible depravity; with agony revolved its fearful consequences. Yet, while the guilt was hateful in her eyes, her heart was full of love and compassion for the offender" (Vol. 2, 166). The use of charged vocabulary speaks to the heightened and enraged emotions of Laura in this scene: "horror," "unspeakable," "depravity," "agony," "guilt," and "hateful". These sentiments are starkly contrasted with a quick shift towards feelings of "love and compassion." This change demonstrates the volatility of Laura's feelings and, thereby, situates this passage in the mind of the heroine. By employing idiomatic expression and narrating in the style of a particular character, Brunton is able to recreate voice in the text. As the reader comes to understand the opinions and language of the character, so too does the narration become layered in its reflection of perspectives. This layering

not only extends to the heroine, but also to other characters in the text. For example, this excerpt, which describes Hargrave's plan to seduce Laura,

He little knew the being whom he thus devoted to destruction! Incited by jealousy and resentment, he now resolved an immediate execution of his design; and he did not quit Lady Pelham till he had obtained her acquiescence in it so far as it was divulged to her (Vol.2, 166).

As with the previous examples, the employment of dramatic language indicates a deep connection between the character and the narrative. In this case, the use of phrases such as “devoted to destruction” and “[i]ncited by jealousy” reflect his emotional state. The tenor of these sentiments is augmented by the exclamation point, which signals extreme emotional expression. Finally, the inclusion of the phrase “he now resolved an immediate execution of his design” underlines the immediacy and intimacy of the narrative to the character. In *Self-Control*, focalized, idiomatic language creates a multivalent narrative that highlights unstable, differing perspectives. However, as with Edgeworth's, Brunton's use of narrative techniques are not as pointed or sophisticated as Austen's. Instead, Austen chooses to triangulate her narration by privileging the perspective of the heroine, layering that point of view with the perspective of the narrator delivering a truly dual voiced narrative.

A strong example of this triangulated narration can be observed in *Pride and Prejudice*. The narrative perspective of this novel is channeled through the heroine, Elizabeth Bennet. Indeed, because the narrative is chiefly focalized through a single character, the reader is ensconced in Elizabeth's lived experience of the plot's events—her prejudices, her misconceptions, her emotions, and her realizations. For example, the following passage captures Elizabeth's shifting feelings for Mr. Darcy. After previously finding him repulsive and narcissistic, Elizabeth's feelings begin to change, and her true feelings are realized:

As he quitted the room, Elizabeth felt how improbable it was that they should ever see each other again on such terms of cordiality as had marked their several meetings in Derbyshire; and as she threw a retrospective glance over the whole of their acquaintance, so full of contradictions and varieties, sighed at the perverseness of those feelings which

would now have promoted its continuance, and would formerly have rejoiced in its termination (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 288).

This passage is marked by Elizabeth's shifts in thought and emotion: she feels the improbability, she glances retrospectively, and she sighs at her own perversity. The excerpt's glimpse into Elizabeth's self-reflection, the acknowledgment of her wholly contradictory opinion of Darcy, draws a deep connection between the reader and the character's focalized narration. The reader, too, would be experiencing this conflict of emotion as they attempt to reconcile the character of Darcy from earlier in the novel—vain and aloof—with the character of Darcy being presented to them now—cordial and charming. The novel's persistent use of language that is specific, measured, and representative of individual character's perspectives, creates dramatic irony as the reader learns alongside, instead of ahead of, the character. While the majority of the novel is focalized through the heroine, Elizabeth, Austen also provides glimpses into the psyche of her lesser characters, as is demonstrated in this passage describing Lydia's thoughts:

In Lydia's imagination, a visit to Brighton comprised every possibility of earthly happiness. She saw with the creative eye of fancy, the streets of that gay bathing place covered with officers. She saw herself the object of attention, to tens and to scores of them at present unknown. She saw all the glories of the camp; its tents stretched forth in beauteous uniformity of lines, crowded with the young and the gay, and dazzling with scarlet; and to complete the view, she saw herself seated beneath a tent, tenderly flirting with at least six officers at once (247).

Lydia's fanciful and flighty persona is captured in the language of this excerpt. The passage focuses on surface aesthetics and momentary romance: striking uniforms, youth, beauty, and dazzling colour. These are objects of concern and delight for Lydia, but not for her older, more mature sisters. This passage could not exist in the mind of Elizabeth or Jane because the language is not reflective of their personalities: neither Elizabeth nor Jane would be drawn to these pieces of "earthly happiness" or revel in being the object of affection for "at least six officers at once." As if the focalized, idiomatic language was not robust enough to enforce Lydia's point of view, Austen underscores her perspective further by repeating the clause "she saw" four times in this

short passage. As both passages demonstrate, Austen employs focalized, idiomatic language to dramatize the thoughts and feelings of her characters, thereby creating a style and cadence that uniquely reflects her character. While Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton approach this technique with their use of particular vocabulary, it is Austen that masters it as a means of developing narrative intimacy.

Using focalized, idiomatic language, Burney, Edgeworth, Brunton, and Austen capture the individuality and voices of their novels' characters. The particularity of their vocabulary and syntax mimics internal thought processes and emphasizes emotion. Where her predecessors cast a wide and varied narrative net, it is Austen's choice to hone the focalization through her heroine that sets her apart.

As these examples demonstrate, the narrative techniques and origins of free indirect discourse that characterize Austen's fiction—both her manuscript works and her published novels—can be observed in the writings of Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton. Specifically, it is the authors' parallel use of extra-linguistic features that unites their writing styles. Emphasized typescript is employed as a means of communicating satire and speech. Punctuational pauses effectively mimic thought patterns and, in turn, transport the reader into the mind and spirit of the character. Pointed focalization, aided by the choice of precise language and phrasing, captures the character's point of view. This use of idiomatic expression ventriloquizes individual characters and sets the novels of these women writers apart from their other contemporaries. Importantly, it is in this trifecta of stylistic signifiers—emphasized typescript, punctuational pauses, and focalized, idiomatic language—that we recognize the foundation of Austen's masterful free indirect style. The deep connections among these women writers—a literary network of influence—cannot be ignored. The narrative techniques shared between these authors are not the outcome of chance but rather the results of a determined and directed education that Austen underwent as an avid and attentive reader of early women's writing.

However, while the narrative techniques and the impetus for employing them might be the same, the maturity and nuance of Austen's style far exceeds those of Burney, Edgeworth, and Brunton. These qualitative differences set Austen apart from her predecessors. As Ira Konigsberg argues, it was Austen who sparked the future of the genre: "a kind of novel that was to become classic in its technique and structure, a work which went beyond its predecessors" (244). Firstly, Austen's sure and sustained use of the free indirect style contrasts with her forerunners' sporadic and limited success. Through this prolonged engagement with the technique, Austen is able to create distinct voices—not just of the novels' characters, as is partially accomplished by her predecessors, but also of her narrator. The reader is easily able to decipher free indirect discourse because the layered voices are clearly defined. While syntactically the voices of the heroine and the narrator are intermingled, as readers we learn to hear the rhythms of each individual. In this way, free indirect discourse teaches us how to effectively read Austen. Finally, Austen leverages the free indirect style to create a space for her to imagine and parody the emerging social structures of Regency Britain. Social satire requires an intimacy with its subject and free indirect discourse provided Austen with this. In sum, what sets Austen's writings apart is that free indirect discourse becomes a defining feature of the work's spirit as well as part of its narrative function. Further, the germination of Austen's free indirect style can be observed in her manuscript works and traced across her authorial oeuvre, as is demonstrated in the computational analysis undertaken in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Roots

In understanding the emergence of Austen’s free indirect style, it is critical to explore how her style functions across her oeuvre—from manuscript works to print publications and back again. To do so effectively and with equal attention to all parts of Austen’s canon, I turn to digital humanities (DH). Austen, as one of the first and most popular subjects of DH inquiry, has helped to shape the discipline of computational stylistics. Considered only decades ago an emerging field, DH has particularly invested in analyzing and representing Austen’s work. Her writing has been the test subject for experimentation, and her canon has helped to reveal the successes and failures of early text-analysis methodologies. Thirty years ago, John F. Burrows published the first computational stylistic analysis of Austen. His 1987 monograph *Computation into Criticism* presents an extended study of Austen that focuses on the most banal and the most seemingly benign aspect of her canon: the most frequently used words. The main objective of the study was to demonstrate that exact evidence, often hidden “in the unfamiliar language of statistics” does have a distinct bearing on the questions and judgement of literary interpretation (Burrows 2). Working with a small unit of measurement, such as individual words, and complex categorical requirements, this type of research would have been tedious, at best, and, more likely, impossible to carry out correctly using only close reading methods. Given the nature of his research, Burrows took advantage of computational methods to map Austen’s style. Examining vocabulary and idiolect through statistical analysis, Burrows’ publication added concrete, quantitative data to support previous qualitative claims. Burrows’ computational stylistics had an impact on Austen studies: his work opened the doors to new questions, confirmed hypotheses, and developed methods for effectively researching style.¹⁹ However, with the more recent advances

¹⁹ Some examples of close reading hypotheses that were confirmed in Burrows computational reading include significant similarities in language between Mrs. Bennet and Lydia Bennet, Fanny’s language being greatly departed from that of the rest of the novel’s characters, and Emma’s eventual shift in language towards a shared vocabulary with Mr. Knightley (87, 89, 106).

in technological knowledge and access, computational stylistics is, again, a field ripe with possibilities for Austenian inquiry.

This chapter relies on a blend of distant- and close-reading methods to examine the entirety of Austen's oeuvre; giving equal, specific attention to all of her writings and putting them in conversation with one another in order to discover patterns across the arc of her career. This oscillation between methods will allow me to offer a new perspective on the influence of Austen's narrative art. This approach is important because it will allow me to examine how Austen's development of the novel's form and innovation of the novel's style impacted the trajectory of the genre. I will use quantitative, distant reading as an entry point into Austen's canon, particularly her early manuscript writings. The investigation of this chapter centres on Austen's evolution and editorial process by focusing on the arc of Austen's style across her authorial career. While previous scholarship has created a binary between Austen's early manuscript works and her published novel canon, both the quantitative and qualitative evaluations in this chapter challenge this binary division. Instead, I argue that the juvenilia and "The Watsons" have deep connections to, and stylistically foreshadow, Austen's novelistic career and that specific grammatical, punctuational, and stylistic markers reveal deep similarities across the body of work. Further, the use of unrestrained parody and precise focalization evidences her development of the free indirect style. Because my analysis zooms out from the individual texts and considers them as a body of work, I am able to provide a full account of Austen's style and construct a new narrative about her development and progression as a novelist.

Compared to Austen's published fiction, the manuscript works have received relatively little attention—either from critics or the common reader. Peter Sabor argues that despite being "long overshadowed" by her later works, Austen's early and unfinished writings are "astonishingly sophisticated and inventive" (xxiii). This chapter focuses on understanding how the manuscript works fit into Austen's authorial career by putting them in conversation with the novels. Instead of segregating Austen's writing into conventional dichotomies—early and late, finished and unfinished, manuscript and published, fantastical and conventional—this chapter uses digital

methodologies to create a fuller, more holistic understanding of her oeuvre. To conduct this analysis, I use a series of text-analysis methods and tools developed by David Hoover, specifically his proportion-based cluster-graph analysis. These methods measure linguistic patterns among data sets, in this case, composed of individual Austen texts, to statistically and visually render stylistic similarities. Hoover's development of out-of-the-box tools for text analysis and his own research on the evolution of Henry James' writing style demonstrate the claims made for the impact and validity of stylistic studies.²⁰ This analysis has not been previously used to study Austen and it draws attention to points of incongruence in her literary canon that have been previously unidentified or ignored. The output data from this computational rendering of the texts demonstrates that some of the commonly held assumptions about the shape and style of Austen's writings are unfounded and that there are patterns within the canon that have previously been underexplored.

While Austen's unparalleled popularity chiefly stems from the six novels she published between 1811 and 1816, her early draft writings played a considerable role in her growth as a writer. Written between 1787 and 1793, Austen's juvenilia are a tripartite, miscellaneous draft document. The juvenilia can be categorized as a commonplace book; this type of manuscript notebook was common among women writers of the Romantic period and was used to collect miscellaneous writings from across multiple genres.²¹ The extant manuscripts of these writings appear in three notebooks cheekily titled *Volume the First* (Bodleian Library), *Volume the Second* (British Library), and *Volume the Third* (British Library). The juvenilia contain one-act plays, short works of narrative fiction, epistolary novellas, a mock history, and various other

²⁰ Publications on James: Hoover, David L. "Authorial Style." From Dan McIntyre and Beatrix Busse (eds.), *Language and Style: Essays in Honour of Mick Short*, Palgrave, 2010: 250-71; Hoover, David L. "Corpus Stylistics, Stylometry, and the Styles of Henry James." *Style* 41(2) 2007: 174-203. Method development: Hoover, David L. "Using the Wide Spectrum Spreadsheet"; Hoover, David L. "Using the Delta Calculation Spreadsheets"; Hoover, David L. "Using the Analyze Textual Divisions Spreadsheet"; Hoover, David L. "Cluster Analysis, Principal Components Analysis (PCA), and T-testing in Minitab".

²¹ For example, Dorothy Wordsworth kept a commonplace (Dove Cottage Manuscript 120) book with poems and musings.

abbreviated musings. The surviving notebooks are understood to be fair copies given their meticulous organization and lack of editorial markings.

Contrastingly, “The Watsons” manuscript is riddled with erasures, cross-outs, revisions, and additions. The novel is assumed to have been composed c.1805 while Austen was living in Bath (Sutherland, *JAFM* n.p.). The document, untitled by the author but commonly referred to as “The Watsons” since it was so dubbed by James Edward Austen-Leigh in 1871, appears to be the substantial beginnings of a novel. The eighty-page manuscript exists in two separate collections and is the only Austen writing to be physically divided in this way: the shorter portion (twelve pages) is held at the Morgan Library and the more substantial portion (sixty-eight pages) is held at the Bodleian Library (Sutherland, *JAFM* n.p.). “The Watsons” falls in line with the common marriage plot riffed on by Austen and stars the heroine, Emma Watson; her virtuous tutor, Mr. Howard; and wealthy suitor, Lord Osborne. Linda Bree, Sabor, and Janet Todd argue that the opening of “The Watsons” is “well in line with what we might expect from an Austen novel” and that the manuscript clearly illustrates many of the Austenian methods observed in her later finished fiction (15).

These collections of draft writings have received relatively little scholarly attention despite the fact that Austen constantly returned to older writings to revise them and to enhance their contemporary relevance (Levy 1021). This makes the juvenilia and “The Watsons” compelling representations of Austen’s writing career because of their cross-sectional and iterative qualities. Sabor highlights the significance of the juvenilia, arguing that the notebooks are a “major achievement in their own right” and not just a representation of the later novels in “embryonic form” (xxiv). For Sabor, the juvenilia augment Austen’s reputation, rather than damage it, and therefore should no longer be dismissed as “mere apprentice work” (xxiii). Rather, the sophistication and inventiveness of the writings validate them stepping out from behind the shadow of the six published novels (xxiii). When we consider the shorter works as more than “childish effusions,” the shape of Austen’s oeuvre shifts and an alternative writerly figure emerges (Doody 80). Further, Todd argues that the draft texts, specifically the incomplete

novel “The Watsons,” provide an important insight into Austen’s “creative processes” (90). The cross-outs, in-line additions, and marginal notations offer a rare window into Austen’s editorial workflow—her adjustments in fact, impression, and detail (90). Given the significance of Austen’s early manuscript writings, it is imperative that these works be understood as key markers in Austen’s authorial evolution.

However, despite recognizing the importance of the early writings to Austen’s oeuvre, scholars have traditionally regarded the canon as segregated into two chronological halves: the unpublished, unfiltered manuscript texts and the published, more conservative novels. Margaret Anne Doody argues that Austen’s early writings possess a “zest and confidence” that further develops the narrative “sparkle” inherited from the eighteenth-century fiction (85). Similarly, Todd’s remarks that original readers of “The Watsons,” first published in 1871, found the text to be bright, animated, playful, and humorous (91). Doody astutely observes that the juvenilia and other early texts by Austen embrace irony, paradox, and sometimes even exhibit “rough, violent, sexy, jokey” qualities (85). These characteristics lend a knowingness to the texts and help to facilitate a bold critique of contemporary cultural structures, including those that made a “regularized and constricted” place for the novel (85). Bree, Sabor, and Todd echo Doody’s assertion when they characterize Austen’s early writings as “outright burlesques of the threadbare conventions of the sentimental novel” (19). While conceding that the manuscript works and published novels certainly share subject matter, Bree, Sabor, and Todd argue that the two bodies of work are fundamentally at odds (12).²² This opinion is reiterated by Doody who supposes that “Austen underwent a sort of personal and authorial revolution” between 1809 and 1811 (74). Specifically, Doody observes that the “obstreperous qualities that work well in short fiction were not highly valued in the novels,” which opt for more conventional and conservative subject matter (81). She describes this shift in style as a “process of accommodation” that

²² Some of these similarities in subject matter are the focus on gentry class living in the south of England and the preoccupation with concerns about courtship, particularly when it comes to young ladies from less wealthy families (Bree, Sabor, and Todd 12)

resulted in the “tame,” “constricted,” and “domesticated” prose readers find in the six published novels (75, 83, 86). She even goes as far as to claim that the novels of Austen’s fame “may not really have been the works [she] wanted to write” but that, rather, she was compelled to sacrifice her biting tongue for a more palatable polish (76).

The small but growing body of scholarship on Austen’s draft fiction has worked to recover these early and unfinished texts. However, these dedicated studies and scholarly introductions rely exclusively on the use of qualitative evidence to support their claims: close reading moments of satire or unpolished prose from Austen’s manuscripts and juxtaposing them with the conventional writing exhibited in her novels. Because these qualitative arguments rely on presenting truncated textual passages, it is possible that they misrepresent the overall tone of Austen’s oeuvre. This is not to discredit close reading, which is certainly a valid and effective method of literary evaluation and the approach relied on most in this dissertation. Rather, this critique merely highlights why Austen’s canon is ripe for re-evaluation through the lens of DH. The emergent stylistic methodologies, like those exhibited in this chapter, help to identify linguistic patterns through quantitative methods. Zooming out from minute, sentence-level analysis to a more representative distillation of Austen’s oeuvre reveals surprising patterns and correlations. Turning to these particular, stylistically significant examples in close reading demonstrate Austen’s early technical impulses and foreshadows the trajectory of her literature in previously understudied and underappreciated ways. It is this chapter’s oscillation between perspectives—distant reading and close reading—that facilitates a new view of the development of Austen’s narrative art over time and lays the foundation for a systematic, critical-historical exploration of her development of innovative narrative techniques.

The purpose of introducing stylistic text analysis to this chapter is to strengthen the scholarship on Austen’s juvenilia by using *quantitative* measures to assess, corroborate, and challenge the discipline’s *qualitative* claims. Specifically, the experiment employs stylistic text-analysis algorithms to represent Austen’s entire corpus statistically, using word-frequency counts and principal-component analysis (PCA). This data is presented in a series of computer-

generated cluster diagrams that allow a full-spectrum view of Austen's writings. I argue that this quantitative evidence points to an evolution of Austen's style rather than a distinct shift in her literary career, thereby adding clarity and nuance to the current understanding. I approach this topic cautiously, understanding that the use of digital methodologies relies on a healthy balance of skepticism and appreciation. Hoover argues that while computational text analysis is "neither a panacea nor a substitute for sound literary judgment," it can mobilize new research and support different types of argumentative claims (para. 39). The computer is a calculational, not an interpretive, tool and therefore it is only able to produce conclusions from the information it is given—poor data and poor methods will yield poor results. However, the computer is also incredibly useful for handling large collections of data and "reading" them without the interference of human error or bias. Further, the computer's ability to "refine, support, and augment" human judgment makes it an important analytic tool for studying literature during the digital age (para. 39). It is imperative, then, that the computer is only asked appropriate questions that rely on calculations and concrete evidence and not questions of nuance or interpretation. The researcher is just as necessary in quantitative experiments as in qualitative experiments because they can exercise the critical judgment required for thoughtful interpretation. The findings of this experiment integrate technological innovation and humanistic inquiry in turn sparking new considerations about the progression of Austen's style.

The quantitative measures employed for this study of Austen's writings use most frequent word (MFW) lists to assess the style of several manually compiled corpora. MFWs are defined as the number of words that appear most often in a particular text. MFW lists rely on quantification and can be compiled manually or computationally. To create a MFW list, the number of words in a particular text must be counted and then each occurrence of each word in the text must also be counted. The MFW list will include the words that occur most often—that is, those that have the highest ratio of word to text. Parameters for MFW lists are flexible as they can include or exclude stop words and can collect any specified number of frequent

vocabularies.²³ These variables must be determined by the researcher; in this case, the MFW lists include stop words and compile the 990 most frequent words in each text.²⁴ The MFW lists for this experiment were created by importing clean .txt files of Austen's writings into the *Intelligent Archive*.²⁵ The *Intelligent Archive* is Java-based, text analysis software developed by the Centre for Literary and Linguistic Computing at the University of Newcastle. The *Intelligent Archive* allows researchers to input data via .txt files to create texts; compile text sets, or corpora, that contain different combinations of the input texts; use specified parameters, calculate word frequency and proportion data based on the different text sets; and export that data. In this case, four corpora were used to interrogate Austen's juvenilia, and each corpus presents a different combination of the fictional writings in order to execute a holistic and directed reading of Austen and best reflect the totality and diversity of the texts at hand.

The corpus "Austen All" contains all of Austen's writings: her early juvenile work, her draft manuscripts, and her published novels. Each of these twenty-eight writings are categorized as individual texts, meaning that each work from the juvenilia is input as separate files. The corpus "Austen Volume" includes the same selection of works as the previous corpus but divides the juvenilia into its appropriate volumes rather than inputting them as individual texts. The "Austen All" and "Austen Volume" corpora were computed in blocks of 10,000 words and blocks of 15,000 words. Blocks are defined as the segment of text that is analyzed as an individual witness, or an individual instance for text analysis. The *Intelligent Archive* uses the block size information to generate the MFW list. For blocks of 10,000, the *Intelligent Archive* would group the first 10,000 words of a text together as witness one, the second 10,000 words of a text together as witness two, the third 10,000 words of a text together as witness three, and so

²³ Max Bramer defines stop words as a list of common words that "are likely to be useless for classification" (242). While there is no definitive list of stop words, some obvious choices from the English language are words such as "a", "an", "the", and "is". Stop words were included in this text analysis.

²⁴ 990 words were used because *Minitab* is only capable of analyzing 1000 words or less. This number pushed close to the maximum of software's capabilities (allowing for the greatest amount of data to be analyzed and compared) without risking crashing the program. Also, given the average length of the texts (30567 words), 990 words seemed adequate for analysis (approximately the most frequent 3% of the vocabulary).

²⁵ A .txt file is a container for plain text content. Plain text content is readable, character material, not graphic, representative data. Plain text content is generally encoded in ASCII, UTF-8 or UTF-16.

on. For texts that do not equally break into 10,000-word groupings, the final 10,000-word block of text will also include the remaining words, otherwise known as “Big Block Last.”

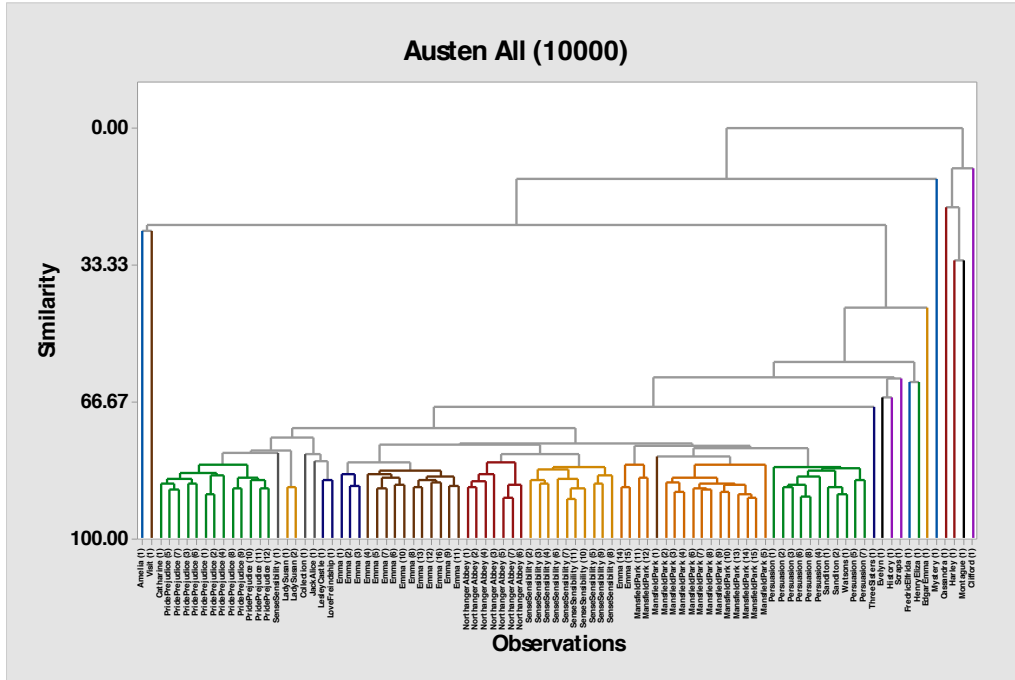


Figure 1: Austen All (10,000)

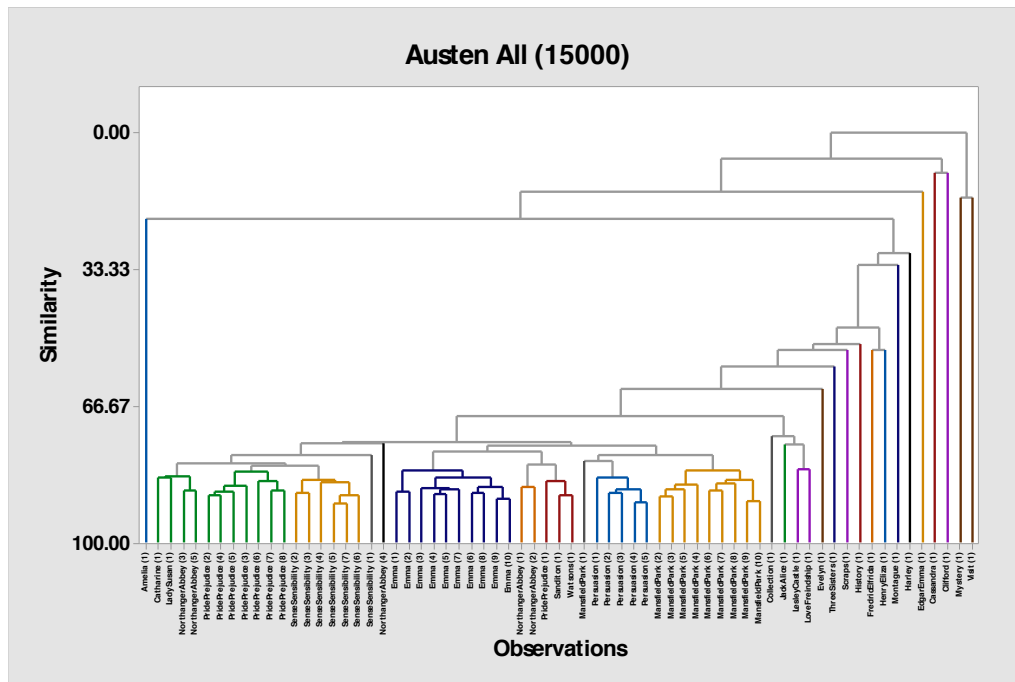


Figure 2: Austen All (15,000)

The corpus “Austen 1000” includes all of Austen’s fictional writings that are greater than 1000 words in length: “Catharine,” “Collection of Letters,” “Edgar and Emma, *Emma*,” “Evelyn,” “Fredric and Elfrida,” “Henry and Eliza,” “History of England,” “Jack and Alice,” “Lady Susan,” “Love and Freindship,” *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, *Pride and Prejudice*, “Sanditon,” “Scraps,” *Sense and Sensibility*, “The Three Sisters,” and “The Watsons.” One of the challenges with MFW-based analyses is that vastly varied text lengths can skew results. Because MFW data is collected based on the most common words in a particular text, short writings, like “Mr. Harley” or “Mr. Clifford” from *Volume the First*, which are both barely 150 words in length, have a much lower threshold for MFWs than triple-volume novels, like *Mansfield Park*, which contains upwards of 150,000 words. In order to address this challenge, the “Austen 1000” corpus was developed as a comparative text set. Using the results of this analysis helps identify which results from “Austen All” and “Austen Volume” were potentially skewed by the variation in text length, and which results were more legitimate and therefore lend reason to be further explored. The “Austen 1000” corpus was computed in blocks of 10,000 words and blocks of 15,000 words.

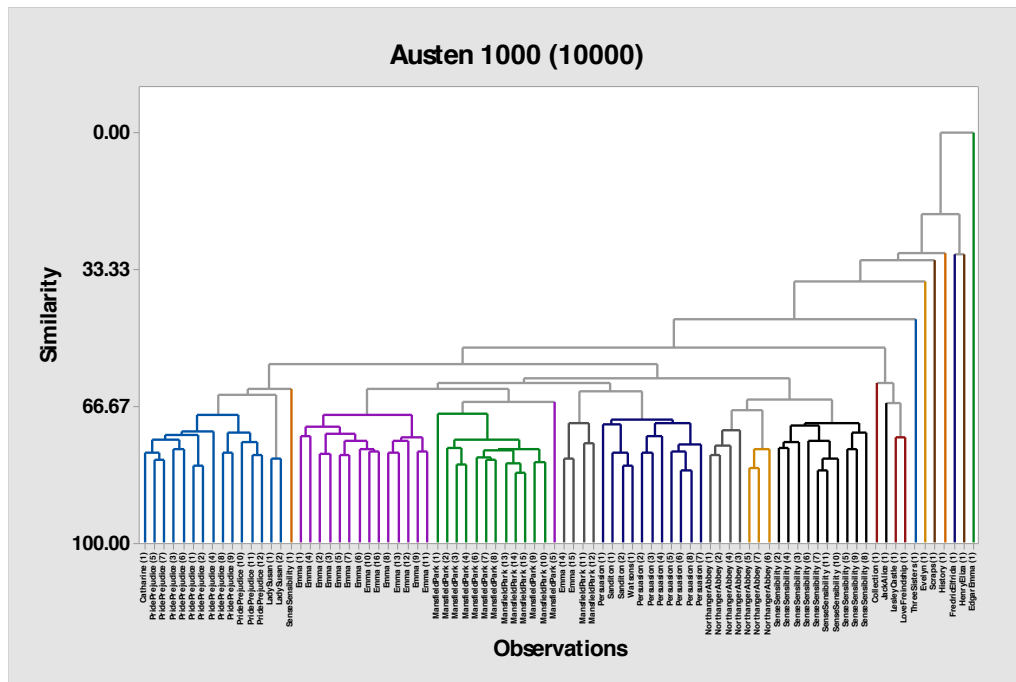


Figure 5: Austen 1000 (10,000)

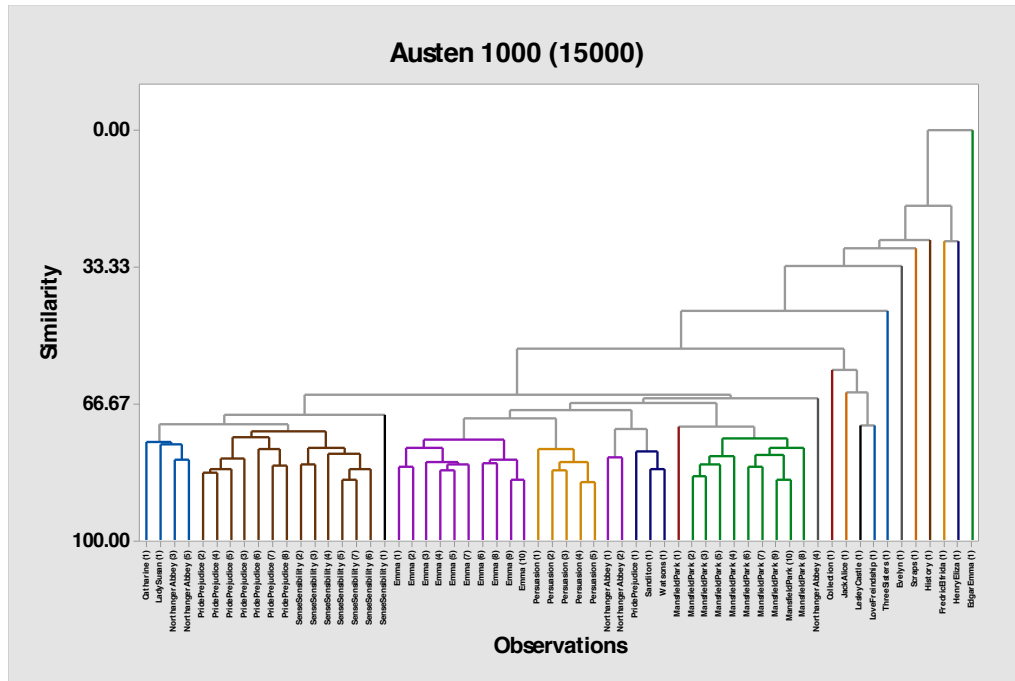


Figure 6: Austen 1000 (15,000)

Finally, the corpus “Austen Narrative” contains only the texts that employ a third-person narrative structure: “Catharine,” “Edgar and Emma,” *Emma*, “Evelyn,” “Fredric and Elfrida,” “Henry and Eliza,” “Jack and Alice,” *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, *Pride and Prejudice*, “Sanditon,” *Sense and Sensibility*, and “The Watsons.” This narrowly focused corpus was created because the form of a work can easily impact the type of language that is used. For example, a play may employ more conversational language and direct questioning whereas a letter would likely contain a relatively high number of “I statements.” The generic differences then affect the MFWs for a text because certain sentence constructions necessitate particular vocabulary. To help control for this variable, the “Austen Narrative” corpus was created. The “Austen Narrative” corpus collects Austen’s writings, of all lengths, that use the third-person narrative structure presented in her published novels. By standardizing the form of the writing, this corpus zeroes in on the variable of composition timeline and allows for a more concentrated comparison between the juvenilia works and the later works. The “Austen Narrative” corpus was computed in blocks of 10,000 words and blocks of 15,000 words.

The MFW lists generated by the *Intelligent Archive* form the building blocks of all the text-analysis results presented in this quantitative experiment of Austen's corpus. It should be acknowledged that text-analysis technology is limited by its ability to recognize only the presence of specific vocabulary and not the context or manner in which it is evoked. Understandably, this limitation could be considered problematic when investigating an author's style because the true meaning behind the use of specific language is often camouflaged without context. However, as I have argued and demonstrated in the previous chapter, one of the central building blocks of style is the vocabulary it utilizes. Therefore, calculating and comparing the use of language across a corpus is a sound method for researching questions of style. From the *Intelligent Archive*, the MFW data is transferred to a CSV document for further cleaning and formatting before inputting the data to *Minitab*. *Minitab* is a statistical analysis program that supports principal component analysis (PCA).²⁶ PCA was used for this quantitative experiment because it measures similarity by examining textual data, making observations about likeness within a corpus, and then plotting individual witnesses (in this case, Austen's texts) on an XY-axis graph according to their relative relations to one another. The data is rendered as a series of cluster graphs represented in Figures 1-8. Cluster diagrams interpret principal component analysis data and output the results in a graphic representation. PCA data can be represented in scatterplot graphs as well, but because the focus of this experiment is on similarity, clustering offers the most effective graphic representation. Importantly, cluster graphs should not be read left to right but rather top to bottom: the closer to the bottom the connection, the more similar the texts. What the distant reading reveals is that while many of the juvenilia's shorter tales are diametrically opposed to the novels in terms of style—confirming previous scholarly assessments—the longer, most substantive narrative of “Catharine, or Kitty the Bower” from *Volume the Third* has surprisingly strong ties to Austen's published canon. Similarly, “The

²⁶ This includes replacing characters that cannot be read by *Minitab* to unique, readable characters and transposing the data, so the appropriate information appears on the correct XY-axis.

Watsons” resemblance to Austen’s final manuscript “Sanditon” raises previously unexplored questions about chronology and Austen’s composition techniques.

A couple of immediate observations about the cluster graphs help to clarify and validate the experiment’s methodology. First, there are duplicate data points for many of the texts; this is the result of block sizes.²⁷ Smaller block sizes are considered superior for stylistics because they allow for more accurate and detailed analysis. Generally, blocks from the same text cluster with each other—meaning that the analysis demonstrates that texts are most similar to themselves. For example, Figure 2 renders all ten segments of *Emma* in a single cluster, meaning that every section of *Emma* is more similar to the other sections of *Emma* than they are to any other text segment of text from Austen’s canon. This result is unsurprising because, in many ways, it is obvious: a text must be coherent and, therefore, will resemble itself. It is safe to assume that because plot points, character interactions, generic tone, and overarching themes find unity in a single text, that text would logically share similarities in language. What is significant about this observation is that the quantitative analysis mirrors critical instinct and qualitative claims, which further validates the method.

While the principal focus of this chapter is on Austen’s early draft writings, it bears mentioning that *Northanger Abbey* is an interesting outlier because its text blocks do not behave in the exact cohesive manner detailed above. In several of the computations—specifically, and most significantly, in Figures 1, 5, and 7—the final third of *Northanger Abbey* does not cluster with the previous two thirds. For example, in Figure 5 blocks 1-4 of *Northanger Abbey* cluster together in a grey section, whereas blocks 5-7 cluster in a yellow section. This same type of segregation is mirrored in Figure 1 where sections 1-4 group together off one arm of the burgundy cluster and sections 5-7 group together off the other arm of the burgundy cluster. While these diagrams do confirm that *Northanger Abbey* is still more similar to itself than it is to

²⁷ PCA was conducted in blocks of 10,000 and 15,000 words, meaning that each 10,000-word or 15,000-word chunk was treated as a separate text. For texts that exceeded that length, additional blocks were added until the entirety of the text was segregated into individual blocks.

other texts in the analysis, the fact that the novel consistently breaks down *chronologically* is notable because most texts do not behave in this manner. This negation of chronological clustering is illustrated by *Pride and Prejudice* in Figure 1 where blocks 5 and 7, and blocks 3 and 6, are most similar—with block 4 being an outlier. It is also demonstrated in the same diagram with *Sense and Sensibility*, where sections 7 and 11 are the most similar. Figure 7 presents the most curious performance of *Northanger Abbey* and emphasizes the linguistic differences between the novel’s first two thirds and its final third. In the cluster visualization, blocks 1-4 appear together, as expected, in a green cluster centre-left, and blocks 5-7 appear together, as expected, in a blue cluster centre-right. The two groups are connected by the grey branch three levels up from either cluster. This text analysis visualization shows that *Northanger Abbey* blocks 1-4 are more similar to *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and the short story “Catharine” than they are to *Northanger Abbey* blocks 5-7. On the other hand, *Northanger Abbey* blocks 5-7 are more similar to *Persuasion*, the majority of *Mansfield Park*, and some sections of *Emma* than they are to *Northanger Abbey* blocks 1-4.^{28, 29} This textual incongruence and statistically detectable dissimilarity are notable not only because *Northanger Abbey* sits apart as an anomaly in the analysis, but also because the quantitative data mirrors the perceptible shift in theme and plot that happens in the novel when Catharine visits the abbey. The novel’s complicated revision process has fueled a debate regarding when and what Austen amended over the novel’s nineteen-year history from original drafting to eventual, posthumous publication (Shaw 591). The Gothic overtones of the final third of the novel contrast with the characteristics of a novel of sensibility presented by the first two sections. This shift is recognizable through close reading; it is also a dynamic detected by the computer program, as is graphically illustrated in the diagrams by the diversion in the novel’s clusters. What the PCA makes apparent is that the shift in style is not only thematic but is also stylistic. Austen’s attention to Gothic tropes in the latter part of the novel impacted the frequent vocabulary used, thereby creating a palpable shift. I

²⁸ Excepting block 1, which sits apart from the other 11 sections of the text.

²⁹ Excepting block 1, which sits apart from the other 8 sections of the text.

will return to *Northanger Abbey*, this phenomenon, and a deeper discussion of the novel's drafting history in the next chapter.

In the case of all eight computations—regardless of their specific attention to genre, length, or editorial status—“The Watsons” is shown to be most similar to “Sanditon.” The two texts cluster together in each of the visualizations. In Figures 1, 5, and 7, the two draft novels cluster with segments from *Persuasion*, Austen's final completed novel. In Figures 2, 6, and 8, “The Watsons,” and “Sanditon” share ties to early sections from *Northanger Abbey* and *Pride and Prejudice*. The consistency is intriguing, but the wide range in textual similarities—ties to an early novel, a mid-career novel, and a late novel—reveals very little about “The Watsons” as a standalone text. Further, it is curious that “The Watsons” and “Sanditon” would exhibit such strong stylistic similarities, especially given that they are bookends of Austen's authorial career. “The Watsons” is thought to have been drafted around 1805, whereas “Sanditon” was being written up until Austen's death in July 1817. Of course, their shared form—the novel—certainly accounts for some of their shared attributes, but because most of the sample is comprised of fiction, what this deep correlation between the two actually shows is that stylistic ties are as closely related to the composition process as they are to composition chronology. What is significant is that “The Watsons” and “Sanditon” exhibit strong similarities because they are both unfinished, draft novels. Being composed approximately twelve years apart, their connection signals that the language, shape, and style of Austen's texts are just as strongly reflected in their place in the editorial process (draft versus published) as to where they land chronologically in Austen's body of work (early versus late). The continual, obsessive editing visualized on the manuscript pages of “The Watsons” and “Sanditon” demonstrates Austen's novelistic ambition and her willingness to feel her way through the drafting process. While this is evidenced in the stylistic similarity of these draft works, it is corroborated by her use of punctuation in both manuscripts as well, particularly her propensity for the em dash. Both “The Watsons” and “Sanditon” demonstrate proportionally higher uses of the em dash, with 850 and 1100 respective instances, when compared to Austen's fair copy manuscripts (Bree, Sabor, and

Todd 17). I also assert that it further underscores the influence of Austen’s editorial process on the relative stylistic similarity of her canon. In addition, despite being an early draft manuscript like the juvenilia, “The Watsons” shares very little with these volumes of Austen’s youth. Instead, significantly, the majority of the juvenilia sits apart from the other texts in the corpus— corroborating scholarly claims that, in some ways, Austen’s body of work is dichotomous.

Moving through the cluster graphs individually, Figures 3 and 4 represent Austen’s corpus divided into volumes. In this case, “volumes” are defined as an individual novel (finished or draft) or a single notebook from the juvenilia. Both of these cluster graphs corroborate the scholastic claim that Austen’s juvenilia sit apart from her novels. *Volume the First*, *Volume the Second*, and *Volume the Third* cluster together and are distinctly separate from the other texts, as is indicated by the breakdown of the first branch in the graph. This is particularly evident in Figure 4 where the three juvenilia volumes cluster together on the right-hand side of the graphic, while the rest of the corpus clusters together under the other branch. The separation of the juvenilia from the rest of Austen’s corpus demonstrates that there is a significant stylistic shift between the juvenile writings and the published novels. The importance of chronology, in this case, is further evidenced in Figure 3 because the novel most similar to the juvenilia volumes is “Lady Susan,” which is an early, draft novel assumed to be written in the 1790s. However, while the collected juvenilia volumes stand apart from the novels, when the components of the juvenilia are broken down into individual texts, the clustering differs in some significant ways.

The cluster graphs shown in Figures 1 and 2 illustrate all of Austen’s writings as individual data points. As mentioned earlier, it is expected that the blocks that will share the most similarity are blocks within one text, and this is seen in Figure 1 with *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. Conversely, when we examine the pieces of the juvenilia the diversity of the texts is apparent. Generally, the juvenilia map into a large cluster on the far right-hand side of the graph with a few texts appearing on the far left-hand side of the graph. As is shown in both Figure 1 and Figure 2, while the juvenilia are diverse, many of the texts are more similar to each other than they are to the novels. This, however, is not the case with “Catharine.”

“Catharine,” a narrative from *Volume the Third* that tells the story of a young woman, clusters with *Pride and Prejudice* in Figure 1 and “Lady Susan” and *Northanger Abbey* in Figure 2. Surprisingly, we must move through six branches to find the closest connection “Catharine” has to another text in the juvenilia. In both Figures 1 and 2, the most similar writings are “Collection,” “Jack and Alice,” “Lesley Castle,” and “Love and Freindship.” In fact, according to Figure 2, “Catharine” is more similar to every single Austen novel than it is to any other single piece from the juvenilia.

Understanding that text length can alter the efficacy of stylistic analysis, the datasets represented in Figures 5 and 6 were assembled to create a more cohesive corpus and to allow for more minute differences to manifest in the graphic. As a reminder, the “Austen 1000” datasets contain all the texts greater than 1000 words in length. In both Figures 5 and 6, all of the juvenilia’s texts cluster together on the right-hand side of the graph—except, again, for “Catharine.” Stylistically, “Catharine” exhibits deep similarities to *Pride and Prejudice*, “Lady Susan,” and *Northanger Abbey*. To find a link between “Catharine” and another text from Austen’s juvenilia, we must move up eight branches in Figure 5 and four branches in Figure 6. As with the data presented in Figure 6, “Catharine” is shown to be more similar to every Austen novel than to any of the lengthy pieces from the juvenilia. When the corpus is narrowed to only Austen texts that present third-person narratives, as is the case with Figures 7 and 8, we arrive at the same conclusion: “Catharine” is more similar to every single Austen novel than it is to any other single narrative from the juvenilia.

Austen’s texts represented in this dataset are homogeneous in their narrative style: they are all written in the third person. Using a dataset with a homogeneous narrative approach style was important because style and language are intimately linked. Because stylistic analysis relies on most frequent word usage, one would assume that texts with the same narrative style would be more similar than texts with distinct narrative styles. Consider a first-person novel: such a novel will use a great deal of first-person pronouns, like “I” and “me,” to relay the details of the story from the character’s point of view. Alternatively, consider a third-person novel: such a

novel would not use very many first-person pronouns but would likely rely on third-person pronouns to propel the story. The narrative style of the text alters the language and distinguishes the texts from one another. Alternatively, conducting stylistic analysis on two texts with the same narrative style assumes a base of shared language and, therefore, allows the analysis to compare the finer details of the dataset. Figures 7 and 8 contain only texts that employ a third-person narrative style. The results of these analyses mirror the results found in Figures 2, 5, and 6, thereby revealing that “Catharine” is a true outlier that shares many more stylistic characteristics with Austen’s draft and published novels than with any of the other narrative pieces in the juvenilia.

The results of these quantitative analyses demonstrate that, in general, the language Austen employed in her juvenile, manuscript writings did shift later in her career. This is demonstrated most clearly by Figures 3 and 4 that both cluster the three volumes of the juvenilia apart from the draft and published novels. It is also supported by the other visualizations, which represent Austen’s early writings as isolated clusters on the borders of the frame, rather than interspersed with the draft and published novels.³⁰ In this respect, the quantitative evidence presented in this chapter corroborates the qualitative arguments made by scholars in the field. However, these scholarly claims fall short when considering “Catharine.” This text is a significant outlier because despite being an early, draft work it shows unexpected, startling similarity to the later, published works. In five out of the six cluster graphs that compute the juvenilia as individual texts, “Catharine” is more similar to every other Austen novel than to any single text from the rest of the juvenilia. I argue that “Catharine” acts as a linchpin text that bridges the supposed gap between early, unfiltered Austen and the published novelist Austen.

Overall, the quantitative evidence presented in these various stylistic analyses adds nuance to our understanding of Austen’s employment of language by showcasing that the works are better understood as existing on a spectrum as opposed to distinct, binary categories.

³⁰ Excepting Figure 1 where several of the early, *Juvenilia* works appears between later works

Ultimately, Austen's works cannot simply be divided into simple schemas, such as draft versus finished or early versus late; instead, her corpus compels us to look for less obvious stylistic similarities and to consider the impact of her revision process. This is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that in none of the computational renderings do Austen's three draft collections—"The Watsons," "Sanditon," and the juvenilia—cluster together. If draft versus finished was the common divide in Austen's corpus, it would be expected that the three incomplete manuscripts would possess deep similarities, and therefore would cluster together. On the other hand, the consistent clustering of "The Watsons" and "Sanditon" demonstrates that, despite bookending Austen's authorial career, these two texts mirror each other in language and style. This highlights the influence of the writing process on Austen's style and demonstrates that style is as equally tied to the place in time as it is to the place in composition. Like a visual artist, Austen's texts begin as sketches: rough, incomplete, and unrefined. As Virginia Woolf commented: Austen is "one of those writers who lay their facts out rather baldly in the first version and then go back and back and back and cover them with flesh and atmosphere" (173). As Austen drafts and redrafts, she fills in these gaps with detail, complexity, and depth of character. Because she returns again and again to her early texts, Austen's artistic process influences and further complicates the simplistic division of works into early and late. Significantly, this computational stylistic study draws important attention to the role of editing in Austen's corpus and supports the argument that Austen's style was part of a slow evolution across her authorial career.

While the quantitative analysis signals notable similarities and disparities across Austen's canon and makes apparent some less obvious patterns, understanding *how* and *why* passages of texts share stylistic characteristics requires the use of close reading. Using the distant reading techniques as a map for navigating the narrative arc of Austen's career, this portion of the chapter will dive more deeply into specific textual examples that make clear the evolution of Austen's style and the connections between her early draft writing and her later published novels. The analysis will centre on a selection of third-person narratives from the juvenilia — "Catharine," "Edgar and Emma," "Evelyn," "Fredric and Elfrida," "Henry and Eliza," and "Jack

and Alice”—as they most successfully anticipate the trajectory of Austen’s literary career, and “The Watsons,” as the first incomplete draft novel from Austen’s oeuvre.

Working through the eclectic early and unfinished writings demonstrates that Austen’s initial amateur engagement with the techniques of free indirect style germinated in her effusive and consistent use of satire. As Angus Fletcher and Mike Benveniste argue, the use of free indirect discourse as a satiric device was a long custom that Austen eagerly adopted (15). Notably in Austen’s case is the imitation of voice through idiomatic language. It is this quality that is central to Austen’s narrative style and characteristic of both free indirect discourse *and* literary satire. Jenny Davidson argues that Austen’s early writings, particularly her epistolary tales and “Lady Susan,” are written “chiefly in the mode of parody” (13). Davidson asserts that the short epistolary tales of “Love and Freindship” and “Lesley Castle” exhibit these qualities; I would broaden Davidson’s claim by adding that the same quality of satiric narration can be found throughout the juvenilia. The “satirical edge” of Austen’s fiction can be traced through her use of punctuation, typescript, and—most significantly—vocabulary (38). As Davidson argues, Austen’s ear for the “peculiarities of individual speech” is one of her “most striking gifts as a novelist” (24). This ability to mimic the vocal patterns of individual characters lends itself both to parody and to free indirect discourse. I argue that Austen’s habit of evoking satire developed organically into her mastery of imitating voice through free indirect discourse. What began as an overt technique leveraged for comedic purposes transformed into a subtle, stylized skill that came to characterize Austen’s fiction. Moving beyond purely parodic fiction allowed Austen to create a dialogic environment that layered voices on top of one another and put differing perspectives into conversation. As the close reading in the chapter begins to demonstrate, and as the later chapters of this dissertation highlight specifically, Austen’s development of free indirect discourse began early and was continuous—eventually resulting in a modern literary style.

Of the five abbreviated, third-person narratives from the juvenilia, Austen explicitly categorizes three—“Jack & Alice,” “Henry & Eliza,” and “Evelyn”—as novels. This is noted in the formal title of the texts as well as through other generic signifiers, such as dedications and

chapter divisions. Austen's intentional adherence to the specific characteristics of a novel while narrating bizarre, unfathomable stories demonstrates both her deep knowledge of the genre and her propensity for a biting, satiric style. It also reinforces her attention to the generic conventions honed by her female predecessors and underscores the impact of her female literary lineage. In these brief works, Austen generally abides by the assumed structure of the novel, as well as its style and language. What is evidenced by these early short tales is that Austen's famed use of free indirect discourse was developing in nascent form prior to her shift from familial manuscript to popular print. Further, I argue that her narrative style facilitates a subtle satire that can be traced across her canon. The syntactical, grammatical, and linguistic qualities of free indirect discourse, along with the dramatic and comedic irony the narrative style creates, are recognizable, albeit at an underdeveloped stage, in many of the juvenilia's works.

In the juvenilia, Austen uses narrative techniques, specifically, satire, irony, and idiomatic language, to create comedic distance between her characters and her audience. In the story of "Jack and Alice," we are first introduced to Mr. Johnson, who is considering his upcoming birthday: "Mr Johnson was once upon a time about 53; in a twelvemonth afterwards he was 54, which so much delighted him that he was determined to celebrate his next Birth day by giving a Masquerade" (Austen, *Jane Austen's Manuscript Works* 58). This passage paints Mr. Johnson as a trivial man, very similar to Sir Walter in *Persuasion*. The simplicity, childishness, and self-indulgence of taking "delight" in getting older year by year is revealed through the narrator and the audience becomes privy to Mr. Johnson's comedic character. The use of vocabulary—most notably the oxymoronic and comical use of both "delighted" and "determined"—connect this passage to Mr. Johnson's thoughts, thereby creating an intimacy between his character and the perspective and opinions relayed in the snippet of text. This focalization is characteristic of Austen's early writing and can be observed in the writings of her women writer contemporaries. Another example of focalization appears later in the story with the narrator's recapitulation of an interaction between Lucy and one of the title characters, Alice:

The perfect form, the beautiful face, and elegant manners of Lucy so won on the affections of Alice that when they parted, which was not till after Supper, she assured her that except her Father, Brother, Uncles, Aunts, Cousins and other relations, Lady Williams, Charles Adams and a few dozen more particular friends, she loved her better than almost any other person in the world (68).

This quotation represents the juvenilia at its best by blending humour, focalization, and idiomatic language to create a rich, stylish narrative. The language used here reveals Alice as shallow, ungenerous, rude, and childish—all characteristics that are furthered supported by her actions in the rest of the story. The speech-like quality of this passage, created by its incessant listing and exuberant use of adjectives, is also symptomatic of Alice's character. By narrating in the style of a specific character, Austen transcends the singular, objective narrator and introduces a blended style that incorporates the identifiable voices of her characters. This broad caricature evidences Austen's propensity for parodic humour. But, further than that, it underscores Austen's attention to the specific speech patterns, language, and linguistic idiosyncrasies of individual characters. I argue that this developing narrative skillset built the foundation for her later use of free indirect discourse.

Austen's use of focalization to caricature her characters is further evidenced in the following passage from the story of "Frederic & Elfrida:" "Mrs Fitzroy did not approve of the match on account of the tender years of the young couple, Rebecca being but 36 and Captain Roger little more than 63. To remedy this objection, it was agreed that they should wait a little while till they were a good deal older" (52). The use of vocabulary such as "tender," "remedy," and "objection" signifies a specific opinion, in this case, the opinion of the aforementioned Mrs. Fitzroy. This focalization helps to create a portrait of Mrs. Fitzroy as a stupid, judgmental, and nosey woman. Further, the false logic of this statement—that a couple ages 36 and 63 are altogether too young to marry—plays into Austen's satiric, ironic humour. The employment of focalization as both a comedic device and a narrative tool is evident, again, in the story of "Henry and Eliza." In the following passage, focalization is used to reveal the contradictory humour of the statement: "With tears in her eyes, she parted with these last reliques of her former

Glory, and with the money she got for them, bought others more usefull, some playthings for her Boys and a gold Watch for herself' (78). The emotionally charged language and sentiments of evaluation present in the sentence evidence that the passage is focalized through, and is intimately connected, to Eliza. It is obvious to the reader that "playthings" and a "gold Watch" are certainly not items more "usefull" or necessary than the family's "last reliques" of "former Glory." These items are equally frivolous, and Eliza's overvaluing adds a comedic, satiric tone to the text. Further, her decision to indulge herself with the purchase of a gold watch when she is only buying curios for her children underscores her selfishness and doubles down on the shallowness of her character.

Further, "Henry and Eliza" uses idiomatic language to identify sentiments and points of view with a particular character or group. This is particularly recognizable in this passage when the Duchess receives Henry and Eliza's letter:

Her Grace as soon as she had read the letter, which sufficiently explained the whole affair, flew into the most violent passion and after having spent an agreeable half hour, in calling them by all the shocking Names her rage could suggest to her, sent out after them 300 armed Men, with orders not to return without their Bodies, dead or alive (77).

The satiric humour of sending a full army of soldiers after two harmless runaways fits perfectly in line with the tone of much of the juvenilia, especially the shorter tales. From the beginning of the sentence, it is clear that the action and emotions are intimately connected with the Duchess' character. Phrases like "violent passion" and "all the shocking Names her rage could suggest" describe an emotional, exaggerated reaction that connects more intimately to the Duchess' personality than to an omniscient narrator. In this example, Austen uses specific, charged vocabulary to focalize the passage through the perspective of the Duchess, creating closeness between the reader and her character. Much of the tale of "Henry and Eliza" is focalized through the perspective of Eliza. This is evidenced in the following passage that details Eliza's reaction after being locked in the dungeon:

She went to the Door; but it was locked. She looked at the Window; but it was barred with iron; disappointed in both her expectations, she dispaired of effecting her Escape, when she fortunately perceived in a Corner of her Cell, a small saw and a Ladder of ropes (77-78).

Austen's use of the semicolon in this sentence draws attention to the abbreviated thoughts and quick action-reaction of the moment. This punctuation mimics the pattern of Eliza's thoughts as she frantically tries to escape the prison. Further, the language reflects Eliza's point of view: disappointment, despair, and fortunate perception. These words are connected to the bias of her singular character and do not reflect the emotional neutrality of the narrator. However, the repetition of "she" demonstrates that Austen's free indirect discourse is unsophisticated and immature. From the beginning of the passage, it is evident to the reader that the narrative, along with clearly satirizing the narrative cliché of the trapped heroine in distress, is mimicking Eliza's actions and reactions. Therefore, the repetition of the word "she," which appears four times in this sentence, is unnecessary. Later, in her novels, Austen often drops the explicit statement of the sentence's subject (in this case, "she"), and instead relies wholly on idiomatic language and syntax to communicate the perspective of the passage. These specific markers and the general evolution of Austen's free indirect style will be demonstrated throughout the dissertation.

The tale of "Edgar and Emma" also evidences Austen's blooming, but rudimentary, free indirect discourse. In this passage, Emma's carriage is pulling up to Edgar Marlow's home:

Mr and Mrs Willmot with their three eldest Daughters first appeared—Emma began to tremble—. Robert, Richard, Ralph, and Rodolphus followed—Emma turned pale—. Their two youngest Girls were lifted from the Coach—Emma sunk breathless on a Sopha. A footman came to announce to her the arrival of Company; her heart was too full to contain its afflictions (Sutherland, *JAFM* n.p.).

The use of idiomatic language, particular punctuation, and focalization align this passage with the free indirect style. The vocabulary used to describe Emma's state reveals a progression of emotion and physiological reaction as she moves from trembling, to going pale, and finally to sinking breathlessly onto the furniture. Each of these moments is flanked by the use of the em dash, which separates the passage and the plot points, allowing the reader to interpret the asides

as brief glimpses into Emma's point of view. Additionally, by repeating the character's name, Austen draws an explicit connection between Emma and the subsequent emotional reaction detailed in the passage. While this syntactical structure signals an immature form of free indirect discourse (because it unnecessarily repeats the character's name even though the language, punctuation, and structure of the sentence adequately alerts the reader), it clearly evidences that Austen is tying this passage to the interior thoughts and feelings of her leading female character. This same type of underdeveloped free indirect discourse can be found in *Northanger Abbey*; this similarity in style and its impact on the text's contentious revision history will be explored in next the chapter. A brief, more sophisticated passage of free indirect discourse appears later in the story when Emma summons the courage to speak to Mrs. Willmot but is unsuccessful in gaining her attention: "Dejected by the ill success of her first attempt she made no other" (Sutherland, *JAFM* n.p.). This sentence gives the reader a window into Emma's decision making and emotional response to the situation. The vocabulary used, specifically "dejected" and "ill success," directly corresponds to Emma's perception of the situation. This is clear because no one else heard Emma's attempt at striking a conversation with Mrs. Willmot and therefore could not evaluate her failure. The biased tone of the language reveals that this is not the impartial view of the narrator.

The tale of "Catharine" from *Volume the Third* of the juvenilia sits apart from the other abbreviated tales of the collection. "Catharine" has been characterized as a "betweenity" by Bree, Sabor, and Todd as it bridges Austen's early eccentric manuscripts and her polished published fiction (24). R.W. Chapman calls "Catharine" Austen's "first essay in serious fiction" (qtd. in Sabor lii). The tone, approach, and content of "Catharine" exhibit deep connections "with the later manuscript narratives, and indeed with the published novels" (Bree, Sabor, and Todd 22). Further, I argue that it is the style of "Catharine" that most deeply reflects the techniques of Austen's better-known narratives. As with these several stories from *Volume the First*, Austen uses generic conventions to set up "Catharine" as a novel. In her brief introduction, she speaks of the "warm patronage" of Cassandra Austen in encouraging and supporting her work (Austen,

Jane Austen's Manuscript Works 164). These dedications are not uncommon in the juvenilia, but their inclusion speaks to Austen's explicit attention to publication norms and her blurring of the lines between private manuscript circulation and popular print production. They also play to Austen's wit and sense of exaggerated humour. She forms "Catharine" as a "threescore" edition that has "obtained a place in every library in the Kingdom" (164). As noted by Bree, Sabor, and Todd, even the most popular fiction of the eighteenth century, for example, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, went through fewer than sixty editions. Austen's billing of "Catharine" as an extraordinary success reveals her tongue-in-cheek comedy, as well as her familiarity with the language and conditions of fiction publication. I argue that this demonstration of generic prowess is meaningful in light of the strong connections between the manuscript tale of "Catharine" and Austen's conventional, multivolume novels.

While the tales in *Volume the First* demonstrate periodic focalization and rudimentary free indirect discourse, "Catharine" is an example of a more refined narrative style that approaches Austen's early, published fiction. While the short tales from *Volume the First* shift focalization and presents the viewpoints of several characters, "Catharine," like Austen's published novels, is intimately connected to the experience of the heroine. Using idiomatic, biased language, the narrative gives the reader glimpses into Catharine's unique point of view: "Kitty had heard twice from her friend since her marriage, but her Letters were always unsatisfactory, and though she did not openly avow her feelings, yet every line proved her to be Unhappy" (166). The terms "unsatisfactory" and "unhappy" indicate specific value judgments on the part of Catharine's character, as does the phrase "she did not openly avow her feelings." Similarly, emotionally charged language can be observed in this passage: "Kitty was left in a painful Uncertainty, as to the particulars of Sir Peter's Character; She knew only that he was Horrid and Shocking, but why, and in what, yet remained to be discovered" (171). The use of vocabulary like "painful," "uncertain," "horrid," and "shocking" reflects Catharine's feelings in the moment. This particular language differentiates the intimate narration of this passage from the omniscient perspective of the narrator. Despite a good amount of ironic distance created

between the narrative and Catharine's character, the reader is encouraged to feel some degree of sympathy for her character and to engage in the same speculation over Sir Peter's intentions. By using idiomatic narration, Austen ventriloquizes Catharine—invoking her perspective and drawing the audience into the story.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this passage can be contrasted with various examples of less sophisticated attempts at free indirect discourse. The most common and recognizable characteristic of these passages is the repeated evocation of Catharine's name in excerpts where inference, punctuation, emphasis, or idiomatic language could be used to decipher the free indirect discourse (168, 183, 197). The following example comes from the very opening of the story:

Catharine had the misfortune, as many heroines have had before her, of losing her Parents when she was very young, and of being brought up under the care of a Maiden Aunt, who while she tenderly loved her, watched over her conduct with so scrutinizing a severity, as to make it very doubtful to many people, and to Catharine amongst the rest, whether she loved her or not (164).

The second mention of "Catharine" is unnecessary. Catharine is both included in the "many people" as well as signaled through the phrase before that describes in specific, emotional terms the care and conduct of Catharine's aunt, opinions that can be attributed to Catharine herself. Significantly, the cadence and construction of this opening foreshadow the opening of Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, which also clearly casts Catherine as the novel's heroine in the opening line: "No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be a heroine" (Austen, *Northanger Abbey* 37). The deep echoes of "Catharine" in *Northanger Abbey*—both in terms of the titles characters' names and the narrative style—evidence the place of both works as "early" in Austen's canon. As will be argued in a forthcoming chapter, *Northanger Abbey*'s strong connections to the juvenilia place it as an early Austen novel, rather than a substantially revised later work. Overall, this snapshot from "Catharine" demonstrates how Austen's development and, eventual, command of free indirect discourse germinated in the

juvenilia. The weaving together of multiple stylistic and linguistic techniques present Austen as a proficient young writer with a deep understanding of narrative methods.

The tone of “The Watsons” sets it apart from most of the short stories collected in the juvenilia, both in terms of qualitative close readings and quantitative distant analyses. The exaggerated humour and deeply sarcastic narration of the juvenilia, especially of the abbreviated narratives in *Volume the First*, stands in contrast to the conservative, polite plotline exemplified in “The Watsons”—arguably, Austen’s first novel of manners. This shift in tenor most certainly manifests in the language being used and therefore impacts the results presented in the quantitative analysis. Tone can be understood as one of the important stylistic factors that separates “The Watsons” from Austen’s other early draft works. In fact, Bree, Sabor, and Todd argue that the “realistic tone” of the novel most clearly approaches Austen’s “finished fictions” (15). Additionally, “The Watsons” exhibits more sustained employment of sophisticated techniques, such as focalization, idiomatic language, and the beginnings of free indirect discourse. These narrative qualities are exhibited in Austen’s particular use of vocabulary to mimic a layering of voices.

However, like “Catharine,” “The Watsons” places the heroine at the centre of the novel’s focalization. Significant, extended passages of text intermingle the thoughts, emotions, and judgements of Emma Watson with the voice of the narrator. This is strongly exemplified in the narration of the ball. The Watsons, though poor and living slightly out of town, are invited to attend a ball with the service officers who are in town. Emma arrives at the ball and is immediately taken up as an object of interest and affection. The passage begins with Emma’s initial reactions entering the ball and acclimatizing to her surroundings. Austen invokes the name of the characters repeatedly to signal that the reader is experiencing the action of the novel through the lens of the heroine: “And Emma, who could not but watch her at such a moment, saw her looking rather distressed, but by no means displeas’d” (285). This technique is a common indicator in Austen’s early attempts at narrating in the free indirect style. This use of explicit indication is a quality of Austen’s immature style and can be observed in other early

novels like *Northanger Abbey*. However, while the technique may be clunky, the desired effect—the mingling of the narrator’s voice with the perspective of Emma—is successfully achieved. The dual-voiced passage from the ball continues for several pages. The reader is privy to Emma’s impressions of the residents of “the Town of D– in Surry” (271). In these particular examples, the narration reveals Emma’s opinion of Mr. Howard: “Emma was very well pleased with the circumstances; – there was a quietly-cheerful, gentlemanlike air in Mr. Howard which suited her” (290). Here we see the use of the em dash to mimic stream of consciousness. The vocabulary “pleased,” “quietly-cheerful,” and “gentlemanlike” also presumes a judgment of character and behaviour that is personal and subjective. The relational aspects of the passage, specifically the way Emma relates her feelings on Mr. Howard to her own circumstances, highlights that this sentence is intimately connected with the character. Several pages later, Austen returns to Emma’s reflection on Mr. Howard with this lengthier passage:

The frequency of his appearance there, was the only unpleasant part of her engagement, the only objection she could make to Mr. Howard. – In himself, she thought him as agreeable as he looked; tho’ chatting on the commonest topics he had a sensible, unaffected, way of expressing himself, which made them all worth hearing, and she only regretted that he had not been able to make his pupil’s Manners as unexceptionable as his own (292).

Again, this passage’s relational syntax stresses how this description of Mr. Howard can only belong to Emma: “the only objection she could make,” “she thought him as agreeable as he looked,” “she only regretted that he had not been able to” (my emphasis added). The use of polarized language bolsters the intimacy between the passage and Emma. Finally, the use of punctuation—semicolons, commas, and em dashes—creates a cascade of ideas that parallels internal thought processes.

While Emma Watson’s voice may dominate the novel’s focalization, the voice of the community is also very present in the narration of “The Watsons.” Whereas the focalization in “Catharine” comes exclusively from a single character’s point-of-view, the narrator in “The Watsons” weaves in the critical, invasive, and collective voice of the community. The voice of

the public is exemplified in this passage addressing the village protocol after a ball: “It was the way of the place to always call on Mrs. Edwardes on the morning after a Ball, and this neighbourly inclination was increased in the present instance by a general spirit of curiosity on Emma’s account, as Everybody wanted to look again at the girl who had been admired the night before by Lord Osborne” (294). The phrase “general spirit of curiosity” reflects the collective feelings and observations of the community. Further, the passage narrates a set of communal values and practices that dictate the behaviour of the residents: calling on Mrs. Edwardes is described as “the way of the place,” and it is “neighbourly inclination” that unites and motivates the community to engage in gossip. This same collective voice is reflected in the following passage: “With some her brown skin was the annihilation of every grace, and others could never be persuaded that she were half so handsome as Elizabeth Watson had been ten years ago” (294). This passage not only reflects the views of the community (as is accomplished in the previous example) but also uses certain words that the reader can directly attribute to and agree with as the language of the community. Specifically, the exaggerated and restrictive vocabulary—“annihilation,” “every,” and “never”—captures the ungenerous judgments of the community. This idiomatic language differentiates the opinions of the narrator from the opinions of the community. In the same way, the layering of Emma’s voice with the narrator’s voice creates intimacy by revealing internal thoughts and emotions, the introduction of the community’s voice in the same schema reveals the novel’s collective consciousness. These examples of polyvocal narration, where the voice of a character or group of characters is layered with the voice of the narrator, come to epitomize Austen’s narrative style in her later novels.

There is an emphasis on perception and observation when it comes to the vocabulary associated with the communal voice. While focalization through individual characters is closely connected to personal biases and internal emotions, focalization through the community reflects, albeit still generally biased, group consensus. In layering the voice of the community and the voice of an individual character, the narrative works to negotiate the gap between the way we see ourselves and the way others see us. In the following passage, the oscillation between character

and community is made clear: “Having no reason to be dissatisfied with her partner, the Evening began very pleasantly to her; and her feelings perfectly coincided with the re-iterated observation of others, that it was an excellent Ball” (285). The beginning of this passage exists squarely within Emma’s consciousness as the narration pinpoints the heroine’s emotions and understanding of her circumstances. However, the phrase “her feelings perfectly coincided with the re-iterated observation of others” introduces the voice of the community. Specifically, the use of “coincided” and “re-iterated” creates a dialogue between the collective and the individual. By creating this dialogue between the internal and the external, Austen uses the narrative space of her novels to mirror the socially complex spaces of Romantic Britain.

Reinvestigating Austen’s canon through the lens of computational text analysis highlights previously unexplored patterns in her canon. Specifically, while Austen’s early manuscript works have been relatively ignored by contemporary criticism, distant reading provides an entry point to understand these works in the context of Austen’s wider career trajectory and authorial evolution. The qualitative methods demonstrate that Austen’s commonplace manuscript books and her draft novel “The Watsons” are strongly predictive of her later works. The stylistic similarities between “Catharine” and the completed novels evidence that Austen’s corpus complicates the common conception of a segregated, oppositional canon. Additionally, the close relationship between “The Watsons” and “Sanditon” reveals the importance of interrupted composition and continuous revision, as well as chronology, in determining stylistic similarity.

Further, revisiting Austen’s canon through the lens of close reading and minute qualitative analysis highlights the importance of parody in the development of her free indirect style. The abbreviated tales in *Volume the First* are intensely witty, slightly vulgar, and surprisingly fantastical, which contrasts with the tone of Austen’s published novels. However, the narratives’ deft use of caricature and parody foreshadows Austen’s later techniques of idiomatic language and free indirect discourse. Notably, both “Catharine” and “The Watsons” exhibit extended focalization, through the use of punctuation and vocabulary, which builds intimacy between the narration and the perspective of an individual character in the text. This

practice of layering the voice of the heroine with the voice of the narrator can be easily traced from the early manuscript writings into the published canon. “The Watsons,” Austen's first novel of manners, also presents the first instance of polyvocal narration. The embodiment of the communal voice reflects the changing social space and the emergence of competing social powers. This movement from dual voice to collective shows the complexity of Austen’s early drafts and predicts the later novel’s attention to dialogic publics. Overall, Austen’s early manuscript writings anchor the arc of Austen’s canon. While the juvenilia are significantly more parodic and fantastical than Austen’s later works of manners, similarities in narrative structure illuminate how Austen’s style was initially developed through this early fiction. Austen’s early draft manuscripts demonstrate that she experimented with perspective and omniscience from the most nascent stage of her craft (Bray, *Language* 22). Her consistent attention to voice can be understood as the catalyst in her challenging the common form of the novel. In her pursuit of the most probable fiction, Austen discovered that free indirect discourse was necessary, as a style and method of imagining and critiquing her contemporary moment.

Chapter 3: Transformations

The full realization of Austen's indicative free indirect style, while founded in her early manuscript works through the use of parody, was the product of over a decade of experimentation with narrative form. Because of this, as Mary Favret discusses, Austen resists periodization and instead exists in recurrent moments (373). Further, perhaps one of the reasons Austen does not cleanly or easily fit into any particular snapshot of time is because her writings were continually and consistently revised throughout her life. Rather than drafting her novels in a linear process—from the germination of an idea through publication—Austen repeatedly returned to many of her works over the years. In some instances, this process of revision manifested in returning to create fair copies of her youthful texts; in some, it meant battling publication timelines and handling returned manuscripts; and in some further, it meant adapting to narrative trends in order to rejuvenate early works. It is important to remember, as Cheryl Wilson argues, that Austen was writing novels when, as a genre, the novel was still young (153). In this way, Austen was learning her craft alongside the formation of the craft itself.

How can we understand Austen's evolution as a writer as she transitioned from the private, parodic writings of her juvenilia to her first novels? This chapter explores this question by focusing on Austen's habitual and continual revision practices, and how this approach to writing funneled into her development and proficient use of free indirect discourse. I start by discussing Austen's epistolary beginnings and take up three texts: "Lady Susan," *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. The first is an early writing by Austen that takes on the letter form, while the latter two are commonly acknowledged to have begun as epistolary texts that were later revised and transformed for publication into third-person narratives (Lynch, *Economy* 234, Watson 3). These three texts reveal how Austen draws on the novel in letters tradition to create perspective when moving between types of narration because, as Bray argues, the "combination of narrator's and character's perspectives in the third-person form of free indirect thought which Austen handles so skillfully in her mature novels derives, at least in part, from the interaction

between the narrating and the experiencing self crucial to the epistolary novel” (*Epistolary Novel* 153). Defined by its recitation of an individual character’s thoughts, the epistolary novel form develops an intimate connection between character and reader. Narrative texts, on the other hand, introduce an unknown speaker that complicates this relationship. A careful dissection of the texts’ employment of free indirect discourse will illuminate why this layered, dual voiced style affords the linguistic, narrative space necessary to present competing voices and critique.

Next, I will turn my attention to *Northanger Abbey*, specifically to how its checkered publication history intersects with Austen’s stylistic development. Using the structural and linguistic elements of Austen’s narrative, this chapter presents an alternative timeline for Austen’s oeuvre that shifts some common understandings of the novel’s composition. By weaving together historical documents, the novel’s paratext, and quantitative stylistic analysis, I will argue that *Northanger Abbey* was revised on a specific nineteen-year timeline and in a specific iterative manner that generated a “betweenity” text that merges Austen’s early style with her mature style. The revision history of *Northanger Abbey* remains ambiguous and widely debated; the new compilation of evidence I present here offers another perspective informed by both widely accepted scholarly views and my original computational analysis. In the case of each of these four pre-Chawton novels, I will highlight how Austen’s malleability as an author led her to critical, narrative transformations and eventually to offer pointed social criticism.

Elizabeth MacArthur argues that the conventional definition of “narrative” excludes the epistolary form. While the common supposition is that narratives take place in the past, the epistolary style does not “conform to this assumption” because it recounts present moments “without knowledge of the future, privileging metonymy over metaphor, sequence over closure” (3, 8). Because first-person and third-person stories are delivered in the past tense, the conclusion of the narrative is supposedly “inevitable;” in contrast, epistolary narratives take place moment to moment:

A third- or first-person narrator can create expectations about the ending from the beginning of his or her narration; hints of the future can be scattered throughout the

narrative so that when it arrives it will seem to the reader inevitable, predetermined. The letter-writing characters of an epistolary novel, in contrast, cannot make insinuations about the future [...] and they cannot explain the significance of present events in relation to a larger whole (9).

Because epistolary novels unfold themselves in tandem with the experience of the reader, they appear less centred and less certain. This decentred approach can be juxtaposed with first-person and third-person stories that maintain a more uniform narrative method. One of the ways this difference is manifested is in the conception of voice. As opposed to first-person and third-person narratives, which rely on a central figure who determines “which events to recount and in what order,” epistolary novels “lack the central, organizing authority” and instead integrate multiple perspectives and privileges—in turn—multiple characters’ diverse points of view (9-10).

Until recently, critics have commonly considered the epistolary eighteenth-century novel as an “obstacle” that prohibited, for some time, literature’s progress towards the narrated nineteenth-century novel form (11). However, instead of labelling epistolary novels as “defective” narratives, MacArthur proposes that we redefine the term narrative to encompass stories told across forms: first-person, third person, and epistolary (3). I argue that this inclusive definition is particularly useful when it comes to Austen, her canon, and her position as a writer caught on both sides of the century’s divide, as it contextualizes her evolution as a writer. Instead of segmenting Austen’s literary career into early experimentation and professional narration, adopting a more holistic understanding of literary narrative highlights Austen’s arc of writing—short parodic fiction, epistolary novels, and, finally, novels narrated through free indirect discourse. This chapter will trace the relationship between Austen’s epistolary works and her transition to third-person narratives and show how free indirect discourse ventriloquizes the individual characters and creates space for Austen to advance her social critique.

As Michelle Levy details, Austen’s relationship with manuscript culture has commonly been relegated to her early writings in the juvenilia (1019-1020). However, exploring Austen’s drafting, revising, and publishing processes highlights that these “two aligned sets of

categories—scribal and print culture, amateur and professional authorship—[have] been too starkly drawn” (1020). In fact, Austen persisted in participating in manuscript culture, alongside her life in print, for the entirety of her authorial career. This is evidenced by the fact that she continually returned to older writings to revise them or create fair copies. While some manuscripts written in her early life travelled “several house moves” over a period of more than twenty years, others mark her final days of productivity as she succumbed to her illness (Bree, Sabor, and Todd 11).

In addition to the juvenilia discussed in the previous chapter, “Lady Susan” serves as an early example of Austen’s significant manuscript career. While there is some debate, “Lady Susan” is thought to have been drafted between 1793-1795 and scribed into fair copy around 1805 (Emden 283, Kaplan 163, Levy 1018). Caroline Austen, Austen’s niece, classified “Lady Susan” as one of the author’s “betweenities:” “it has the skill, sophistication, realism, and length that set it apart from the juvenile works, together with the subject matter that separates it from the later published novels” (Bree, Sabor, and Todd 24). While some scholars consider this evaluation of the text to be rather critical, I think that Caroline Austen presents modern readers with a rather extraordinary conception of the text. I argue that “Lady Susan” should be considered a “betweenity” because it symbolically and stylistically straddles two Austen worlds. Symbolically, the 1805 fair copy of “Lady Susan” stands as the final Austen manuscript before the author attempted publication (albeit unsuccessfully for the first while). “Lady Susan” is the text that bridges Austen’s wholly private writing life and her eventual public-facing canon. Stylistically, “Lady Susan” is a largely epistolary novella; however, the conclusion of the narrative is non-epistolary and marks Austen’s first extended foray into third-person narration. As Bree, Sabor, and Todd argue, “Lady Susan” reproduces the “formalities accorded to other letters in novels until the work’s non-epistolary conclusion” (15). This sudden pivot in style has been described as a “subversion” possibly introduced because Austen was unable to reach a mature conclusion while operating within the mind and mode of her characters (Kaplan 171). Despite the fact that the conclusion of “Lady Susan” has been thought of as an ill-suited “swerve

to narrative commentary,” its switch to the third-person style certainly supports the notion that the text is a “betweenity” and evidences Austen’s authorial arc (27).

The novella details the dramatic and mischievous life and times of Lady Susan Vernon. Notwithstanding the older and bolder protagonist of the text, the subject matter of the “Lady Susan” is not dissimilar to the plot lines of the published novels, where the narrative is primarily concerned with how characters move within a defined, intimate social space:

the same preoccupations with genteel families in villages in the south of England, the same concerns about courtship, the same specific fears of what might happen to young women, however beautiful and intelligent, if their families are not wealthy enough to attract desirable husbands for them (Bree, Todd and Sabor 12).

Again, like the published novels that followed, “Lady Susan” demonstrates that Austen intimately understands the “patriarchal structure of the social world” (Kaplan 168). Despite including a very commanding and formidable heroine, power in “Lady Susan”—and across Austen’s canon—always lies with property ownership. Because women of the gentry were excluded from inheriting property given the system of male primogeniture, they “acknowledge and accept their sole social recourse—to marry men” (168). Broadly, primogeniture refers to rights, “fact or condition of being the firstborn child in a family,” but it became popular in England after the Norman conquest of 1066 as a way of preserving the inheritance of estates by requiring property be passed down a familial male bloodline (“primogeniture, noun”; Tarpley 90). However, “Lady Susan” challenges these traditional power structures through its discourteous characters and the audacious use of parody. The novella treats men as the prizes of female competitions rather than the masters of their fate. Even the form of the novel itself—the private, domesticated, “primarily female discourse of letter writing”—places the women in control of the narrative (168). This same unflinching satire can be found in the juvenilia and is later transformed into a subtler, yet still biting, approach in the published novels, which demonstrates, again, why “Lady Susan” is a “betweenity” and a linchpin in Austen’s authorial evolution.

Further, how the epistolary novel treats voice is particularly important to consider in the context of Austen's move to third-person narrated fiction and her development of free indirect discourse. Deborah Kaplan argues that epistolary fiction is the "narrative form of manifest relationship" (163). She additionally claims that Austen found the epistolary style as a "means for expressing powerful female friendships" (163). I would take this argument further and assert that this narrative form taught Austen how to integrate multiple points of view under a cohesive story arc. Because epistolary novels rely on multiple, identifiable correspondents and their reciprocal communications, the epistolary novel necessarily creates a dialogic environment. This would later become a key component of Austen's development of free indirect discourse. However, while letters are exchanged between a variety of characters, as Bree, Sabor, and Todd claim, the only voice we really care about is Lady Susan's (28). This foreshadows a second integral characteristic of Austen's mature style: intimacy with a single female protagonist. Ultimately, what I am arguing is that, rather than Austen's epistolary era opposing her stylistic development, it was integral. In the same way that MacArthur contends for understanding epistolary fiction as a valid narrative, I suggest that, while all of Austen's six published novels rejected the epistolary form in favor of third-person narration, her considerable experimentation with the style between 1793 and 1799 must be acknowledged as fundamentally shaping her narrative approach.

The primary trouble Austen encountered working in the epistolary tradition, and likely a chief reason why she pivoted her style away from it, was that the novel in letters was a dying form (27). Despite experiencing a brief resurgence due to radical feminist fiction in the late 1790s, the epistolary form had been on the decline in popularity since the 1780s given its "moral anarchism" (Levy 1024). By the time England reached the turn of the century, the epistolary style had all but given way to narrated fiction. Therefore, when Austen returned to the ten-year-old manuscript of "Lady Susan" in 1805, she had already missed the form's moment. Austen would later be confronted with this same challenge when writing and revising both *Elinor & Marianne*, later *Sense and Sensibility*, and *First Impressions*, later *Pride and Prejudice*. Both

drafted in the second half of the 1790s, *Elinor & Marianne* and *First Impressions* were narratives Austen transformed into the third person before submitting them for publication. While Kaplan claims that this writing history marks Austen's "struggle in her fiction," I would argue that it instead shows her nuanced narrative ear (173-174). Austen's adaptability underscores her desire to establish a narrative mode that retained the subjectivity and relations of the epistolary style while achieving the perspective of third-person narration. Of course, this aim would eventually lead her to advancing and, in some ways, creating the narrative mode of free indirect discourse, which allowed for simultaneous closeness and detached observance.

Lynch summarizes why *Sense and Sensibility* is generally recognized as such a significant text, both for the novel form and Austen's stylistic development:

[a]rguments for recognizing *Sense and Sensibility*'s centrality in the history of the novel often proceed by applauding Austen's use of free indirect discourse and her reworking of the form of the epistolary novel and by suggesting that the language of inward experience these innovations produce is capable of conveying what is most authentically individual about the individual (*Economy* 234).

This synopsis hinges on the narrative style and structure of *Sense and Sensibility*, and Austen's ability to ventriloquize individual experience through narrative form. This narrative transformation took place over nearly two decades as Austen transitioned from the epistolary tradition to the third-person narrative approach. The ur-text of *Sense and Sensibility*, originally titled *Elinor & Marianne*, was drafted between 1795 and 1797 and was likely the first extended narrative Austen wrote following the manuscript of "Lady Susan" (Emden 283, James-Cavan 7). Records kept by Austen's sister Cassandra suggest that the novel was revised around 1809 when the Austen women relocated to Chawton (7). While the story and characters remained relatively the same, Austen redrafted the novel in the third-person narrative form before eventually publishing it in 1811. While there is no record of how Austen negotiated her agreement with publisher Thomas Egerton of Whitehall, we know that the novel was published at "her own expense—a respectable and common practice for new writers at this time but a risky venture for

an impoverished single woman” (8-9). Maybe, after previous disappointment, Austen was so desperate to enter the print market that she was willing to make a precarious professional move. Or, perhaps Austen knew she was making a sure bet as her “contemporary readers would have been very familiar with the novels and their conventions, both invoked in *Sense and Sensibility* (24). The latter seems likely given her marked understanding of readers, markets, and narrative trends—something she successfully demonstrated through her previous stark parodies in the juvenilia.

This youthful parody is not entirely lost in *Sense and Sensibility*. Kathleen James-Cavan claims that parody is crucial to the novel and that “Marianne’s descent and return bring together and then re-present in a new light the novel’s most important literary allusion” (30). Notably, this style of parody marks a turning point in Austen’s use of the literary device as she moves from aggressive satire to a subtler form of burlesque. Another way in which *Sense and Sensibility* evidences a critical moment in Austen’s oeuvre is in the method of reporting thought and speech. As Rebecca Richardson argues, *Sense and Sensibility* has “the spirit of epistolary fiction” particularly as the novel “occupies a unique place in her transition from epistolary to third-person narration” (234). She further contends that it is “not a coincidence that *Sense and Sensibility* began as the epistolary *Elinor and Marianne*,” especially given the form of free indirect discourse, which relies on capturing the intimacy of a first-person narrative (234). I concur with Richardson and argue that, broadly, the way free indirect discourse clings to and ventriloquizes the internal dialogue of individual characters maps easily onto the direct reporting of thought encapsulated by the novel in letters. Free indirect discourse “relies upon the meeting of two or more entities” and the “overlap of two voices,” as does letter writing, which relies on correspondents engaging in a written dialogue (Richardson 230, 241). The “dramatized consciousness” Austen skillfully develops through her free indirect style has its roots in the first-person narrative tradition (Bray, *Language* 23). Given these shared origins, it is easy to imagine how Austen successfully revised the novel’s approach while maintaining the narrative’s essence. The transformation of *Elinor and Marianne* from the waning epistolary style to *Sense and*

Sensibility as a third-person narrated novel—a form now gaining traction in the burgeoning reading community—shows Austen’s movement towards modernity, “both thematically and structurally” (Kaufmann 400).

However, as Eric Lindstrom argues, *Sense and Sensibility* “is still on the way to developing” how to represent “social experience,” especially when we consider it within the entirety of Austen’s canon and specifically in comparison to the later novels that exhibit a much more mature use of the free indirect style (1073). As B.C. Southam suggests, there is a noticeable “stiffness” in *Sense and Sensibility* that may be a hangover from the novel’s original draft (qtd. in Richardson 234). Southam argues that Austen “had difficulty in freeing herself from the original design;” I propose that the remnants of the epistolary form and rigidity of her writing evidence her stumbling to security within her new style (qtd. in Richardson 234). What both *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* display are a writer’s early experimentations, which are in almost all cases clumsy and inconsistent. Austen was a writer who relied on revision even when adjusting her most sophisticated manuscripts, so it is unsurprising that her first serious attempts at free indirect discourse would look radically different than the narrative prowess we encounter in the later Chawton texts.³¹

As mentioned above, *Pride and Prejudice* followed a very similar trajectory to *Sense and Sensibility*: an epistolary draft revised into a third-person narrative with sporadic use of free indirect discourse. *Pride and Prejudice* was drafted shortly after *Sense and Sensibility* between 1796 and 1797 (Emden 283). The nearly overlapping timelines of these two texts highlights why they share such recognizable stylistic similarities. As Austen’s second extended attempt at integrating free indirect discourse into a narrative, *Pride and Prejudice* shows some development and promise that was missing from her first effort. Anne Waldron Neumann provides a very granular and astute analysis of how Austen successfully and less successfully deployed the free

³¹ Consider *Persuasion*’s two cancelled chapters as an example of Austen’s propensity for revision, even at the latest stage of her career.

indirect style in this most beloved novel. Of particular note, Neumann focuses on Austen's use of verbs—a key component of the syntax, and emotion, of free indirect discourse:

[m]uch of Austen's characterization and comment is also implied by her telling choice of verbs of speaking and verbs of thinking or feeling, however. These verbs of communication, and of articulated and sometimes nonarticulated consciousness, are worth studying whenever they occur in Austen's narratives, but it is also significant *where* they occur—whether they originate in the actual discourse of a character, whether they form the narrator's introduction to quoted speech or thought, or whether they may seem to belong to narrator's and character's discourse *simultaneously* (364-365, emphasis in original).

What Neumann differentiates in the final sentence of that passage is narrative speech, character speech, and the enigmatic free indirect speech that eventually became Austen's signature style. In *Pride and Prejudice* specifically, these three modes of reporting thought and speech appear intermingled and intertwined, especially in comparison to Austen's later works that more exclusively use free indirect discourse. In this case, by identifying the voice, or voices, anchoring each verb, the reader is able to recognize more aptly passages of free indirect discourse and to pinpoint which sentences constitute dual voices (365). However, while Neumann argues that, regardless of the shifting narrative style, *Pride and Prejudice* “sympathetically reports” and “accurately articulates” the thoughts of the heroine without satire or bias, I contend that Austen's choice to adopt free indirect discourse was partially a way to preserve parody and dramatic irony (386). As I will demonstrate later in this chapter, free indirect discourse often uses the biases and blind spots of particular characters, thereby, in many instances, obscuring reality for the reader and creating the gap necessary for dramatic irony.

Finally, after writing a “definitely epistolary *Elinor and Marianne*” and a “potentially epistolary *First Impressions*,” Austen turned her attention to *Susan*, later *Northanger Abbey*, between 1798 and 1799 (Mandal, “Making Austen Mad” 509). This timeline is supported both by archival evidence, including Cassandra Austen's records, and by paying attention to a logical timeline of narrative tropes: “[i]t is no great leap to consider that, having burlesqued the epistolary novel from the later 1780s to the mid-1790s, Austen would have turned her scrutiny

towards the emergent Gothic form as it began to dominate the late 1790s” (Mandal, “Making Austen Mad” 509). When set in comparison to *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* however, *Northanger Abbey* is a particularly interesting case because it boasts a nineteen-year writing, revision, and publication timeline that culminated after the death of the author in 1817. Because of this, much can be deduced about Austen’s “craftsmanship and her development as a novelist by investigating the circumstances” of *Northanger Abbey* (Emden 97).

As previously mentioned, the ur-text of *Northanger Abbey* was originally composed under the title of *Susan* in the very late 1790s. *Susan* was the first manuscript that Austen took to a publishing house but was, of course, not the first manuscript she had published. Mandal states that *Susan* was contracted to the publishing house Crosby and Co. in the spring of 1803 after Austen lightly revised the manuscript post-1800 (Making Austen Mad” 510-511). Crosby and Co. was not a large publishing house, but they were known for their inventory of novels and were experiencing a “marked rise” in their production of fiction due to the simultaneous decline in the popularity of Minerva Press (512, 514). These market forces made Crosby and Co. a suitable choice for Austen’s first foray into public authorship. Austen’s relationship to her publisher, at least at first, was not visibly one-sided: Crosby and Co. advertised the publication of *Susan* at least twice, which satisfactorily “manifests a commitment in principle to publishing the book” (520). *Susan* was included on the list of “New and Useful Books Published by B. Crosby & Co.,” and was later released on a list of works “In the Press” (519). However, despite this outward appearance of an enthusiastic intention to publish, *Susan* was never sent to print.

There is no settled understanding as to why Crosby and Co. chose to abandon their publication of Austen’s text. Park Honan suggests that it was Crosby and Co.’s vested interest in the fiction of Anne Radcliffe that steered them away from publishing *Susan*, given the novel’s satirical treatment of Gothic fiction (Grogan 10). Alternatively, Margaret Kirkham claims that Austen’s feminist views and outspoken nature made *Susan* too risky to publish (10). For Mandal, Crosby and Co.’s eventual rejection of Austen’s work was due to financial difficulties (“Making Austen Mad” 521). Whatever the motivation, *Susan* never made it to print and Austen’s ego was

“understandably chafed” by the non-publication, so much so that in April 1809 she wrote to the firm to collect her manuscript (508). In this sardonic letter, Austen expresses that she presumes the manuscript to be carelessly lost, as it is the only reasonable explanation for the six-year publication delay. Austen signed the letter under the pseudonym Mrs. Ashton Dennis, or M.A.D. (508). This very thinly veiled and appropriate acronym underscores the half-serious and half-ironic tone of the entire letter. With the opportunity of publishing *Susan* all but lost, Austen chose to retrieve and revisit the manuscript, likely at this time shifting the story and style to what the reader encounters in *Northanger Abbey*.

This checkered publication history poses a particular problem when considering where the novel fits in Austen’s canon. Austen actively composed the general plot of the story in 1798-1799, finished a publishable draft in 1803, pursued the manuscript’s return from the publisher in 1809, and then gave the novel renewed attention in 1816 (Mandal, “Making Austen Mad” 507; Shaw 591). The extent of each of these treatments of the manuscript is unknown. As Cecil Emden clearly articulates, there is a “disharmony between the Bath and the Gothic episodes” in the novel (280). Parts of *Northanger Abbey* resemble Austen’s juvenilia; for example, the heroine in “Catharine” in several respects anticipates Catherine Morland and Isabella Thorpe can be read as a “close parallel” of Camilla from the same narrative (282). Further, the publication of “The Advertisement,” which was added to the manuscript in 1816, underscores Austen’s awareness that the text was already outdated before it came to print. Austen claims that the work was “finished” in 1803 and that the gap in time, between the novel’s completion and Austen’s assumed second attempt and publication, rendered parts of the story “comparatively obsolete” (qtd. in Irvine 36). If Austen had heavily revised the novel in 1816, there would be little point to “The Advertisement” and no need for her to apologize for the “period, place, manners, books, and opinions” that dramatically shifted as England experienced “immense social and political upheaval” (qtd. in Irvine 36; Irvine 9).

However, while I maintain that significant revision likely did not take place post-1803, this does not mean the manuscript was left untouched or unchanged in the fifteen-year gap leading to

publication. Significantly, as Narelle Shaw suggests, Austen's incorporation of free indirect discourse does signal that the novel was in some part stylistically updated:

[w]hile a comprehensive revision of *Northanger Abbey* would be impossible to demonstrate a rudimentary case can be made that the manuscript in 1816 at those points where Jane Austen incorporates free indirect speech, the stylistic device associated with her mature novels" (592).

Given what we know of *Northanger Abbey*'s complicated and convoluted publication history, what I will argue and show, through a combination of distant and close reading, is that it is likely that Austen lightly revised only the final third of the novel—when Catherine travels with the Tilneys to Northanger Abbey—when she received the manuscript back from the publisher in 1816. It was at this point that she also drafted and added “The Advertisement.” The novel's Advertisement, subject matter, and absent class tensions signify that this work was only moderately revised after the early 1800s and that the vast majority of the novel was virtually left alone. Thus, in terms of Austen's style and progression, *Northanger Abbey* should be considered still a transitional text, albeit that the author returned to the manuscript after seriously developing her narrative approach over the Chawton years. As Susan Lanser claims, it is “no small irony that *Northanger Abbey* was published after Jane Austen's death rather than as the brilliantly oppositional inauguration of a literary career” but literary history has “corrected” this chronology by reading *Northanger Abbey* as part of Austen's juvenilia—a parody and precursor to her later work (61). Despite being published posthumously and bearing a date succeeding most of Austen's other novels, *Northanger Abbey*'s nineteen-year publication history means that it exhibits qualities from across Austen's authorial evolution, showcasing the transient nature of her narrative voice, narrative themes, and narrative style.

To demonstrate this, we can return to the discussion of *Northanger Abbey* touched upon briefly in the preceding chapter. When text analysis algorithms are run against Austen's entire corpus, *Northanger Abbey* behaves differently from most other writings. While *Northanger Abbey*, like other Austen novels, does display the highest level of similarity within itself, it

consistently clusters chronologically. Specifically, the first two-thirds of the novel (represented by text blocks 1-4) cluster together and the final third of the novel (represented by text blocks 5-7) cluster together. In comparison, Austen's other published novels do not exhibit this pattern but rather arrange themselves in a varied collection where beginning sections resemble middle sections and late sections almost equally. Further, highlighting Figure 7, which contains only the texts that employ a third-person narrative structure, it is clear that *Northanger Abbey* is internally incongruent. In this visualization, the earlier two-thirds of the novel are shown to be more similar to writings in Austen's juvenilia and her novels with early, epistolary roots: *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*. On the other hand, the final third of *Northanger Abbey* is shown to be more similar to Austen's final three novels: *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*. Overall, the behaviour of *Northanger Abbey* when run through PCA makes it a recognizable outlier. This demands that the reader pay attention to what palpably shifts in the novel's voice, theme, and approach to create this schism that is both statistically and stylistically identifiable. When the novel is broken into blocks of 10,000 words, as is the case with the stylistic analyses we are discussing, blocks 1-4 comprise Catherine's experiences in Bath with the Allens and blocks 5-7 comprise her time at the abbey with the Tilneys. More precisely, block 4 stops (and block 5 begins) at the beginning of Chapter 17 right before Eleanor Tilney invites Catherine to be a guest at Northanger Abbey. The entire company arrives at its characteristically Gothic locale less than three chapters later at the close of Chapter 20. Given these divisions, the novel almost exactly separates into clusters based on Austen's thematic and narrative approaches; the novel of sensibility, presented by the first two sections, is contrasted with the Gothic overtones of the final third of the novel.

Another element to consider is Austen's use of the free indirect style throughout the novel. Shaw pays attention to this and claims that while in volume one "there are just four brief examples of free indirect speech," by comparison "the incidence of free indirect speech is

inordinately high in volume two” (597).³² Shaw’s overarching argument is that Austen’s writings “display an escalating use of free indirect speech—sporadic experimentation in the early work leading to a habitual reliance upon the versatile narrative device after 1814” (592). Given the disparity found in the use of free indirect discourse between the different volumes of *Northanger Abbey*, it is reasonable to conclude that Austen’s revision of particular sections shifted, and, arguably, improved in terms of narrative style. One key trait of Austen’s early, rudimentary experimentation with free indirect discourse is her use of identification tags. Identification tags are used as a signal to the reader that they are entering into the mind of a particular character. Generally, they are comprised of two parts: the specific evocation of a character’s name—for example, “Catherine”—and then an action, often conjugated in the past tense—for example, “thought.” Identification tags do not leave interpretive room for a reader to infer the point of view in a passage; this type of blatant demarcation interrupts the flow of the narration leading to an inelegant rendering. In an advanced mode, free indirect discourse does not directly advise the audience—through an identification tag—that they are in a character’s mind but rather the character’s biases are reflected in the language, the context of the passage signals the character’s point of view, and the emotionally charged diction establishes an undeniable connection between the reader and the subject.

In most of Austen’s early novels, readers can observe her consistent use of identification tags in passages approaching free indirect discourse, as will be demonstrated here with *Northanger Abbey* and later in the chapter with *Sense and Sensibility*. In *Northanger Abbey*, it is often easy to spot an identification tag because it is often preceded or succeeded by an em dash, as is shown in each of the following examples: “Catherine began to feel something of disappointment—she was tired of being continually pressed against by people;” “Catherine assented—and a very warm panegyric from her on that lady’s merits closed the subject;” “It was very noble—very grand—very charming!—was all that Catherine had to say” (Austen,

³² Volume One is matched by Chapters 1-14 and Volume Two is matched by Chapter 15-26 in the Broadview edition cited in the bibliography.

Northanger Abbey 45, 124, 182). Not only do the em dashes make the tags stand out, but they underscore their redundancy. In all of these cases, the tag could be removed, and the reader could still identify the speaker of the passage, particularly within the extended context that each of these excerpts exists within. It is possible, too, that Austen was, consciously or unconsciously, realizing that these introductory clauses were unnecessary. Separating the clause through punctuation shows Austen writing her way into the character's psyche and then pausing and introducing an em dash before continuing to narrate in the character's perspective.

Certainly, these identification tags are unnecessary, but they are often mixed in with more advanced narrative skills that characterize Austen's evolving narrative style. For example, in this quotation, which appears when Eleanor and Catherine are exploring the forbidding corridors of the Abbey:

The gallery was terminated by folding doors, which Miss Tilney, advancing, had thrown open, and passed through, and seemed on the point of doing the same by the first door to the left, in another long reach of gallery, when the General, coming forwards, called her hastily, and, as Catherine thought, rather angrily back, demanding whether she were going?—And what was there more to be seen?—Had not Miss Morland already seen all that could be worth her notice?—And did she not suppose her friend might be glad of some refreshment after so much exercise? (185).

The use of the identification tag “Catherine thought” in the middle of the passage is entirely superfluous. While the point of the identification clause is to signal to the reader that they are entering the mind of a character, in this passage the reader is already deeply embedded in Catherine's perspective. The reader experiences the entire scene through Catherine's perspective: Eleanor is described as “advancing” and the General as “coming forward” with hasty and “rather” angry commands. Because the action is clearly written from Catherine's point of view, and because the narrative continues in the free indirect style after the identification clause, the tag “Catherine thought” is unnecessary. In fact, the tag disrupts the flow of the free indirect discourse; removing the phrase would clarify rather than complicate the passage's point of view. Despite the clumsiness of the identification tag, the remaining passage that follows exhibits one

of Austen's characteristic traits of free indirect discourse: the em dash. The series of em dashes demarcating a progression of questions adds a hurried tone and a stream-of-consciousness quality to the passage. Further, the questions clearly come from Catherine's unique perspective, which is recognizable in both the perspective of the questions and the topic of interest: Eleanor is described as a "friend" and Catherine is anxious to know what was missed in her quest and if there was "more to be seen?" Again, the evocation of Catherine's name—Miss Morland—is redundant here as the reader is already deeply embedded in the mind of the character. The presence of identification tags indicates a hangover from Austen's previously undeveloped narrative style. Passages like this, which blend the qualities of free indirect discourse with more rudimentary narrative skills, demonstrate the impact of *Northanger Abbey's* sporadic and continuous revision.

In the latter third of *Northanger Abbey*, Austen leans into the free indirect style. Not only does the final portion of the novel contain more examples of free indirect discourse, as Shaw suggests, but I argue that many of the examples also display advanced features of this narrative mode. As is shown in the quantitative analysis of the novel, the final third of the text shows deep stylistic similarities with *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*. All of these novels are praised for their consistent, nuanced engagement with free indirect discourse and their seamless movement between narrative perspectives. This lengthy excerpt, which comes early on in Catherine's visit to the Abbey, shows how the novel anticipates her mature style:

Henry's words, his description of the ebony cabinet which was to escape her observation at first, immediately rushed across her; and though there could be nothing really in it, there was something whimsical, it was certainly a very remarkable coincidence! She took her candle and looked closely at the cabinet. It was not absolutely ebony and gold; but it was japan, black and yellow japan of the handsomest kind; and as she held her candle, the yellow had very much the effect of gold. The key was in the door, and she had a strange fancy to look into it; not, however, with the smallest expectation of finding anything, but it was so very odd, after what Henry had said. In short, she could not sleep till she had examined it. So, placing the candle with great caution on a chair, she seized the key with a very tremulous hand and tried to turn it; but it resisted her utmost strength. Alarmed, but not discouraged, she tried it another way; a bolt flew, and she believed herself successful; but how strangely mysterious! The door was still immovable. She paused a

moment in breathless wonder. The wind roared down the chimney, the rain beat in torrents against the windows, and everything seemed to speak the awfulness of her situation. To retire to bed, however, unsatisfied on such a point, would be vain, since sleep must be impossible with the consciousness of a cabinet so mysteriously closed in her immediate vicinity. Again, therefore, she applied herself to the key, and after moving it in every possible way for some instants with the determined celerity of hope's last effort, the door suddenly yielded to her hand: her heart leaped with exultation at such a victory, and having thrown open each folding door, the second being secured only by bolts of less wonderful construction than the lock, though in that her eye could not discern anything unusual, a double range of small drawers appeared in view, with some larger drawers above and below them; and in the centre, a small door, closed also with a lock and key, secured in all probability a cavity of importance (170-171).

Notably, there is no identification tag preceding this passage; the reader is, instead, transported into the mind of the heroine through Austen's specific choices of language and her attention to the narrative tone, which reflects Catherine's point of view. The excerpt begins with Catherine's recollection of Henry mentioning the cabinet. This type of unique remembrance immediately identifies the passage's perspective with that of the heroine, who was privy to this earlier exchange. In what follows, the reader experiences Catherine's internal battle as she is drawn into the Gothic mystery of the abbey while trying—somewhat unsuccessfully—to maintain her distance and decorum. The vocabulary reflects Catherine's desire to exist within the Gothic fiction she so ardently adores: “whimsical,” “remarkable coincidence,” “strange fancy,” “breathless wonder,” and “mysteriously closed.” Each of these phrases contains a distinct value judgment on the part of the heroine and works to create the passage's dramatic tone. Clearly, this is all sensationalized through Catherine's perspective because only a chapter later it is revealed that the contents of the mysterious “ebony cabinet” include a mundane laundry list and a farrier's bill (173-174). Finally, the excerpt uses exaggerated punctuation that also thoroughly matches Catherine's dramatic and fanciful personality. The repetitive use of commas and semicolons creates long, winding sentences that fragment and regroup hastily. The passage has a hurried tone because it avoids full stops and persists, instead, with connective punctuation. This choice amplifies Catherine's anxiousness in exploring her room at night. In addition, the inclusion of exclamation points heightens the excitement of the passage. Altogether, these qualities construct

a keen passage of free indirect discourse that could easily lead to the revised parts of this “betweenity” being mistaken for one of Austen’s later, more mature works.

As argued earlier in this chapter, “Lady Susan” is also a “betweenity” in Austen’s canon given that it symbolically and stylistically straddles several authorial transition points: from private writing to public writing, from the epistolary style to the third-person narrative voice, and from short, parodic fiction to the extended novel form. “Lady Susan” is a melting pot of all of these characteristics and is, therefore, uniquely positioned to demonstrate how and why Austen decided to shift her approach to writing as England neared the turn of the century. The overtly sarcastic and often overly dramatic tone of “Lady Susan” is certainly reminiscent of the juvenilia. “Lady Susan” still carries what Doody regards as the unrestricted and untamed energies of Austen’s earlier works (qtd. in Levy 1020). For example, this remark appears in the second letter of the novella written from Lady Susan to Mrs. Johnson: “Sir James did make proposals to me for Frederica; but Frederica, who was born to be the torment of my life, chose to set herself so violently against the match that I thought it better to lay aside the scheme for the present (Austen, *Jane Austen’s Manuscript Works* 208).” Firstly, the relationship dynamics between Lady Susan and her daughter Frederica are overblown and overdramatized. The deepness of Lady Susan’s disdain for her daughter and the fearfulness Frederica has for her mother strike the reader as caricatures of a more believable relationship. Specifically, the phrase “who was born to be the torment of my life” is so excessively mean that it carries a recognizably satiric tone. Further, the use of the words “violently” and “scheme” characterize the presumed match between Sir James and Frederica as a sinister, forced engagement rather than a traditional, romantic betrothal. Scholars and enthusiasts alike have continually underscored how unlikeable Lady Susan is, but perhaps it is more appealing to read her as a cartoon version of a Mrs. Bennet or a Lady Catherine de Burgh type of character. This approach of employing caricature and parody is used consistently in the juvenilia and, I argue, is being replicated here, thereby evidencing Austen’s continuum of style.

Not only does Austen satirize character in this novel, but she also pokes fun at social circumstance. Again, this cultural parody stems from writings in the juvenilia, such as “The History of England,” which takes a comedic approach to the popular history texts of the eighteenth century and presents some seething characterizations of British monarchs. In “Lady Susan,” we see Austen making jest of social graces, as is demonstrated here with Lady Catherine Vernon’s recounting of Sir James’ behaviour: “Sir James invited himself with great composure to remain here a few days;—hoped we would not think it odd, was aware of its being very impertinent, but he took the liberty of a relation; and concluded by wishing, with a laugh, that he might be really one soon” (238). What Bree, Sabor, and Todd point out in their gloss of this passage is that Sir James inviting himself to stay is an “act of gross social impoliteness,” especially considering that he has never met the Vernon family before. Of course, the reader can also see how absurd it is that someone would presume they could impose in this way considering the lack of established relationship. Not only does this action reflect on Sir James’ character, but it also shows Austen’s parodic approach to civility and manners. This tendency to satirize the social landscape of England’s upper gentry classes comes from the juvenilia and is undoubtedly carried forward in her later novels—albeit in a more nuanced, less obtuse way.

While “Lady Susan” is almost entirely written in the epistolary form, there are qualities of the letters that foreshadow Austen’s propensity for, and shift towards, a third-person narrative style. There are, for example, on several occasions, letters missing from an exchange between characters. Letter 5 begins with Lady Susan referencing a note sent from Mrs. Johnson, but this correspondence is not included in the novella (212). Again, Mrs. Vernon’s note to Lady De Courcy (Letter 18), begins with the following sentence but it not proceeded by the letter or description it mentions: “My dear Madam,—I am very glad to find that my description of Frederica Vernon has interested you (233).” The result of Austen often providing only one side of the epistolary exchange is that she can better control the narrative. The letters included in the novella receive additional emphasis while correspondence that Austen deems unnecessary or uninteresting is effectively bypassed. Rather than adhering to the strict, dialogic form of the

epistolary novel, “Lady Susan” pushes the boundaries by disclosing and disguising letters as best serves the story’s purpose—an approach similar to that of the third person novel as it evolved in the nineteenth century. Additionally, some of the letters in the novella are much less reflective of the genre of correspondence and much more representative of a narrated text. A particularly good example of this is Letter 24, which, while it begins as a letter written from Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy, can be more accurately described as an extended passage of dialogue. Such comprehensive, verbatim recounting of conversations between characters is not conventionally part of written correspondence and is also not typical of a novel in letters. Instead, I assert, that the inclusion of multiple pages of dialogue in this letter demonstrates Austen’s need, or perhaps her predisposition, to write in a style outside the bounds of the epistolary novel.

Not only does the dialogue of Letter 24 signal Austen’s movement towards a third-person narrated text, but there are hints in this very early, unrefined novella of free indirect discourse. The novel in letters style overtly indicates that we are in the mind and operating under the biases of an individual character, but the way Austen uses punctuation and emphasis in “Lady Susan” can later be observed in her subtler narrative approaches. For example, this excerpt appears in Letter 5, sent from Lady Susan, ostensibly the protagonist of the story, to Mrs. Johnson:

I wanted her to be delighted at seeing me—I was as amiable as possible on the occasion—but all in vain—she does not like me.—To be sure when we consider that I *did* take some pains to prevent my Brother-in-law's marrying her, this want of cordiality is not very surprising—and yet it shows an illiberal and vindictive spirit to resent a project which influenced me six years ago, and which never succeeded at last (212).

The most notable quality of this passage is its use of the em dash, which, as I have shown, is a foundational, critical characteristic of Austen’s free indirect discourse. Here, as in the later novels, the em dash operates as a break between interconnected thoughts. Lady Susan recounts her feelings, her experiences, and her judgments in a coarse and unfiltered way. Further, the italicized “*did*,” which appears as underlined in the manuscript copy of the novella, injects a tone into the passage that is undeniably attributable to Lady Susan (Sutherland, JAFM n.p.). This use

of emphasized typescript, as already noted, can be observed in the works of Austen's female literary predecessors and in Austen's own published novels. This glimpse of the building blocks of Austen's free indirect discourse further underscores how and why "Lady Susan" is a linchpin text in Austen's canon and an exemplary "betweenity."

In general, scholars have placed less emphasis on Austen's early publications as exemplars of free indirect discourse. Perhaps, given their epistolary roots, these texts have been looked on as less potent, less pure examples of Austen's innovative style. However, these novels still exemplify the same conventions and consequences of the free indirect style as exemplified by later publications. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen's focalization oscillates between the novel's two heroines: Elinor and Marianne Dashwood. Both of these characters become conduits for the free indirect discourse, which creates a more dynamic narrative mode than is seen in *Northanger Abbey*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and even *Mansfield Park*. These novels generally focalize through one character—the central female figure—and predispose the reader to fall into step with this single character's opinions, feelings, and thoughts. In *Sense and Sensibility*, because the focalization is split, the reader shifts between the minds of the two remarkably different sisters. However, while Austen would later return to this polyvocal, multi-voiced style with mastery and maturity in *Emma* and *Persuasion*, the examples in *Sense and Sensibility* are, in comparison, clunky. Particularly, the narration often uses identification tags to signal to the reader that they are moving into the perspective of a character, for example: "Elinor thought" or "Marianne heard" (Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* 93, 222). In early examples of Austen's fiction, identification tags are used as a segue between general narration and free indirect discourse. Given the consistent movement between the heroines in *Sense and Sensibility*, there is an increase in the occurrence of these tags. Take, for example, the following passage which appears after Mr. Willoughby leaves on business to London:

Marianne would have thought herself very inexcusable had she been able to sleep at all the first night after parting from Willoughby. She would have been ashamed to look her family in the face the next morning, had she not risen from her bed in more need of

repose than when she lay down in it. But the feelings which made such composure a disgrace, left her in no danger of incurring it. She was awake the whole night, and she wept the greatest part of it. She got up with a headache, was unable to talk, and unwilling to take any nourishment; giving pain every moment to her mother and sisters, and forbidding all attempt at consolation from either. Her sensibility was potent enough! (115).

The excerpt begins clearly with an identification tag: “Marianne would have thought”. However, once the reader moves beyond this marker, the passage displays some compelling free indirect discourse. First, the language is characteristic of Marianne’s theatrics: “inexcusable,” “disgrace,” and “forbidding.” The heightened drama exhibited in the passage’s vocabulary clearly attaches it to Marianne’s perspective. Not only does the specific choice of words prevent the passage’s connection to any other character in the text, but the vocabulary also clearly separates from the narrator who would rely on much more objective, observational diction. In addition, the exclamation point that closes the passage underscores the emotion and the cliché evocation of “sensibility”—key to the novel’s title and attributable to Marianne—neatly and clearly ties everything to Marianne’s perspective. Further, the context of the excerpt situates the reader within her psychological and internal experience: she contemplates how her family would react to her behaviour, she recounts private moments from the night prior, she describes her physical and emotional state. Despite Marianne’s general propensity to abandon reason, this passage shows her “reasoning” through Mr. Willoughby’s departure and evaluating her appropriate next move. I argue that the identification tag is superfluous in this instance; it could easily be removed or replaced with a generalized pronoun and the reader would certainly still associate the passage with Marianne’s character.

This same formula—a rudimentary identification tag followed by fairly developed free indirect discourse—can be observed in the following passage that conveys Elinor’s point of view. This excerpt appears following John Dashwood’s dinner party where Mrs. Ferrars, who is described as a sour little woman, has snubbed Elinor’s painting (248):

Elinor’s curiosity to see Mrs. Ferrars was satisfied.— She had found in her every thing that could tend to make a farther connection between the families undesirable.— She had

seen enough of her pride, her meanness, and her determined prejudice against herself, to comprehend all the difficulties that must have perplexed the engagement, and retarded the marriage, of Edward and herself, had he been otherwise free;—and she had seen almost enough to be thankful for her *own* sake, that one greater obstacle preserved her from suffering under any other of Mrs. Ferrars’s creation, preserved her from all dependence upon her caprice, or any solicitude for her good opinion. Or at least, if she did not bring herself quite to rejoice in Edward’s being fettered to Lucy, she determined, that had Lucy been more amiable, she *ought* to have rejoiced (254).

Again, the narration is clearly associated with Elinor given the opening identification tag but moving past this the excerpt exhibits several key features of Austen’s free indirect style. One marker we can observe here, but not present in the above passage connected to Marianne, is the em dash. As Austen evolved her free indirect discourse, the em dash became an important component of her style. The em dash lends a natural, colloquial, speech-like cadence to written narrative excerpts. By avoiding more precise punctuation, like a full stop, the em dash mimics stream of consciousness and more accurately captures the internal processes of communication. This passage contains three em dashes that connect the statements as if they are a string of Elinor’s thoughts. The psychological depth of these first few lines is heightened by the use of polarizing language that makes the sentences easily attributable to Elinor: “undesirable” and “determined prejudice.” Finally, the use of differentiated typescript—in this case, the italicized words “*own*” and “*ought*”—places an emphasis on the words that determine the tone of the passage. Elinor is thankful for “her *own* sake” that she has avoided having Mrs. Ferrars as an in-law and she reasons with herself that if Lucy was more tolerable “she *ought* to have rejoiced” in her match to Edward. By underscoring these particular words, the passage takes on a new rhythm and meaning. Despite starting the passage with an unnecessary identification tag, the consistency and quality of the free indirect discourse exhibited in this passage, and the passage above, is significant.

Given the fact that Austen was actively writing in the epistolary form until the mid-1790s, her ability to pivot, revise, and capture the essence of free indirect discourse in the late 1790s shows her authorial fortitude and her commitment to developing a narrative style that

would reasonably replace the novel in letters, which was no longer commercially viable. While the presence of identification clauses does signal her starting point in this evolution, there are examples in *Sense and Sensibility* of free indirect discourse unhindered by this feature—giving a glimpse into a more mature and immersive narrative style. For example, the following lengthy passage focalizes through Elinor after she realizes that Lucy and Edward are betrothed:

Her resentment of such behaviour, her indignation at having been its dupe, for a short time made her feel only for herself; but other ideas, other considerations, soon arose. Had Edward been intentionally deceiving her? Had he feigned a regard for her which he did not feel? Was his engagement to Lucy an engagement of the heart? No; whatever it might once have been, she could not believe it such at present. His affection was all her own. She could not be deceived in that. Her mother, sisters, Fanny, all had been conscious of his regard for her at Norland; it was not an illusion of her own vanity. He certainly loved her. What a softener of the heart was this persuasion! How much could it not tempt her to forgive! He had been blamable, highly blamable, in remaining at Norland after he first felt her influence over him to be more than it ought to be. In that, he could not be defended; but if he had injured her, how much more had he injured himself; if her case were pitiable, his was hopeless. His imprudence had made her miserable for a while; but it seemed to have deprived himself of all chance of ever being otherwise. She might in time regain tranquillity; but *he*, what had he to look forward to? Could he ever be tolerably happy with Lucy Steele; could he, were his affection for herself out of the question, with his integrity, his delicacy, and well-informed mind, be satisfied with a wife like her—illiterate, artful, and selfish? (165-166).

Immediately, the reader is catapulted into the mind of Elinor in this excerpt without the need for a direct identification of her character; instead, the passage's use of language, punctuation, and emphasized typescript is all that is necessary in this case. While the dramatic, critical language might seem more apropos of Marianne's sensibility than Elinor's sense, there is no mistaking that this excerpt is focalized through Elinor as it reflects her feelings of shock, confusion, and betrayal. The series of questions at the beginning of the passage ventriloquizes Elinor's fretful and flustered thoughts as she tries to parse how Edward could so fully mislead her. Elinor is stuck on this deception: the passage repeats "deceive" twice and also uses synonyms, such as "dupe" in its place. Further, the additional repetition of the words "blamable" and "injured" underscore Elinor's circuitous thought process. The echo of these particular words adds a rambling quality to the excerpt that makes perfect sense in the context of free indirect

discourse—and perfect nonsense in the context of general third-person narration. Finally, the passage uses punctuation, particularly exclamation points and typescript, such as the italicized “*he*” near the close of the passage, to intensify the overall emotional tone. The hurried and passionate narration does not reflect an objective, observational narrator but is directly tied to one of the novel’s heroines in her most heightened state of emotion and trauma. The immersive nature of the passage, and the blend of third-person syntax with first-person intimacy, makes this excerpt a shining example of free indirect discourse in Austen’s early canon.

As in *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* presents early instances of Austen’s foray into free indirect discourse. In this specific case, in the latter half of the novel, Austen makes much of her free indirect discourse by providing ample examples of relatively sophisticated narration. I suggest the reason for this dichotomy between the first half and the second half of the novel is possibly because Austen needed to write her way into Elizabeth’s character and, therefore, into free indirect discourse. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the narration is almost wholly focalized through the heroine and the free indirect discourse necessitates an intimacy between the voice of the third-person narrator and the character. Perhaps, as Austen worked to transform *Pride and Prejudice* from a novel in letters to a third-person narrative, she also needed to transform her authorial relationship to the novel’s central character. Another practical reason why free indirect discourse appears more often in the novel’s last third is the nature of the novel’s plot; a lot of revelations—about characters, about circumstances, about relationships, about feelings—happen over the final volume. One of these shocking realizations is, of course, Elizabeth learning of Wickham’s deception, Lydia’s foolish elopement, and the possibility that she might be able to love Mr. Darcy:

Elizabeth soon observed, and instantly understood it. Her power was sinking; everything *must* sink under such a proof of family weakness, such an assurance of the deepest disgrace. She could neither wonder nor condemn, but the belief of his self-conquest brought nothing consolatory to her bosom, afforded no palliation of her distress. It was, on the contrary, exactly calculated to make her understand her own wishes; and never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain. But self, though it would intrude, could not engross her. Lydia—the humiliation, the misery she was bringing on them all, soon swallowed up every private care; and covering her face

with her handkerchief, Elizabeth was soon lost to everything else (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 287-288).

While free indirect discourse cannot be solely deciphered based on grammatical markers, certain indicators help to signal passages that are syntactically in line with this particular narrative style. Such markers are present in this passage: Elizabeth is referred to in the third-person context and the past tense conjugations of the verbs “observe” and “understand” describe the principal actions of the scene. However, notably, the sentiments of this passage do not seem to reflect a merely objective narrative viewpoint. The passage begins with a shift from outward observance to inward contemplation. The use of the verb “understood” transports the reader into the mind of the character; it denotes an internal exercise rather than an external reaction. This window into Elizabeth’s interiority classifies it as a passage of free indirect discourse. Further, the emotionally charged language makes it impossible for the reader to ignore Elizabeth’s specific reaction to Lydia’s elopement as it permeates the narration. Language such as “weakness,” “deepest disgrace,” “humiliation,” and “misery” manifest how horrified Elizabeth is and how deeply she is feeling the blow of her sister’s improper behaviour. The idiomatic language carries a palpable emotional significance that ties it directly to the feelings of the heroine and does not reflect the outside, observant perspective of the narrator.

In addition, the textual emphasis on the word “*must*,” through italicized type, and “sink,” through repetition, contribute to dictating the passage as Elizabeth’s inner monologue. This emphasis brings a speech-like quality into the narration, as does the aside that appears in the middle of the excerpt, which reflects Elizabeth’s disjointed, stream of consciousness by moving between her anger and disappointment with Wickham and Lydia, and her appreciation for Darcy. Elizabeth is momentarily distracted by her own realization of Darcy’s true character and her emerging feelings for him: “never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain.” While Darcy’s confession does not offer any “palliation of her distress”, Elizabeth’s mind does temporarily wander away from the disaster at hand and pauses

to recognize that “she could have loved him.” This vulnerable moment appears amidst an intensely emotional scene and is considered, by the heroine, an intrusion of thought before she returns to her family’s predicament: “[b]ut self, though it would intrude, could not engross her.” Elizabeth recognizes the intrusion of her thoughts and feelings and the passage returns—suddenly—to contemplating Lydia’s decision and its familial consequences. The excerpt concludes by bringing the reader outside the character’s psyche. Just as the free indirect discourse brought the reader into Elizabeth’s most intimate thoughts and feelings, the third-person style can force the reader to zoom out—once again becoming an observer. This is achieved by focusing on Elizabeth’s outward emotions and body language: “covering her face with her handkerchief, Elizabeth was soon lost to everything else.” The dual voice of free indirect discourse is observable in this passage as the third-person narrative structure is infused with the qualities of first-person narrative intimacy.

Notably, while the narrative style of *Pride and Prejudice* transitioned away from the epistolary genre, many of the most remarkable instances of free indirect discourse revolve around Elizabeth’s reading of letters. Bray notes that there are fifty-two mentions of letters in *Pride and Prejudice* and thirteen letters which are reproduced in full (124-125). In terms of understanding why these two entities share a connection over the course of the novel, I would like to offer that the act of reading and writing letters is a very intimate activity that lends itself well to introspection. It is possible that as Austen dismantled the epistolary format in favour of third-person narration that she left intact a couple of letters that underscored key moments in the plot and progression of her characters. Instead of leaving Elizabeth to answer this correspondence in letter form, Austen translates her psychological and emotional response into passages of free indirect discourse. This ability to capture the intimacy of a letter while using the form and syntax of an observational narrative style is what makes free indirect discourse such a powerful mode. Perhaps Austen needed to move through the epistolary style—understanding and capturing its essence—in order to adapt and establish her unique narrative style.

I will offer two examples of Austen using the letter form in the service of her third-person narrative mode. The first of these passages appears after Elizabeth has received a letter from Darcy explaining his “[t]wo offences of a very different nature”: detaching Mr. Bingley from Elizabeth’s sister Jane and his poor treatment of Mr. Wickham (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 216). Darcy’s letter runs to several pages, as does Elizabeth’s response; the narration slips into free indirect discourse as demonstrated here:

She perfectly remembered every thing that had passed in conversation between Wickham and herself, in their first evening at Mr. Philips’s. Many of his expressions were still fresh in her memory. She was *now* struck with the impropriety of such communications to a stranger, and wondered it had escaped her before. She saw the indelicacy of putting himself forward as he had done, and the inconsistency of his professions with his conduct. She remembered that he had boasted of having no fear of seeing Mr. Darcy—that Mr. Darcy might leave the country, but that *he* should stand his ground; yet he had avoided the Netherfield ball the very next week (225).

Immediately, Elizabeth’s remembering of the events that happened when she met Mr. Wickham is a sign that the passage is written in the free indirect style. This reflective, contemplative moment of realization does not easily lend itself to the objective third-person style. Instead, it relies on a particular character’s experience and recollection. Significantly, this remembrance is followed by a pivotal word that is communicated in italicized type: “*now*.” Elizabeth is in that moment reevaluating the prejudiced opinions she had formed in the past in light of the new information she has been given in the moment. Through dramatic irony, the reader is compelled to do the same. The language of the passage clearly reproduces Elizabeth’s surprise, particularly the word “struck,” which paints an immediate, almost violent realization. Further, her description of Mr. Wickham, which up until this point in the novel has been abundantly praise-filled, becomes decisively uncomplimentary—using verbiage such as “indelicacy,” “inconsistency,” and “boasted.” This language reveals the impact of Darcy’s letter. Finally, placing specific emphasis on “*he*” in the closing sentence of this passage adds a tone of disdain and suspicion that can readily be bestowed on only two of the novel’s characters at this stage—the two characters who shared the exchange of the letter: Elizabeth and Darcy.

A second example appears quite near to the novel's conclusion when Elizabeth receives a letter from her aunt, Mrs. Gardiner. This excerpt appears immediately after the letter's close:

The contents of this letter threw Elizabeth into a flutter of spirits, in which it was difficult to determine whether pain or pleasure bore the greatest share. The vague and unsettled suspicions which uncertainty had produced of what Mr. Darcy might have been doing to forward her sister's match, which she had feared to encourage, as an exertion of goodness too great to be probable, and at the same time dreaded to be just, from the pain of obligation, were proved beyond their greatest extent to be true! He had followed them purposely to town, he had taken on himself all the trouble and mortification attendant on such a research; in which supplication had been necessary to a woman whom he must abominate and despise, and where he was reduced to meet, frequently meet, reason with, persuade, and finally bribe, the man whom he always most wished to avoid, and whose very name it was punishment to him to pronounce. He had done all this for a girl whom he could neither regard nor esteem. Her heart did whisper that he had done it for her (330).

The opening sentence of this passage does not necessarily appear to be in the free indirect style. While the term "flutter of spirits" does display a particularly emotional edge, the phrase "it was difficult to determine whether pain or pleasure bore the greatest share" gestures towards a narrator's outside observation. However, in the paragraph that follows, the language, punctuation, and overall tone of the passage offer convincing characteristics of free indirect discourse. The reader is given hints of Elizabeth's thoughts and emotions: her "vague and unsettled suspicions," her fear, and finally her greatest relief in Darcy's "exertion." In addition, the exceeding length of the first sentence—punctuated by five commas—creates a stream of consciousness feel that reflects Elizabeth's internal processing of the letter and her emotional response, which is underscored by the exclamation point closing the sentence. The passage then shifts into recollections of past events. As mentioned in this previous passage, this sort of reflection is often an indication of free indirect discourse, given the specificity of each character's experience over the course of the novel. Again, the sentence is rambling; and punctuated variously with commas and semi-colons. By constructing the sentence in this way, Austen gives the illusion of Elizabeth's hurried and uncollected thoughts as she processes the news from her aunt. The end of the passage, of course, reveals one of Elizabeth's most tender

and private thoughts: that Darcy's efforts had all been in pursuit and honour of her. The closeness of this moment moves beyond the general capacity of an objective, observational narrative. However, through using the techniques of free indirect discourse, Austen is able to capture an epistolary or first-person narrative intimacy in a third-person narrative style.

As is evidenced by texts examined in this chapter, Austen's narrative development happened in parallel to the novel's rise to generic prominence. Because of this, her canon reflects a diverse array of narrative modes, rather than the practice of a singular method. In addition, Austen's nonlinear writing process, which demanded continually returning to and revising earlier works, creates a complicated web of timelines—where many of her novels are better thought of as betwixt and between authorial periods rather than as classically categorized. The nineteen-year history of *Northanger Abbey*, which spans the turn of the century, accounts for the novel's palpably disjointed style. Further, the epistolary beginnings of “Lady Susan,” *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Pride and Prejudice* underscore how Austen needed to work through the novel in letters in order to grasp narrative perspective and develop her key markers of free indirect discourse: emphasized typescript, tonal language, and unorthodox punctuation. Together, these texts evince Austen's transformation from private, parodic writings to public-facing publications and into the era of pointed, poignant social criticism that followed with the publication of her first Chawton-era novel, *Mansfield Park*.

Chapter 4: Space

Published in 1814, Austen's *Mansfield Park* sits at the midpoint of her authorial career. Printed three years after her debut novel in 1811 and three years prior to her death in 1817, *Mansfield Park* seems set to be the perfect exemplar of Austen's canon. However, while Austen's two earlier published titles foreground theme and character, *Mansfield Park* presents something different with its emphasis on place. The novel marks an aesthetic turn in Austen's career: a "different style and subject" combined with a "significantly more complex form" of free indirect discourse (Flavin 137-138).³³ Not only does the title of *Mansfield Park* represent a shift in Austen's oeuvre, but it is also the first novel of the later works where the fluidity and sophistication of Austen's narrative style becomes evident. In addition to an increase in the quantity of free indirect discourse, there is a notable change in quality: the sometimes laboured, often redundant constructions that appeared in early texts are shed and Austen's command of the narrative technique blends almost seamlessly with that of her later novels.

As Michael Williams claims, "very much has been said about the significance of Mansfield Park as a place" (82). However, Austen's economy in writing pays significantly less attention to landscape and setting by comparison with contemporaries, such as Radcliffe. Instead, I argue that Austen uses her free indirect style to home in on the ways in which the novel's physical place impacts and defines its dynamic social space. In other words, the objective, physical reality and setting of the novel—place—contributes to the ways the characters interact and influences their subjective experiences and navigation of the shifting structures of rank and class—social space. By using style as a means to pay attention to the "dialectical relationship between the body and a space," *Mansfield Park* imagines *habitus* in a meaningful way (Bourdieu, *Outline* 89). Mansfield Park is described as a grand, stately home, yet the reader rarely sees beyond its walls. Mansfield Park is the product of the far reaches of empire, yet the

³³ The title *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) seemingly refers to the two central heroine's whose overabundance of either sense or sensibility present the conflict of the novel. Additionally, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) encapsulates the follies of the protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, and her match Mr. Darcy.

reader is given but a glimpse into the British colonies. Mansfield Park is a hub of convivial activity, yet the reader does not fully understand its position in the social sphere of Northampton Regency gentry. Instead of turning the readers outwards to observe the views and vistas from Mansfield Park, Austen turns the reader inward, through her employment of free indirect discourse, and uses the limitations and confinements of the estate to imagine the changing norms, values, and freedoms of contemporary society within its bounds.

Physical place is used in the novel to explore and express the intricacies of social space. Place acts as a protagonist in the novel by stimulating the progression of the plot, and Mansfield Park is itself central to the action of the novel and to the formation of community. The social context created between the walls of Mansfield Park is largely determined through two identifiable social markers: money and class. In explicitly revealing the income of the characters, the novel communicates something about each individual: their social status, their upbringing, their power, and their cultural prestige. Income and social identity are mutually dependent and mutually impactful. Similarly, minute but demonstrable differences among social groups work to classify individuals within a specific, hierarchical social order. In this way, the projected, outward-facing titles and terms—honorifics, inheritances, monikers, properties—become the determining factors in the implicit, often invisible structures of social space. Ultimately, *Mansfield Park* demonstrates that human interactions are not primarily oriented towards “affection and concern” but are instead attentive to “money or power or both” (Sturrock 20). This chapter unpacks how Austen creates this miniature social world inside the walls of Mansfield Park, and why her deft and inventive use of free indirect discourse was essential for her to imitate, satirize, and critique the immense social changes in Romantic British society.

Unlike the world of *Emma*, which, I will argue, is located in a very particular time and place, the environment and historical placement of *Mansfield Park* are more amorphous. While it is clear that *Mansfield Park* is set in Austen’s contemporary moment (given references to several current events and controversies) and in the county of Northamptonshire, the author eschews precision. John Wiltshire wrestles with the consequences of this untethered world in his

introduction to the Cambridge edition of the novel: “The dating of the action of *Mansfield Park* is controversial, and upon it depends the interpretation of several incidents or circumstances in the novel” (xliii). Wiltshire offers two resolutions to the novel’s “incompatible dating signals:” either Austen extensively revised the novel and removed the dating framework, or she simply was not concerned with providing a specific timeline beyond reasonable contemporaneity (xliv). This second justification seems most plausible and useful. While it is clear that *Mansfield Park* is tied to the economic and social issues of 1810s Britain, the precise location of place and time eludes the reader. The fictional place of Mansfield Park does not exist within definitive geographical and temporal borders but is instead used as a conduit for a directed critique of the shifting social space in Austen’s era. Mansfield Park’s position in parallel to a relatively imprecise historical timeline makes the imagery all the more powerful, consuming, and multi-dimensional.

A lot has been made of how *Mansfield Park* is ultimately concerned with ethics. Critics have painted Fanny as the moral centre of the *Mansfield Park* universe and have defended her reserved and restrained persona as indicative of her larger, metaphorical role in the landscape of the novel (Butler 247-249). Further, some scholars argue that *Mansfield Park* enacts Austen’s own “ethical perspective” and translates her moral imperatives into the fictional space:

When we enter Austen’s world we are sure of where we stand in terms of the beliefs and behaviors of the characters. I think that this is because Austen’s own ethical perspective is so assured. She writes from the core beliefs in her period, and her perspective carries the authority of her whole society. There is no question in Austen’s fiction about who is virtuous or which behavior is admirable. This assurance delimits a social structure that completely defines every aspect of life. For the reader, the social and moral grid is entirely clear (Scheuermann 292).

While I am uncomfortable with Mona Scheuermann’s reading of Austen’s own ethical imperatives onto the moral framework of the novel, I do agree with her concluding sentiment: that *Mansfield Park* creates a clear social and moral landscape for the readers. This point is further supported, and perhaps better articulated, by Raymond Williams, who argues that

Austen's late novels, including *Mansfield Park*, present an "everyday, uncompromising morality" (qtd. in Dunn 483). Williams' evocation of the word "everyday" is significant in this case. The type of society and values reflected in the novel mirrors the world in which Austen lived (Herbert 205). The representation of the mundane and *lived* experiences of the gentry, pseudo-gentry, and burgeoning middle class, instead of the isolated upper echelons, is fundamental to Austen's oeuvre. Further, as Scheuermann suggests: "[e]very aspect of *Mansfield Park*, the perspectives on social classes, the decision to put on a play and the choice of the play itself, and the relationships among the characters, develops within the moral webbing of the book" (293). Again, I agree with Scheuermann here insofar as I acknowledge the deep ties between morality and social imperatives. However, while Scheuermann sees the social, political, and relational aspects of the book as illuminating its "moral webbing," I argue the inverse: morality is a useful lens through which to view *Mansfield Park* because it brings into focus the economic and social foundations of the novel. Furthermore, morality grounds Austen's narrative approach; as Fletcher and Benveniste suggest, Austen uses free indirect discourse as a method for underscoring rules of propriety and her "ethical commitment" to self-command and "amiable virtues" (14).

Viewing *Mansfield Park* as a moral conduct novel is understandable, not least because the period in which it was composed saw the publication of several female-authored, "strongly Evangelical" novels, including Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809) and Brunton's *Self-Control* (1811) (Wiltshire li). In addition, as Alasdair MacIntyre argues, Austen is the "last great effective imaginative voice" that unites Christian ethics and "Aristotelian themes in a determinate social context" (240).³⁴ However, as Marilyn Butler contends, overemphasizing the "extent to which Evangelicalism is really felt in *Mansfield Park*" in turn obscures the book's

³⁴ These scholars follow MacIntyre's arguments on Austen's Christian-Aristotelian ethics: Emsley, Sarah. *Jane Austen's Philosophy of the Virtues*. Palgrave, 2005; Ruderman, Anne Crippen. *The Pleasures of Virtue: Political Thought in the Novels of Jane Austen*: Rowman, 1995; Stovel, Bruce. "'A Nation Improving in Religion': Jane Austen's Prayers and Their Place in Her Life and Art." *Persuasions* 16 (1994): 185-6

broader motivations (243).³⁵ From my perspective, this broader motivation is the novel's careful and deliberate intertwining of place and space with the linguistic nuances of money and class. This new focus is not to assuage the presence or impact of moral and ethical themes in the novel, but rather to reframe their influence in terms of space, place, society, and economy. In fact, as Edward Copeland asserts, the economy can be defined as a "measure of social morality" (128). As the language of *Mansfield Park* demonstrates, social capital, economic capital, and moral status form a reciprocal and oscillatory relationship where each form of wealth is reliant on and beholden to the other. This approach to morality—understanding the term as a framework for the novel's particular social and economic constraints, as opposed to its more traditional definition as an ethical value system—grounds the examinations of this chapter, particularly how free indirect discourse helps to represent this ethical consciousness.

Banfield argues that the three volumes of the novel roughly map onto three places: Sotherton in volume one, Mansfield in volume two, and Portsmouth in volume three ("Moral Landscape" 4-5).³⁶ Banfield asserts that these places stand in as symbols of various ethical principles, with Sotherton manifesting an "unprincipled adherence to rules," Portsmouth demonstrating "unruled feeling," and Mansfield representing a "balance of Sotherton and Portsmouth" (13). In addition to representing "moral contrasts," I argue, the trinity of place propels the plot of the novel. Instead of functioning as a static locale for the events and character interactions, place in *Mansfield Park* is dynamic, changing, and connected to social value and cultural power. While it seems intuitive to characterize a physical space as unchanging, stable, and grounded—especially in comparison to the mutable bodies that inhabit it—this cannot be accurately said of place in *Mansfield Park*. Instead, as Banfield argues, place operates as "the

³⁵ These scholars discuss *Mansfield Park*'s Evangelicalism: Mandal, Anthony. *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*. Palgrave, 2007; Monaghan, David. "Mansfield Park and Evangelicalism: A Reassessment." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 33(2): 215-230.

³⁶ Sotherton is commonly thought to be a fictional representation of Stoneleigh Abbey, which was inherited by Austen's uncle Rev. Thomas Leigh in 1806 (Byrnes 226-35). Significantly, the infamous landscape artist and improvement maker Humphry Repton redesigned the manor's grounds. As Duckworth asserts, over time Austen became particularly opposed to theories of improvement and eschewed Repton's theories of landscape design. In *Mansfield Park*, the concept of improvements is associated with the well-meaning, but inane, Mr. Rushworth—indicating that both are without substance ("Mansfield Park and Estate Improvements" 29-30).

novel's protagonist" (24). Further, I assert that place is as equally variable and shifting as the other agents of the text. In this way, "space and bodies are constitutive and exist in a dialectical relationship" (Kagawa 127). This relationship mirrors Austen's dialogic style of free indirect discourse, thereby further underscoring the necessary negotiation between people, places, spaces, and social structures that defined the Regency era. Rather than physical space functioning as a mere backdrop for the dramatic action of the novel, place plays an integral role in the novel's story development, character arcs, and critical literary purpose.

In fact, place is emphasized from the very beginning. It is immediately apparent in the title of the novel, which highlights an architectural and geographical space. Additionally, like the title, the first and last sentences of the novel also shine a spotlight on "the central role of a house and the value it embodies" (Sturrock 11). Of course, *Mansfield Park* is not Austen's only novel to feature an estate as its central image, as *Northanger Abbey* also satisfies this agenda (Duckworth, "Mansfield Park and Estate Improvements" 25). Nor is *Mansfield Park* the only novel to open with a curious emphasis on location, as "Sanditon" begins with a detailed, explicit account of Mr. and Mrs. Parker's journey from London to the Sussex Coast. However, *Mansfield Park* does offer a unique approach to place in its deliberate use of the estate as a motif to define the Regency era's "attitude toward social change" and individuals' "social, ethical and religious values" (26). Austen frequently uses estates in her novels as not only "the setting of action but as indexes to the character and social responsibility of their owners" (25). For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's opinion of Mr. Darcy changes when she visits his Pemberley property; in *Northanger Abbey*, the mystery of General Tilney is exponentially heightened by the gothic architecture of his manor; and, in *Emma*, Hartfield, "being but a sort of notch in the Donwell Abbey estate" embodies the Woodhouses' reliance on and connection to Mr. Knightley (Austen, *Emma* 153). In *Mansfield Park*, the estate plays an equally important role in bringing together the vocabularies of place and space with the vocabularies of money and class, particularly as these categories pertain to the individuals that move betwixt and between the borders of the property. For example, the novel manifests Fanny's shifting place in the social

order and her movement between class categories as she defines and redefines her relationship to Mansfield Park's unfamiliar social space. Additionally, Mansfield Park juxtaposes itself against its outside visitors, whose different places of origin impact their outlook on social graces and strata. As David Herbert suggests, property and propriety are demonstrated to be interdependent (207). In line with Herbert, this chapter defines place as "not merely the search for reference to landscape or settlement but also the communities in their economic, social and historical context" (194). Attention to these factors is articulated in Austen's use of free indirect discourse.

June Sturrock argues that "Jane Austen presents a society in which the vocabularies of love and money are inextricably entwined" (11). In *Mansfield Park*, the reader encounters one of Austen's most financially diverse cast of leading characters, which ranges from the rich, titled ranks of the Bertram family, to the rich Crawford siblings, to the borderline destitute Price family. Austen's choice to place a poor relative and an unpromising heroine at the centre of her story is significant. As Copeland argues: "[i]ncome serves as the leading economic trope in *Mansfield Park*" (134). In many cases, the wealth of these characters is discussed explicitly: Lady Bertram had only £7,000 before her fortunate marriage to Sir Thomas; Mrs. Norris speculates that Mrs. Grant never had more than £5,000; and when Mary Crawford makes her way to Mansfield, it is said that she has a respectable £20,000.³⁷ In cases where the incomes are not specifically named, Austen uses clear signs of material wealth to situate her characters in an economic and social landscape, whether it be their house, their furnishings, their carriages, their garden, or the number of servants they employ (129). As Herbert argues, Austen's characters are "assessed for their income" (205). I would add a caveat to this statement: Austen's characters are *initially* assessed for their income. Given the attention that Austen pays to explicitly outlining the fortunes and financial positions of her characters, it is clear that money matters. However, economic capital is only one variable of adjudication. In all of Austen's novels, and particularly in *Mansfield Park*, incomes intersect with social identity in a meaningful, reciprocal manner.

³⁷ Mary Crawford's £20,000 would produce approximately £1,000 per annum (or 5%) from consols. This would be enough to live on, respectably, but not enough to live as well as her greed demands.

While I am ultimately in agreement with Sturrock's evaluation of *Mansfield Park's* linguistic landscape, I would add that the vocabulary of rank and class is also deeply enmeshed in the narrative structure and language of the novel. While romantic optimism usually characterizes love as dichotomous or antagonistic to status and wealth, in *Mansfield Park* they are affected by and dependent on each other. The social position, financial well-being, and capital inheritance of each of the novel's characters shape their relationships.

The historicity of "class" has been a point of contention among Austen's literary scholars. Graham Martin asserts that the use of class-based language to evaluate and critique Austen is "anachronistic and directly contradicted by the textual evidence" (131). Further, while Martin acknowledges that the vocabulary of class would eventually replace more archaic terms, he argues that British society in the eighteenth century was limited to the concepts of rank, order, and degree (133). For Martin, this distinction is critical because it signals a "conceptual difference:" "where 'class' points to an economic structure of competing interests, 'rank' points to a social structure, a hierarchical order" (133). Even if we accept this proposed dichotomy between rank and class, it is clear that in *Mansfield Park* these two systems of organization and hierarchy are contingent on one another—thereby disproving Martin's thesis. If, as Thomas Keymer argues, class measures income and economic productivity, and rank measures lineage and a social status "conferred by birth and descent," then both are clearly at play in *Mansfield Park*, which arranges the stories of three sisters and their varied positions in the socio-economic hierarchy of Romantic Britain (387). The narrative of *Mansfield Park* depends on "individuals and families measuring their relative standings to the finest degrees," and this does not segregate birthrights and generated capital but rather aggregates them (387). Further, Keymer notes that the term "class" was already in common use by the time we arrive at Austen's moment (387). In fact, the first recorded use was in 1629—almost 150 years before the publication of *Mansfield Park* ("class, noun and adj." n.p.). To claim, as Martin does, that aligning Austen with class considerations is anachronistic is to misunderstand the historical and linguistic timeline.

Juliet McMaster skillfully unpacks the signs and significance of class in the Regency period. She argues that “[c]lass difference was of course a fact of life for Austen, and an acute observation of the fine distinctions between one social level and another was a necessary part of her business as a writer of realistic fiction” (111). These “fine distinctions” are visible in *Mansfield Park*’s blending of traditional rank titles and new class categories, and the “acute observation” evident in Austen’s subtle differentiations between social groups. For example, we encounter “characters with titles,” Sir Thomas Bertram chief among them (112). We encounter many titled characters across Austen’s canon: Sir John Middleton in *Sense and Sensibility*, Lady Catherine de Burgh in *Pride and Prejudice*, Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram in *Mansfield Park*, and Sir Walter Elliot in *Persuasion*. Aside from Lady Catherine, who is supposed to be the daughter of an earl, all Austen’s titled characters fall into the lowest rank of baronet. And, almost categorically, the titled characters in Austen’s worlds rely on and overemphasize their hierarchical importance and rank, often to the detriment of their charm and character; as McMaster notes characters with honorifics are “seldom admirable,” and Sir Thomas is no exception to with his overestimation of importance and his stodgy rules (112).³⁸ While the social gap between the titled characters and the upper gentry was relatively small, the formal recognition of titles indicates the relative, and hierarchical, honour bestowed on each class.

Sir Thomas is ranked as a baronet, as is signified by the prefix “Sir” attached to his first name. A baronetcy was a heritable knighthood that would be passed down through a male bloodline; knighthood is also signaled by the title “Sir,” but was awarded for particularly admirable service to the Crown. However, because baronetcies did not afford their bearers to sit in the House of Lords, the title carried less prestige. In the case of Sir Thomas, we are to understand his title as part and parcel with his social status, and we are to assume that this same honorific will be bestowed on his first-born son, Tom Bertram. The business of inheritance,

³⁸ One needs only to look at in absolutely intolerable Lady Catherine de Bourgh or recall the infamous scene of vapid Sir Walter Elliot reading the *Baronetage* for proof of this.

entitlement, and primogeniture is almost as keenly felt in *Mansfield Park* as in *Pride and Prejudice*. Whereas in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet and her sisters face destitution or an unhappy marriage to their contemptible cousin because they cannot inherit their father's land, in *Mansfield Park*, primogeniture breeds idleness in one brother and uncertainty in the other. The contrast between Tom Bertram and Edmund Bertram emphasizes the consequences of this inheritance model:

The eldest, who can expect to inherit the estate and the income that goes with it, if not the title as well, is often bred to idleness; and Austen shows how such expectations can make him spoilt and frivolous [...] A younger son [...] who has his living to earn, is sympathetically treated, and becomes a suitable partner for the heroine. Mary Crawford has every intention of marrying an *elder* brother, and is so discontented with herself for falling in love with Edmund by mistake that she wishes his elder brother dead (116).

As McMaster demonstrates, Austen uses the contemporary socioeconomic restrictions as a way to promote *Mansfield Park*'s character development and further the narrative arc. While it may seem cliché to reproduce these stereotypes so literally, Austen's stylistic approach—as always—incorporates nuance and satire. Tom's character, in particular his illness, is offered as an insightful metaphor for the corruption and toxicity of British colonialization and empire. His illness brings Mary Crawford to the brink of realizing her impossible dream of marrying the eldest Bertram son and marrying Edmund. Contrastingly, Edmund is portrayed as sympathetic and good-natured, but also poor in judgement and easily fooled by the charismatic Mary. While ultimately Edmund becomes the most suitable match for Fanny, this pairing is not without trials—in particular, his search for a profession and a partner.

To touch briefly on the position of women in this transitional rank and class economy, while women did “sometimes have handles to their names” they “could not inherit a peerage or a baronetcy” (113). For example, Lady Bertram, whose title is attached to her last name, only holds the honorific by virtue of being married to a man who is a baronet. If Lady Bertram were to remarry, she would lose the title; it is not her own and in social circles this would matter. We

can be certain that subtle signals like this would have been comprehended by a significant portion of Austen's contemporary readership, given their likely proximity to, or possibly direct experience of, these types of social rules. However, modern readers are likely to miss these cues. Like Fanny, who is also an outsider, modern readers learn, understand, and navigate these complex social norms alongside the novel's heroine. Austen's approach to the subjects of money and class are unique given her position in society. While it is paramount to not misread Austen's fictional narratives as a direct reflection of her personal circumstances, it is equally important to take into consideration her perspective and lived experience because her gaze is concentrated on a small sliver of society. Not coincidentally, this small subsection—"approximately three hundred or so families"—most closely aligns with Austen's own familial social class (Keymer 390). As Copeland asserts "Austen is a shrewd observer" who approaches the economic terrain of this social class from an insider position (141). She is a member of the pseudo-gentry, upper professional rank, yet is excluded given her status as a professional woman writer (128-129). This deeply fraught, conflicted point of view makes Austen's social critique all the more compelling, convincing, and effective, as it draws on intricacies only comprehended through experiential learning.

However, critics like Allen Dunn find "Austen's notions of social class offensive" claiming that virtue "that can be sustained only in a system of class-based inequities is purchased at too high a price" (485). In my opinion, Dunn's view of social class in Austen takes the perspective too literally and does not allow for a consideration of nuance, satire, and social criticism. Further, it demonstrates a certain naivete, as if a "system of class-based inequities," and an affordance of social virtues because of them, did not in some way define the relationships of the eighteenth century and continue to define relationships today. Whether or not Dunn finds Austen's recreating of these social inequities offensive is beyond the point: she is capturing a snapshot in her history and is drawing the attention of contemporary and modern readers to her social reality through recreating it in social fiction. Specifically, by using the limited environs of

Mansfield Park, and integrating more complex examples of free indirect discourse, Austen imagines and critiques the Regency-era social space.³⁹

Returning to the novel's title, implications of the name *Mansfield Park* are often misunderstood by contemporary readers. Common conceptions of the Regency era, many fueled by the mass media depictions of Austen classics, cast Mansfield Park as a great English country house. There is certainly no shortage of traditional estates in Austen's canon: both Knightley's Donwell Abbey and Darcy's Pemberley are manifestations of that. However, Mansfield Park is different. The term "park" signals that the property is newly built and not the inherited capital of an old-money, genteel family. The Oxford English Dictionary first defines a "park" as an "enclosed tract of land held by royal grant or prescription and reserved for keeping and hunting deer and other game" ("park, noun" n.p.). For legal purposes, parks were differentiated from forests or chases because they were enclosed. These ancient, walled grounds were, however, still public places where licensed individuals could go hunting or practice gaming for sport. In 1750 a revised definition of a park emerges as a "house or mansion having extensive ornamental grounds." Notably, this definition marks a shift in the conception of the park from a public place to a private space; parks were now occupied, owned properties for individual families. The park becomes a representation of the modern world and the rise of the nouveau riche. As a site of new money, Mansfield Park signifies the accumulation of capital in all forms—financial, cultural, and social. While newly wealthy families did not inherit the land and legacy of an established estate, they were able to feign their social importance by purchasing property and constructing a grand house that replicated the physical and architectural model of the great English manor.

In the case of Mansfield Park, we can assume that it was a home whose erection was at least partly fueled by the bloody proceeds of the British slave trade, given Sir Thomas Bertram's extended time spent in Antigua. In this way, Mansfield Park collapses and entangles place by

³⁹ Louise Flavin argues that *Mansfield Park* contains 69 passages of free indirect discourse in comparison to the 22 passages in *Sense and Sensibility*, 25 passages in *Pride and Prejudice*, and 40 passages in *Northanger Abbey*. While I conjecture that all of these numbers are low, I agree with Flavin's overall assessment that *Mansfield Park* includes more examples than the other texts (143).

highlighting the uncomfortable, unsavoury, and often unspoken realities of colonial England and its Caribbean conquests. While some scholars have criticized *Mansfield Park* for its lack of detail describing the time the Bertram men spend in Antigua, I argue that Austen is purposefully vague. Instead, the narrative focuses on the reverberations of imperialism felt at home. Those pursuing and finding financial success through colonial ventures were able to assemble a lavish life in England, an affordance that was not previously attainable due to strict structures of rank. Notably, the most direct dialogue the reader gets on Sir Thomas' Antigua property is an awkward exchange between Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris on the consequences of "poor returns" from the estate (Austen, *Mansfield Park* 59). While fashionable homes built from the proceeds of the slave trade projected the appearance of a gentry lifestyle, the planter class were often considered vulgar and excluded from polite society. Austen draws on these popular impressions of the planter class in repeated her evocation of the word "plantation" to refer to the property of Mansfield Park, for example: "its increasing beauties from the earliest flowers in the warmest divisions of her aunt's garden, to the opening of leaves of her uncle's plantations, and the glory of his woods" (430). While Sir Thomas and his estate boast a gentlemanly outward appearance, this specific use of language makes clear the connections between Mansfield Park—Britain—and Antigua. Austen is critical of both empire and national identity, of both colonialism and class hostility. The place and the name "Mansfield Park" are markers of imperialism's deep and expansive impact—as is the procession of the plot, which is catalyzed by the patriarch's absence. The physical place of Mansfield Park becomes a pulsating social space as the novel's cast of characters gather and stay at the estate. This limited compound becomes the hub of the novel's social interactions, power negotiations, and moral evaluations. It is the novel's confined space that facilitates a collision of these varied social groups, thereby allowing Austen to leverage her dual voiced narrative style to create a miniature social world within the limited boundaries of Mansfield Park.

While the novel's title highlights the complexities of Mansfield Park as a physical place, its opening lines underscore the house's role as a transformative social space. In particular, this

passage demonstrates how the lives and livelihoods of three sisters from relatively humble origins could be affected and elevated by one sister's marriage ties to a wealthy, titled man:

Miss Maria Ward of Huntingdon, with only seven thousand pounds, had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the county of Northampton, and to be thereby raised to the rank of a baronet's lady, with all the comforts and consequences of an handsome house and large income. All Huntingdon exclaimed on the greatness of the match, and her uncle, the lawyer, himself, allowed her to be at least three thousand pounds short of any equitable claim to it (35).

The vocabulary used in this passage creates a tone of judgement and establishes for the narrator a particular point of view. The reader is told that Miss Maria had “only seven thousand pounds” and that it was “good luck” that Sir Thomas fell in love with her (my emphasis added). Through free indirect discourse, it is made clear that both the narrator and the Northampton community do not see this as an equal match or a predictable pairing, but rather that Miss Maria was surprisingly fortunate in attracting Sir Thomas. In fact, “[a]ll of Huntingdon is astounded by “the greatness of the match,” and even Miss Maria's uncle points out that she was “at least three thousand pounds short of any equitable claim.”⁴⁰ From the beginning, the narrator clearly establishes how marriage and money are inextricably linked. The narrator continues by explaining that Miss Maria was afforded all the “comforts and consequences of an handsome house and large income.” The alliterative use of the terms “comforts” and “consequences” harkens to Bourdieu's powers: the comforts of financial solvency, economic power, and the consequences of being positively connected, social power. The tangible wealth of home and fortune are paralleled by an increase in social stature. It must not be overlooked that Sir Thomas's marriage to Miss Maria also raised her to “the rank of a baronet's lady” and bestowed upon her the title of Lady Bertram. The designation of title—from Miss to Lady—is significant in representing the character's upward social mobility. As previously discussed, Lady Bertram's title status comes only from her marriage, but this recognizable leap in social importance is

⁴⁰ As female suitors were traditionally supposed to have a dowry of twice their suitor's annual income. By this calculation, Sir Thomas' annual income at the time of his marriage to Miss Maria would have been £10,000.

important to the narrative foundation of *Mansfield Park*. By marrying Sir Thomas, Miss Maria not only relocates from Huntingdon to Mansfield Park—a physical manifestation of moving up—but she also becomes a baronet’s lady—a social manifestation of the same hierarchical shift.

However, it is important to keep in mind that, while Lady Bertram and Mrs. Price seemingly exist on opposite poles of the social spectrum, they emerged from the same familial roots. Austen’s narrative advocates for the potential of radical social change for the individual—for better and for worse. The opening paragraph remarks that Lady Bertram had “two sisters to be benefited by her elevation” (35). The particular use of the word “elevation” evokes images of climbing the social hierarchy and draws attention to Lady Bertram’s rise from relatively low social consequence to a position of power. Lady Bertram’s first sister, Mrs. Norris, is described as settled in “conjugal felicity” with Reverend Norris and his annual living income of just under one thousand pounds (35). On the other hand, Lady Bertram’s second sister, Mrs. Price, is settled with a lieutenant marine “without education, fortune, or connexions” (35). The contrast between the married lives of the three sisters emphasizes the importance and influence of money, in combination with education and connections, on the result of social status. By explicitly revealing the income of each sister, the narrator encourages the reader to compare the sisters and underscores the stark differences in their life situations. In fact, the sisters’ contrasting matches create a social chasm described by the narrator as an “absolute breach” (35). As Joseph W. Donohue claims: “The social structure presented in the novel is typified at the very beginning in the marriages of the three Ward sisters [...] the very first page of the novel thus sets up a society well aware of its distinct levels” (171). Sir Thomas, for both admirable and selfish reasons, is described as attempting to rectify Mrs. Price’s damaging choice in husband but failing to do so because “her husband’s profession was such as no interest could reach” (Austen, *Mansfield Park* 35). Again, the term “reach” draws on the metaphor of a social ladder that places a person outside of the reach of another. In this particular instance, Lieutenant Price is beyond the patronage of Sir Thomas; Sir Thomas’s position is so far removed from that of the Lieutenant Price that neither one can “reach” the other. The detrimental circumstances that emerge from the

sisters' shift in social position pinpoint the worst result of a socially stratified Britain: the severing of family ties and the suffering of family members. On the other hand, as will be further discussed, Fanny's character arc demonstrates the opposite: the improvement of a young woman's prospects given the beneficial social relationships of her rich relatives. This is not to say that Fanny's move to Mansfield Park is without consequences, but rather that it is a decision rife with fraught friendships and conflicting values. As these opening lines highlight, the social world of Mansfield Park is complex; as the chapters that follow foreshadow, the novel exists in a space of ever-present tension between wealth and wisdom.

In *Mansfield Park*, outward description of tangible physical place often implicitly correlates to the novel's ephemeral social space. Evidence of this tension is represented early and expertly in this passage of free indirect discourse that occurs shortly after Fanny's relocation from the naval town of Portsmouth and to the palatial property of Mansfield Park: "The grandeur of the house astonished, but could not console her. The rooms were too large for her to move in with ease; whatever she touched she expected to injure, and she crept about in constant terror of something or other" (45). As is shown in this passage, the majority of the novel is filtered through the perspective, bias, and emotions of our young heroine. This directed viewpoint allows not only the characteristic charged language, expressive punctuation, and perplexing juxtapositions of free indirect discourse but also facilitates an affective and emotional response untenable in unbiased third-person narratives. Sianne Ngai argues that affect and emotion are third-person and first-person representations of feeling, with affect standing in for the position of the observer and emotion signifying the position of the speaker (25). In the case of free indirect discourse, affect—third person—and emotion—first person—are blended into one. Thus, the emotional reactions described are not rational or relatable, but rather narrate a very individualized experience of a single character. This affective response to the physical space enlivens Fanny's objective and subjective experience in a narratively palpable manner. Unable to negotiate the immensity of her new home, Fanny feels trapped, oppressed, and out of place. Austen's use of the phrase "crept in constant terror" draws attention to Fanny's discomfort in her

new home. Her fear is unspecific and potentially unfounded as she is described only as worrying about “something or other.” Additionally, the description of the space being “too large” for Fanny to move “with ease” presents a contradiction that emphasizes the heroine’s incongruent relationship to her environment. A place that is too small or narrow would generally warrant a lack of movement, but here the expanse of space is what leaves Fanny feeling constricted. In such an immense physical space, there is no place for Fanny to hide; this stands in contrast to the small, limited physical spaces with which she is familiar. Importantly, this exposure has an affective impact and arouses feelings of restriction, discomfort, and displacement for the character. While the explicit narration of this passage relates to the jarring physical space of Mansfield Park, the implicit narration of the passage, evoked through free indirect discourse, addresses Fanny’s trepidation about effectively navigating her new social space. Her anxiety about injuring “whatever she touched” is likely more a fear of her estranged relative’s reaction to her less-than-ladylike behaviour or her clumsiness than it is about the object she might fracture or destroy (Austen, *Mansfield Park* 45). Notably, Fanny’s relocation introduces her to a foreign physical place as well as an entirely new social space.

Fanny’s uncertain feelings about finding her place in the Bertram family are not unjustified, particularly when it comes to their social culture. In the beginning, it is clear that Fanny lacks the practical knowledge and learned behaviours necessary to assimilate into the Bertrams’ high society. This gap in social class is immediately recognized by the young Bertram sisters when Fanny joins their school lessons:

Fanny could read, work, and write, but she had been taught nothing more; and as her cousins found her ignorant of many things with which they had been long familiar, they thought her prodigiously stupid, and for the first two or three weeks were continually bringing some fresh report of it into the drawing-room. “Dear mama, only think, my cousin cannot put the map of Europe together—or my cousin cannot tell the principal rivers in Russia—or, she never heard of Asia Minor—or she does not know the difference between water-colours and crayons!—How strange!—Did you ever hear anything so stupid?” (48).

The passage overemphasizes Fanny's lack of education with the repetitive use of the word "stupid" and the inclusion of multiple exclamation points. This hypercritical narrative voice, punctuated by direct speech, infuses the voices and perspectives of the young Bertram girls into the passage. Significantly, the content of the Bertram sisters' education is entirely inconsequential: it is obvious, given the relative exclusion of women from the public sphere, that their limited knowledge of foreign lands and trade routes would have no bearing on their actual lives or livelihoods. In fact, the reader is meant to find the frivolity of this education comical—as Mary Wollstonecraft said, they are flowers planted in too rich a soil (71). However, what is consequential about this exchange is the contrast between the Bertram sisters' familiarity and Fanny's ignorance. Despite the triviality of this information, Fanny's misunderstanding of geographical place directly correlates to her position in social space. The Russian rivers are not important in and of themselves but in what they represent. Because Fanny was born into a lower-class household and to parents who did not have the means to fund their daughter's tutelage, she lacks the upper-class female education of the Bertram sisters. Austen demonstrates for the reader the significant gap in capital—both financial and cultural—that sits between Fanny and her relatives at the beginning of the novel. As Mrs. Norris notes, the "rank, fortune, right, and expectations" of Maria and Julia "will always be different" to Fanny's given their family ties and social station (42). Notably, the negotiation of this fraught social incongruence plays out within the imposing boundaries and physical limitations of the Mansfield estate.

While limited views and directed vistas delineate the majority of the novel's physical space, the strict vocabularies of money and class dictate the novel's changing and diverse social space. The entrance of Mr. Rushworth and the company's visit to his estate, Sotherton, are excellent examples of this. Mr. Rushworth first enters the scene at Mansfield Park and is immediately taken with Maria Bertram: "Mr. Rushworth was from the first struck with the beauty of Miss Bertram, and, being inclined to marry, soon fancied himself in love" (67). He is described as overweight and unintelligent but not disagreeable, which, paired with his substantial annual income of £12,000, is more than enough to convince Maria of his marriageability:

Being now in her twenty-first year, Maria Bertram was beginning to think matrimony a duty; and as a marriage with Mr Rushworth would give her the enjoyment of a larger income than her father's, as well as ensure her the house in town, which was now a prime object, it became, by the same rule of moral obligation, her evident duty to marry Mr Rushworth if she could (67).

Whether by “duty,” “obligation,” or—in the more likely circumstance—selfish greed, this passage makes clear that, for Maria, marrying Mr. Rushworth is not a consideration of the heart but is rather a matter of social ambition. Maria is determined to increase her financial and social prestige through her match: securing an income larger than her father's, the exquisite Sotherton manor, and an additional home in elite London. Mr. Rushworth's profits and properties stand in as a metaphor for his wealth, power, prestige, and social class. Like Darcy's Pemberley, Rushworth becomes fused with his property and this appeal woos Maria, who, early in the novel, has conflicting feelings about her suitors: “She had Rushworth-feelings, and Crawford-feelings, and in the vicinity of Sotherton the former had considerable effect” (106-107). As this quotation suggests, Maria is not drawn to Mr. Rushworth because of his personal qualities, but rather it is the expanse and impressiveness of his estate that produces the “considerable effect” of overshadowing Mr. Crawford's boyish charm and convincing her to pursue a relationship with Mr. Rushworth—at least for the moment.

A great collision of place and space can be observed in the company's trip to Sotherton. In this passage, we can observe how the physical features of the estate propel conflicting social discourses between the characters. While visiting, the guests are treated to a tour of Mr. Rushworth's immaculate grounds. The following description of the Sotherton property stands out because Austen does not customarily narrate her novels' settings in such detail:

All were attracted at first by the plants or the pheasants, and all dispersed about in happy independence. Mr Crawford was the first to move forward, to examine the capabilities of that end of the house. The lawn, bounded on each side by a high wall, contained beyond the first planted area, a bowling-green, and beyond the bowling-green a long terrace walk, backed by iron palissades, and commanding a view over them into the top of the tree of the wilderness immediately adjoining. It was a good spot for fault-finding (115).

This passage moves from detail to broad description—much like a camera zooming in and out to the landscape. Beginning with attention to smaller-scale foliage and domestic animals harkens to the Reptonian style of which Mr. Rushworth is a proponent (82-83).⁴¹ His commitment to the idea of physical, manmade improvements to the natural landscape reinforces Mr. Rushworth as a man interested in vapid, popular styles rather than characterizing him as a man of substance (Duckworth, “Mansfield Park and Estate Improvements” 27). The central sentence of the passage uses consecutive commas to draw the reader’s attention to the sheer enormity of Sotherton: there is a lawn, a garden, a bowling-green, a terrace, and a wilderness all contained within Mr. Rushworth’s purview. When the wandering party is confronted with a large, locked door leading to a little wood, with no key, they must decide whether to forge their own way over the gate or to turn back to the manor. Maria Bertram and Henry Crawford choose the former. This physical movement from the controlled environment of the estate into the unpredictable wilderness becomes an extended metaphor for the characters falling out of social favour. The passage following is laden with language that evokes ideas of promiscuity, danger, and the unknown: the iron gate is described as a “restraint” by Maria; the activity is described as “prohibited” by Henry Crawford (Austen, *Mansfield Park* 123). Fanny cautions Maria to not proceed without Mr. Rushworth’s “protection,” a vocabulary choice that summarizes the safeguard of Maria’s respectable marriage to Mr. Rushworth and the comforts afforded by this conventional match. However, Maria eschews Fanny’s first warning as “nonsense” and proceeds to jump over the gate despite Fanny’s second cautioning that she might tear her gown on the dangerous spikes. While Maria and her dress make it over the barrier “alive and well,” this action symbolizes and foreshadows Maria’s eventual infidelity to Mr. Rushworth, her sexual promiscuity, and her imposed banishment from acceptable society. As the party disperses, the reader enters Fanny’s thoughts and emotions through free indirect discourse, partaking in her solitude, unpleasant feelings, astonishment at Maria’s behaviour, and anger at Mr. Crawford. The scene ends with

⁴¹ See this brief explanation of Humphry Repton’s style, see T. Richardson.

Fanny left alone waiting for her cousin Edmund's return and almost entirely forgotten by the rest of the party.

This is not the only instance where Fanny segregates herself from the other company at Mansfield Park. In the infamous re-enactment of *Lovers' Vows*, Fanny starts on the outside of the group—refusing to participate and electing, instead, to silently observe. The pressure and protest Fanny endures at the hands of her cousins, aunt, and their shared company because of this decision leaves her feeling quite distraught and unsure. The following passage, narrated in Austen's characteristic free indirect discourse, focuses on Fanny's emotions following the scene:

she had begun to feel undecided as to what she *ought to do*; and as she walked round the room her doubts were increasing. Was she *right* in refusing what was so warmly asked, so strongly wished for—what might be so essential to a scheme on which some of those to whom she owed the greatest complaisance had set their hearts? Was it not ill-nature, selfishness, and a fear of exposing herself? And would Edmund's judgment, would his persuasion of Sir Thomas's disapprobation of the whole, be enough to justify her in a determined denial in spite of all the rest? It would be so horrible to her to act that she was inclined to suspect the truth and purity of her own scruples [...] A tap at the door roused her in the midst of this attempt to find her way to her duty, and her gentle "Come in" was answered by the appearance of one, before whom all her doubts were wont to be laid. Her eyes brightened at the sight of Edmund (172-173).

The free indirect style of this extended excerpt is immediately evident given the use of emphasized typescript in the first few lines. The italicized type seems to indicate Fanny's moral considerations: what she should do and what is right to do. It also, perhaps, gestures to her uncertainty—the phrases stand out from the rest of the passage to alert the reader to their difference and importance. Fanny's hesitations and doubts are highlighted again in the choice of words: "undecided," "doubts were increasing," and "justify." Additionally, the punctuation of the passage—specifically the question marks—gives the passage a speech-like quality and draws out the emphatic and ambiguous emotions of the scene. These two factors play an equal role in transporting the reader into the mind of the heroine. What is in conflict here are Fanny's own moral impulses and the desires of her closest companions. Fanny contrasts her fears of "judgement," "exposing herself," and denying her own "scruples" against the displeasure of

those “to whom she owed the greatest complaisance.” Her theoretical understanding of moral and appropriate social behaviour is at odds with that of the individuals who dictate social behaviour in practice and hold the key to her entry into elite society. In the end, what draws Fanny out of this internal dilemma is an external interruption: a knock at the door. As the narrative shifts out of free indirect discourse into direct speech and the entry of Edmund, the one “before whom all her doubts were wont to be laid.” For Fanny, Edmund is the solution to her uncertainty and the key to her entry into Mansfield’s social world.

As the novel progresses, Fanny becomes more a part of Mansfield and its social system. By the time the play is ready to be presented to the company, circumstances have changed, and Fanny is entreated to take over the part of the Cottager’s Wife from Mrs. Grant. When Maria claims that Fanny already knows the part well, the narration shifts to this:

Fanny could not say she did *not*; and as they all persevered, as Edmund repeated his wish, and with a look of even fond dependence on her good-nature, she must yield. She would do her best. Everybody was satisfied; and she was left to the tremors of a most palpitating heart, while the others prepared to begin (190).

The double negative here points to Fanny’s continued reluctance to participate in the play, but her eventual decision to do so evidences a shift from the previous circumstance. Fanny is willing to “yield” given the party’s, and particularly Edmund’s, desire for her to agree. It is unclear in the end how exactly Fanny feels about her role in *Lovers’ Vows*: on one hand, the narrator reports that “[e]verybody was satisfied, but on the other, Fanny is left with “tremors of a most palpitating heart.” This unsettled yet compliant resolution seems on par for Fanny. It should also not be overlooked that the theatre has long stood in as a fictional, miniaturized representation of the mortal world and that Fanny’s own moral conflict and resolution add another meta layer to this extended metaphor: she is evaluating her real role in this social group by considering her fictional role in a play that mirrors the real world of its players.⁴² Because *Lovers’ Vows* stands in

⁴² In fact, Shakespeare’s famous Globe Theatre was decorated with painted ethereal beings above the stage to represent Heaven and below the stage was considered Hell (where demons and the like would emerge during a production). This left the stage as the mortal world.

so seamlessly as a symbol for Mansfield itself, Fanny's eventual yielding to the party's production mirrors her transition from social masquerader to member. Fanny not only becomes familiar with, and comfortable in, the estate's physical place, but her transplantation to Mansfield also supplies her with "the education and manners" necessary to successfully integrate into a new echelon of society (285).

Paradoxically, while the spaciousness of Mansfield Park initially frightens Fanny, by the end of the novel she is equally disoriented by the smallness of her childhood home. This is made especially clear when Fanny leaves Mansfield Park to visit her family in Portsmouth. While she was once uncomfortably struck by the vastness of the Mansfield, on her return to Portsmouth, Fanny is stunned by the home's claustrophobic quality: "The smallness of the house, and thinness of the walls, brought every thing so close to her, that, added to the fatigue of her journey, and all her recent agitation, she hardly knew how to bear it" (383). Her beloved Portsmouth now feels narrow, limited, and cramped. Fanny is agitated by the lack of space, so much so that she is unsure "how to bear it." This passage's recitation of Fanny's thoughts demonstrates how, over the course of the novel, she has adapted to and become familiar with the life and luxury of Mansfield. While visiting Portsmouth, Fanny begins to recognize that her conception of home has changed:

She was at home. But, alas! it was not such a home, she had not such a welcome, as—she checked herself; she was unreasonable. [...] Yet to have so little said or asked about herself, to have scarcely an inquiry made after Mansfield! It did pain her to have Mansfield forgotten; the friends who had done so much—the dear, dear friends! (384).

Narrated through free indirect discourse, the passage ventriloquizes Fanny's reflections on belonging. She contrasts the idea of home as the residence of your family—Portsmouth—with the idea of home as the place where you feel most comfortable—Mansfield. Fanny both mourns and questions the loss of her attachment to Portsmouth: the exclamatory "alas!" and self-reflective checking of her "unreasonable" feelings demonstrate this. Until this point, Portsmouth has represented a place of emotional and psychological refuge for Fanny. However, now that she

has returned to her once safe and sacred place, her attention is drawn to her love and care for Mansfield; in this brief excerpt, Mansfield is mentioned three times. Fanny expresses offense that Mansfield has been seemingly “forgotten” as her Portsmouth family made “scarcely an inquiry.” The passage places Fanny at odds with Portsmouth and highlights the friction between her past and present.

Significantly, what originally begins as Fanny’s expressed discomfort with the physical place of Portsmouth then shifts to her displeasure with it as a social space: “Yet she thought it would not have been so at Mansfield. No, in her uncle’s house there would have been a consideration of times and seasons, a regulation of subject, a propriety, an attention towards everybody which there was not here” (384). This passage highlights Fanny’s particularity and displays her convenient forgetting of the chaos and dramatics often characteristic of Mansfield Park. It is ironic that now Fanny can tolerate Mrs. Norris’ continuous meddling or the young couple’s romantic trysts—behaviours that so infuriated her at the novel’s outset. She refers to the company as “dear, dear friends,” seemingly ignoring or overlooking that these people previously abused her and were, in her eyes, morally questionable (384). What this excerpt so clearly demonstrates is that social space is physical space imbued with the attitudes and emotions of the individual. This is achieved through Austen’s skillful use of the free indirect style. In the end, Fanny prefers for things to be just “so” and, for her, Mansfield satisfies this desire. Despite her complicated and sometimes fraught relationship with Sir Thomas, in this moment Fanny recognizes and appreciates her uncle’s gentility. The vocabulary expresses Fanny’s internal monologue, thereby making this excerpt an example of free indirect discourse. The passage’s carefully selected verbs—“consideration,” “regulation,” and “attention”—effectively juxtapose Mansfield’s prescribed order against Portsmouth’s relative chaos. The specificity of the phrase “a propriety” imbues Mansfield—as a place—with the qualities of decorum and respectability, despite the fact that Fanny previously uncovered the dark connections between Mansfield and the proceeds of the Antigua plantation. Further, there is a thoughtfulness about Mansfield and its residents that Fanny has not previously articulated: they are concerned with current “times

and seasons” and distinguish between appropriate “subjects” of conversation. In this excerpt, ventriloquizing our heroine’s intimate thoughts, *Mansfield Park* stands out—and stands alone—as a socially aware, socially connected, and socially rich space.

Ultimately, Fanny’s shift in physical place fundamentally alters her perception of social space. This is demonstrated in the following passage, which details Fanny’s ruminations on her return journey from Portsmouth to Mansfield:

When she had been coming to Portsmouth, she had loved to call it her home, had been fond of saying that she was going home; the word had been very dear to her; and so it still was, but it must be applied to Mansfield. *That* was now the home. Portsmouth was Portsmouth; Mansfield was home (430).

It is in this brief excerpt, two chapters from the close of the novel, Fanny conclusively redefines the meaning of “home:” her most foundational and formative social space. The passage reflects Fanny’s private memories and emotions: recollections of calling Portsmouth home and the ultimate realization that this place no longer embodies that symbol. While the key sentiments of home remain the same for Fanny—feelings of love and fondness—the place is now Mansfield. Again, Austen’s use of emphasized typescript alerts the reader to the operative word in the central sentence: “*That* was now the home.” The final line of this passage succinctly captures how intertwined Fanny’s geographical relocation is with her social movement: it was Portsmouth that was home, it is now Mansfield that is home. In the end, despite *Mansfield Park*’s initial physical limitations and imposed social anxieties, the miniature world created inside its walls facilitated Fanny’s rupturing and renegotiating of her place in society.

While many critics focus on the novel’s moral implications, I argue that Austen’s *Mansfield Park* is ultimately concerned with the relationship between place and space. By emphasizing how place operates within the text, Austen uses the physical confinement of her characters to facilitate an imaginative and transportive social world, particularly for the novel’s heroine. The “dynamic role” of the novel’s physical location mirrors the heroine’s shifting social location: “Mansfield changes [...] Fanny changes too, and her development ties the three places

[Sotherton, Mansfield, Portsmouth] together chronologically” (Banfield, “Moral Landscape” 23). Fanny’s physical relocation in the novel is mirrored by her social relocation in the rank and class of Romantic Britain. Ultimately, this is demonstrated in her marrying her cousin, Edmund Bertram, and their settling near Mansfield Park. The novel ends not with the reader looking at Mansfield Park from a distance but with the reader looking through the estate for a first and final appreciation of its unique vantage point: “[it] [s]oon grew as dear to her heart, and as thoroughly perfect in her eyes, as every thing else, within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park” (Austen, *Mansfield Park* 468). Fanny’s fondness for the place and patronage of Mansfield—demonstrated in the careful use of phrases like “dear to her heart”—corresponds to her comfort with, and connection to, the estate’s social space. The once unnerving and unaccepting atmosphere becomes “thoroughly perfect in her eyes,” which signifies Fanny’s transformation both internally and categorically.

In conclusion, the novel’s use of extended metaphors—such as the bounded estate, the restricted home, and the limited stage—enforces its keen attention to, and oscillation between, place and space. This focus is furthered by the employment of free indirect discourse, which enables the narrative recreation and satirization of Regency-era British society. Ultimately, Austen highlights the symbiotic relationships between wealth and power, money and class, and place and space. While today we take for granted that the novel of manners is attentive to social space, it should not be overlooked that it was Austen’s pioneering narrative techniques—specifically free indirect discourse—that first facilitated the mapping of the relationships and interactions we now assume to exist and, therefore, rarely critically or clearly see. The relatively amorphous and unidentifiable location of Mansfield Park works in service of this careful reimagination. Contrastingly, in *Emma*, the incredibly specific place in time that aids a pointed historical, socio-economic critique of the burgeoning middling and gentry communities.

Chapter 5: Community

While the historical moment of *Mansfield Park* is roughly embodied by the extended timeline of colonialism, the slave trade in the West Indies, and the rise of new money in rural Northamptonshire, Austen's successive novel, *Emma*, inhabits a very particular space and an exact moment of rural London market towns at the economic height of 1815.⁴³ While some critics argue that *Emma* fails to engage with the challenges and changes of Austen's contemporary historical moment, I argue that the novel uses style to parallel the economic and social shifts of early nineteenth-century Britain and retrace the evolution of capital, in all its forms. Economically, it was during this era that London emerged as the centre of world finance. The social reverberations of London's financial dominance and the establishment of empire were felt in the agricultural hamlets populating England's bucolic landscape—rural communities like Emma's fictional Highbury. While physically and sociologically imagined, Highbury presents the “broad spectrum of personal and family economics” that compose the village setting (Hume 295). Austen's *Emma* recreates the transformative power of capital in rural Romantic Britain with thoughtfulness and precision. Further, her use of free indirect discourse to attend to the social minutiae—the comparative differences between gentry, pseudo-gentry, and the rising middle class—sets *Emma* apart as a masterful study in community and sociability.

In *Emma*, the intricacies of sociability and “entanglements of economic language” are transformed into narrative principles (Miles, “A Fall in Bread” 76). Specifically, free indirect discourse manifests difference and sameness between social groups by creating a narrative space with “two sensibilities” and allowing an “interplay between narratorial and figural voices” (Gunn 42). The majority of the novel is focalized through the young, confident, and fallible heroine, Emma Woodhouse. Utilizing the narrative affordances of free indirect discourse, Austen establishes Emma's individual voice through tone and idiomatic language. By contrast, the third-

⁴³ A peculiar English word and concept, a market town is defined as a satellite community generally about a day's worth of travel from a major city. Market towns were the centre of life within provincial areas. In *Emma*, Highbury is a market town in the shadow of London.

person style necessitates a separate narrative voice. The measured, mature perspective of the narrator is often placed in contrast to Emma, creating a layered, dual-vocal statement that facilitates the novel's dramatic irony, didacticism, and humour. Relying on historical economics, sociological theory, and close reading, this chapter will elucidate how *Emma* contrasts the decline of rank-based social structures with the rise of a new social-economic order. Further, this chapter will demonstrate how the negotiation of new values, politics, and ideals, is not a linear process but is rather a power struggle fraught with tension, competition, and confusion. Particularly focusing on free indirect discourse channeled through the novel's heroine and Austen's emerging development of a collective, public voice, I will highlight how economic, industrial transformations and social change ruptured a previously stable and static system, thereby introducing new challenges and shifting the social hierarchy.

Robert Miles argues that Austen's *Emma* is deeply reliant on the precise historical moment in which it was written (“‘A Fall in Bread’” 67). He further asserts that the meditations presented in the novel depend on the particular economic context of its composition: if the novel had been written any earlier, the nuances would not have been evident; if the novel had been written any later, they would not have been tractable (“‘A Fall in Bread’” 67). Similarly, Mary-Elizabeth Fowkes Tobin expands this idea by arguing that “*Emma* addresses certain political, social, and economic problems specific to early nineteenth-century Britain” (413). While there is some scholarly debate about whether *Emma* remains “blissfully untouched” by economic, political, and social concerns, or whether Austen narrates “the tempests of her present,” I side definitively with Miles in arguing that the societal shifts of the early 1800s reverberate through the novel in subtle, compelling, and greatly impactful ways (“‘A Fall in Bread’” 67).

During the nineteenth century, the population of England and Wales more than tripled—growing from 9,000,000 people at the beginning of the century to 33,000,000 people by its close. According to Perkin, this rapid population increase was accompanied by astronomical growth, of approximately 400% per capita, in industrial production and real income. These demographic

and economic changes had profound and lasting impacts on the “social structure and organization” of modern English society. In addition to drastically shifting social strata—a process defined by slow, non-quantifiable change over the course of an extended period of time—England faced the more immediate and palpable social consequences of reorienting communities and distributing income in the townships with newly enlarged populations (134). Changing agriculture practices, particularly the mutually-entangled technological advances of high farming and increase in enclosure, meant that the previously equitable division of resources that allowed all individuals to graze their animals on common property was abandoned for a competitive, capitalist market.⁴⁴

Historian John Rule argues that enclosure was the culmination of the “social and economic change in English agriculture” that took place over the course of the Romantic period (68). The driving force of enclosure were some 4,000 Acts of Parliament that were passed to align government policy with this social, industrial, and economic change (Perkin 125). The parliamentary Enclosure Acts commuted the waste or common land that was previously used for open grazing into fenced, privatized pastures, thereby favouring the wealthier landed gentry who were politically dominant and controlled parliament (Rule 56). Simply put enclosure meant the “extinction of common right” and this resulted in approximately half of the population losing commons rights following the pass of enclosure (Neeson 1, 61, 64). Over eighty-four years between 1760 and 1844, 6,000,000 acres of open pasture and common fields were transitioned into enclosed farming estates (Perkin 125). The majority of this legislation occurred during two concentrated bursts between 1760 to 1780 and 1793 to 1815 (Perkin 125; Rule 80). Most significantly, this second implementation of laws aligns almost identically with Austen’s literary career—ending directly before the publication of, and during the composition of, *Emma*.

⁴⁴ High farming is defined as a “now *historical* a form of land cultivation making extensive use of soil improvement” (“high farming, noun” n.p.).

The movements from agricultural to industrial, and from shared space to private place, had a profound impact on the organization of rural village societies. Enclosure impacted not only the way land was held, but also the way land was treated by influencing how people farmed (Rule 69). For the majority of country dwellers, enclosure presented “extremely unpleasant consequences;” because they had no legal right to the property, most people lost access to the common land (Perkin 126). Additionally, wages for labourers stagnated and the practice of offering living quarters to hired workers declined (126). On the other hand, landlords and tenant farmers reaped rewards from the installation of a closed market system; between 1790 and 1830 the value of enclosed estates and the profit they generated nearly doubled (126). Enclosure encouraged landowners to adopt improved farming methods and allowed them to consolidate and re-let their property to progressive tenant farmers (Rule 57, 80).

Austen imagines this agricultural, economic, and social shift in *Emma*, particularly in her characterization of Knightley, who appears as a “sophisticated agricultural capitalist, keeping one eye on the land and the other on nearby London” (Delany 544). In fact, gentleman and gentry families like the Knightleys “owned more than three-quarters of all land” at the start of 1800 (535). In the pre-enclosure economy, this minute group of only about 13,000 people (less than 0.15% of the population) held a “virtual monopoly” of not only the physical landscape but also the political and social spaces that presided over, powered, and directed daily life. Miles argues that these landlords had a joint interest in their tenant farmers adopting high farming practices (“A Fall in Bread” 69). In *Emma* the reader witnesses this mutually beneficial and collaborative relationship develop between Robert Martin and Knightley; this type of shared investment was an emerging and characteristic feature of the early nineteenth-century agricultural economy (Rule 58). It is clear, in the way that Knightley speaks about and defends Robert Martin, that he values the tenant farmer as a business partner, as both men are invested in the prosperity of the land. These types of reciprocal farming relationships were encouraged by the development of high farming practices, as they increased efficiency, effectiveness, and generated capital for all parties involved.

Not only did these agricultural and economic changes shift the financial landscape of Regency England, but they, in turn, affected the social landscape as well. As enclosure and high farming practices made it more possible for tenant farmers to generate an adequate, steady income and become “sufficiently prosperous,” so too did they “win social acceptance from the gentry” (Delany 540). Kristin Fliieger Samuelian argues that Austen manifests this shift in the character of Robert Martin and the family’s home at Abbey-Mill farm: “it seems clear that the Martins’ move into the gentry is inevitable. It is happening, however, at an appropriately gradual pace” (22). Previously, this type of upward mobility would have been stunted given the rigid social classifications. But with the industry and commerce allowing for the generation of new money, entrepreneurs and labourers like Robert Martin were afforded an opportunity to raise their social station. In other words, the values of a farmer, like Robert Martin, and a gentleman, like Knightley, could be aligned—equal within this newly defined social space—as long as they possessed equivalent powers. Likewise, the capital of an individual at the beginning of their life was not necessarily equal to the capital at the end of their life, as was the case in a rank-based hierarchy. Instead, society embraced the fluidity that accompanied a modern economy by facilitating the opportunity for self-made men. However, while this movement created a more equitable social landscape, the collapse of the outdated social structure also catalyzed what Mark Parker terms the “fear of levelling tendencies” for the upper class (347). It is out of this uncertainty that *Emma* emerges. These real historical changes and palpable cultural transitions can be further understood through Taylor’s sociological lens. Particularly, the diverse, universal, egalitarian approach to social structure mirrors Taylor’s politics of equal recognition, where competing frameworks collide to assemble collective ideals and values.⁴⁵ As Miles asserts, in *Emma*: “Austen’s theory of value encounters, and works in and through, the competing interest of the different players who—in financial terms at least—principally compose the rural

⁴⁵ I use the word egalitarian cautiously considering the incredibly inegalitarian, unequal, and exploitative treatment of many different minority groups during this period. Here, the word “egalitarian” refers to the more equitable treatment of white men born into different social classes—the ability for white men to rise in society based on their perceived financial, cultural, and social success. I fully acknowledge that women and racial minorities were certainly not afforded this same respect or opportunity.

community” (“A Fall in Bread” 69). The imagined community of Highbury is in constant negotiation, dialogue, and struggle to build both its public, collective identity and to redefine the individual identities of the community members in the newly modern society.

Given Austen’s imagination of a quintessential homestead community in *Emma*, it seems apt to draw on Benedict Anderson’s seminal work *Imagined Communities* (1983). That being said, the subject of Anderson’s monograph (the construction of nations throughout history) and the subject of Austen’s *Emma* (a fictional, rural market town sixteen miles from London) differ drastically. In fact, as Southam argues, Austen’s narrow and specific reconstruction of England through her novels is a central and defining feature of her work. While her sister-novelists often ran “their stories across Europe and towards America,” Austen’s “novels remain immovably in England” and only gesture to a world beyond the British Isles (Southam, “Jane Austen’s Englishness” 187).⁴⁶ Southam traces Austen’s Englishness across her canon but eventually lands on *Emma* as the novel most attuned to the exploration of national identity (190). This is where Austen and Anderson align: Anderson’s definition of a nation as a socially constructed and socially defined community imagined by its inhabitants is a particularly apt and insightful way of characterizing *Emma*’s Highbury and its representation of England’s national tale. Highbury is both physically and sociologically imagined. As a fictional, physical space, Highbury represents the essence of an English market town but written in Austen’s familiar satirical and caricaturist style. Contemporary readers were endeared to this simple, observational nostalgia for the rural English community. As one reader wrote to publisher John Murray, there is “so much of English fireside that you fancy yourself seated in the circle” (194). This familiar local identity conjured by *Emma* ties the novel to popular national tales of Scotland and Ireland commonly composed by early nineteenth-century women writers.⁴⁷

Further, while Austen narrates the geographical borders of Highbury, the social landscape of the community is constructed by its fictional inhabitants. It is the specifically generic details—

⁴⁶ For example, the references in *Mansfield Park* to Antigua.

⁴⁷ For example, Sydney Owenson’s *Wild Irish Girl* (1806) and Jane Porter’s *Scottish Chiefs* (1810).

slight but meticulous gradations in class, tight social circles, and “finely calibrated hierarchy”—that cast Highbury as a quintessentially English social commonwealth (194). The vast majority of *Emma*’s main cast of characters fall into the narrow and liminal category of pseudo-gentry. The term pseudo-gentry was originally coined by historian Alan Everitt as a means of categorizing seventeenth-century townsmen who did not own land but were as wealthy as their gentry counterparts. David Spring later imported the term to literary scholarship and Austen studies by using the term as a way of referring to what he considered a third group of the rural elite that was equivalent to but separate from the readily identifiable gentry and aristocracy (59). The pseudo-gentry describes the social group of wealthy, non-landed families, mostly comprised of the clergy, professionals, military service members, and rentiers.⁴⁸ Spring argues for the use of the term pseudo-gentry because, while these individuals “were not landowners in the same sense as the gentry and aristocracy were [...], they were gentry of a sort” (60). While critics like J.A. Downie have taken issue with the term, claiming that is an inaccurate classification of Austen’s central characters, I argue that it is an acutely apt description of Emma (80). The Woodhouses’ residence at Hartfield as rentiers is relatively recent history—especially when compared to the landed legacy of the Knightleys.⁴⁹ Hartfield is described as inconsiderable and a “notch in the Donwell Abbey estate,” which gestures to the insignificance of the Woodhouses’ property and their uncertain footing as true members of the gentry (Austen, *Emma* 153). On the other hand, the Woodhouse family holds a place of high regard among the community of Highbury and Emma considers herself, both in manners and civility, a member of the upper social echelon. As a woman who is, economically, on the verge of being non-landed but is, socially, secure as a member of the rural elite, Emma is a prime example of the pseudo-gentry. The Woodhouses are not the only characters who fit into this liminal category: the Coles and Mr. John Knightley also epitomize this social classification.

⁴⁸ Rentiers are defined as people who derive their “income from property or investment” (“rentier, noun” n.p.).

⁴⁹ Thomas Keymer identifies the Woodhouses as rentiers in “Rank.” *Jane Austen in Context*, edited by Janet Todd. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Alice Drum argues that “[g]entry life was never static,” and the same can be said for members of the intermediary pseudo-gentry who “sought strenuously to be taken for gentry” (93, Spring 60). Spring’s emphasis on the pseudo-gentry’s desire to be perceived as gentry—to fit neatly into the entrenched, yet dissolving, rank structure—speaks to common Regency anxieties of social acceptance, social position, and social prestige. In fact, much of the struggle of *Emma*’s imagined community, and of real rural Regency villages, circulated around the “anxious desire to fix social positions” (Samuelian 17). The unknown, noncategorical social structure that emerged with the Industrial Revolution meant that previously entrenched social relationships and world orders were disrupted. This shift was stimulated by the rise of the middling classes, who emerged in the social landscape of the early nineteenth century and, consequently, redefined society’s social values (Grossman 159). For example, the emergence of professions, and their growing prestige and importance, also intersected with the previously held preoccupations of the English gentry (Drum 93). In *Emma*, this is embodied in the relationship between Robert Martin and Knightley, which “demonstrates a progressive way of life” (Drum 101). Similarly, while Emma may not recognize it, the resolution of the novel culminates in both her and Harriet marrying up: Emma, who comes from a rentier family with unstable financial prospects, marries landed gentleman Knightley; Harriet, the illegitimate daughter of a tradesman, marries rising tenant farmer Robert Martin. As Casey Finch and Peter Bowen argue, Emma realizing she must marry Knightley “marks an uncanny moment of *recognition*: the moment when the individual is brought into alignment with social imperatives” (qtd. in Grossman 145). In addition, I argue that Harriet eventually settling with Robert Martin also satisfies the newly reimagined social order—despite challenging the heroine’s outdated understanding of rank and class.

While the social gradations among many of Austen’s characters are slight, they are also very real. Instead of relying only on obvious external markers, the middling and gentry classes turned to internal markers, such as virtue, ability, and taste, to justify their rank and rise in social class. Miles unpacks this social negotiation or “trading up:”

To trade up required added value. For Austen, but also for the pseudo-gentry in general, that added value was comprised by what contemporary sociologists call, following Pierre Bourdieu, symbolic forms of capital (such as “cultural” and “social”) (“A Fall in Bread” 71).

Returning to Taylor, as hierarchical society declined, modern social spaces were redefined by “divergent social imaginaries” as people reconceptualized their social existence, relationships, and societal expectations (*Modern Social Imaginaries* 2). As social negotiation emerged as a defining feature of modern, English society, so too did the modern public sphere rise up as an arena of discussion and a “breach in the old ideal of social order undivided by conflict and difference” (90). More than any other Austen novel, *Emma* captures the historic moment where this tension reached its initial peak. James Thompson examines the nexus of Austen’s novels and sociology, claiming: “[i]f sociation is the principal subject and the principal action of Austen’s fiction, then it stands to reason that sociology, the science of sociation, should help with our analysis of these novels” (2). I agree with Thompson’s premise and find the consideration of sociological theorists in his analysis both compelling and enlightening. For *Emma* in particular, Thompson uses Georg Simmel’s social types to understand how individuals can simultaneously participate in society and actively work against it: “[h]owever much an individual may contribute to group life, however much his personal life may be tied with social life and submerged in it, he also stands *vis-à-vis* that totality” (qtd. in Thompson 64).

This chapter will examine *Emma* as Austen’s fictional representation of rural British society in economic and social flux and will demonstrate how her dialogic narrative style manifests these shifts in structure. I argue that the contemporary social and economic dynamics impacted the literary landscape and, therefore, considering these factors is key to understanding Austen’s novelistic innovation. The novel’s formulaic approach to imagining community provides a “model of sociability” (Thompson 72). In the first three chapters of the novel, the reader is presented with the social structure and social hierarchy of the major players in Highbury. As Thompson argues, the first chapter opens with Emma and Knightley, the second chapter incorporates the Westons, and the third chapter “not only introduces everyone else, but

also shows us in miniature the social hierarchy and how they all interact” (72). Austen’s care to establish the novel’s social landscape early and explicitly speaks to the centrality of interaction and enacting community. Thompson claims that *Emma* is “Austen’s one serious attempt at representing community” and while I do not agree that this is her only thoughtful effort towards doing so, I do believe it is her most successful given the novel’s geographic and social insularity. It is through “series of scenes of sociability,” at Hartfield, at Donwell Abbey, at Box Hill, that Austen tracks “Emma’s learning the rules and responsibilities of social interaction/social cohesion” (16). Not only does Emma fail, learn, and mature through the novel’s social experiments, but so do the readers. Using free indirect discourse, Austen’s “facilitates ‘double vision’ and didacticism” (Gunn 41). As Daniel Gunn argues, free indirect discourse in *Emma* is “best seen not as a representation of autonomous figural discourse but as a kind of narratorial *mimicry*, analogous to the flexible imitations of others’ discourse we all practice in informal speech and expository prose” (35-36). This mimicry and replication of idiomatic speech in third-person narrative discourse affords *Emma* its double vision quality by transposing the voice of the narrator and the voice of the heroine. Further, by layering these conflicting voices and perspectives in single narrative statements, Austen creates a dramatic and didactic irony that exposes her heroine’s flawed reading of her social surroundings.

Butler claims that, with *Emma*, we encounter the first full and consistent representation of Austen’s dialogic narrative mode (260-261). I agree with Butler’s assessment of Austen’s narrative maturation and argue that it is Austen’s nuanced understanding and development of free indirect discourse that allows her to capture the “heroine’s thought-process” while maintaining “the objective detachment of the dramatist” (260). While Emma’s voice often dominates the layered free indirect style of the novel, Austen also consciously creates a public voice—a collective voice—in *Emma* that reflects the community’s perspective on the persons and situations presented in the text. Just as the narrative “dips in and out” of Emma’s subjectivity, so too does the omniscient narrator ventriloquize the communal voice of the Highbury population (Oberman 2). This both underscores the importance of Highbury and its

residents as a nostalgic representation of a quintessential market town and demonstrates the rich, polyvocal qualities of Austen's mature narrative method. As Rachel Provenzano Oberman argues, "the boundary between the narrative voice and the 'communal' voice" is fraught and at key points in the progression of the novel the narrator is "actually at odds with the communal voice" (6-7). A classic example of this comes in the opening line of *Emma*: "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich" (Austen, *Emma* 55). On re-reading, this line can be interpreted as a blending of Emma's naivety to her own status in Highbury, the community's admiration of the novel's heroine, and the narrator's subtle, biting sarcasm. It is obvious that Emma's voice is permeating this statement given the follies presented in the narrative action of the text. Emma views herself as exceptionally well-bred and well-suited within the social landscape of Highbury. Her oftentimes unforgiving evaluations of other characters—in particular, Mrs. Elton, Mrs. Bates, Miss Bates, Jane Fairfax, and Robert Martin—reflect her own sense of self-importance. She thinks herself clever enough to negotiate Harriet's romantic relationships and rich enough to wholeheartedly dismiss the proposal of Mr. Elton. Emma is convinced of the veracity of this opening statement; on the other hand, for the narrator, this statement is ironic. Emma *is* beautiful, but she is not nearly as clever or as rich as she thinks. Emma's inability to read social cues or abide by social graces thicken the plot of the novel. It is the inflexibility of her mind, her resistance to adapt to her changing world, that is often at the forefront of the tension between heroine and narrator. Additionally, the Woodhouses' financial status is insecure. Historical economists have indicated that the wealth of rentiers was unstable in the 1810s due to increasing national debt from the war and inflation (Ferguson 81). In fact, during this period inflation "devalued" money by about sixty percent because, while the cost of maintaining a living rose, interest rates were relatively stable. For rentiers, this meant that the money going out was far from equal to the money coming in. This economic reality would have been easily recognized by Austen's reading public and would have made the irony of this opening very apparent. Less apparent, but certainly present, is the voice of the community. Emma is well regarded by the residents of Highbury: Mrs. Weston adores her, Harriet Smith admires her, Miss Bates forgives

her, and Knightley marries her. The community believes, as much as Emma does, that she possesses the qualities of beauty, cleverness, and wealth. While the persistence of these descriptors—“handsome, clever, and rich”—may ebb and flow throughout the novel, they generally maintain an accurate portrait of the heroine from the perspective of her peers. Highbury’s commitment to Emma’s overall goodness and grace is one of the things that saves her and prevents her from being characterized as an irredeemable, ignorant elitist. The tension between the characters’ shared belief in the legitimacy of this opening sentiment and the narrator’s sarcasm makes it an excellent example of the dialogic quality of Austen’s free indirect discourse. This “interplay between narratorial and figural voices”—narrator, heroine, and community—demonstrates the narrative complexity of Austen’s late works and evidences her learning trajectory (Gunn 49).

The amorphous voice of the community arises again after Mr. Elton returns to Highbury with his new wife: “Mrs. Elton was first seen at church: but though devotion might be interrupted, curiosity could not be satisfied by a bride in a pew, and it must be left for the visits in form which were then to be paid, to settle whether she were very pretty indeed, or only rather pretty, or not pretty at all” (Austen, *Emma* 248). Here, as Finch and Bowen argue, “while the precise citizens who compose Mrs. Elton’s welcoming committee are left unnamed, we rightly understand them to represent the community at large” (9). The free indirect style leaves space for multiple points of view and multiple evaluations of Mrs. Elton, despite being rendered in a seemingly singular narrative perspective. The passage begins with Mrs. Elton being “seen” in public and observed by the community. The use of the word “seen” makes it clear that Mrs. Elton is being observed and judged by the Highbury residents rather than being actively interacted with and allowed to shape her impression on the group. As Finch and Bowen assert, there is an aura of gossip in this passage, as is gestured towards in the use of the word “curiosity.” It is then further emphasized by the hypercritical evaluation of Mrs. Elton as either “very pretty indeed, or only rather pretty, or not pretty at all.” This vain subjective rubric for describing Mrs. Elton makes it entirely apparent that the opinions of the Highbury residents are

distinct from the arbitration of the narrator. This space for simultaneously acknowledging the possibility of conflicting points of view within the Highbury community, as well as the differences between the omniscient narrator and the ventriloquized communal voice, highlight the narrative depth and flexibility of Austen's free indirect style. By allowing multiple voices to enter into dialogue, Austen imagines Highbury as a place of negotiation and difference.

This layering of voices is further emphasized by the ever-present gap between the characters' (especially Emma's) limited perspective—characterized by misunderstanding and ignorance—and the narrator's omniscient perspective—characterized by maturity and insight. As the narrative oscillates among points of view, the dialogic quality of Austen's style unfolds. The space between the characters' opinions and the narrator's knowledge is reflected in the reverberation of their distinct voices. Additionally, the effects of the narratorial interplay are heightened through *Emma's* use of dramatic irony. This is exemplified in the following excerpt that describes Emma's reaction to Mr. Elton's praise of Harriet's portrait: "Yes, good man!—thought Emma—but what has all that to do with taking likeness? You know nothing of drawing. Don't pretend to be in rapture about mine. Keep your raptures for Harriet's face" (Austen, *Emma* 84). The identification tag, "thought Emma," signals to the reader that this passage transitions into the voice of the character. As shown previously, this rudimentary technique is commonly used in Austen's earlier novels as a way of signaling free indirect discourse. While it does appear in this particular excerpt, the majority of *Emma* is free from such obvious identifying markers. The language and punctuation of the passage make it clear that Emma's voice is ventriloquized; the use of an exclamation point draws attention to Emma's enthusiasm and praise. As arranging the match between Harriet and Mr. Elton is Emma's scheme, her excitement of his admiration would uniquely please her. Further, the repetition of the word "rapture" reflects Emma's dramatic, overzealous, and oftentimes ironic tone. The colloquial, conversational tone of the excerpt fits Emma's "valley girl" voice: it is casual, it is judgmental, and it is spirited. However, equally, the voice of the narrator comes through. It is through the context of the scene and the narrator's true understanding of the character's relationships that the layered voices can be

recognized. The passage's dual voice is manifest in its dramatic irony. While Emma completely misses the point of Mr. Elton's compliments, this flattery is not lost on the narrator. In fact, the aside remark "—thought Emma—" can be interpreted as the narrator using punctuation and syntax to distance themselves from Emma's erroneous reading of Mr. Elton's behaviour and comments. The narrator recognizes that Mr. Elton's comments are directed at Emma, despite the heroine entirely misinterpreting this flirtatious interaction. While the reader may miss the irony of this passage on a first reading, once they return to the text they are included in the joke and can more aptly decipher the novel's negotiation of voices. Further, the passage's use of exclamation points, em dashes, and idiomatic language, which all highlight the exaggerated emotions characteristic of the dramatic Emma, are made more humorous in knowing their misplacement and misunderstanding. This gap underscores the presence of multiple perspectives in the text.

As evidenced above, Emma's dramatic, opinionated, and overtly self-assured persona dictates many of the novel's ironic social episodes, flawed character portraits, and pivotal plot points. Her bias towards particular professions, classes, connections, and relational norms reflects the social tensions of Austen's cultural moment, especially the struggle to negotiate previously rigid class structures and adapt to a newly reoriented social climate. For example, take this passage where Emma is evaluating Mr. Elton as a suitor for Harriet:

Mr. Elton was the very person fixed on by Emma for driving the young farmer out of Harriet's head. She thought it would be an excellent match; and only too palpably desirable, natural, and probable, for her to have much merit in planning it. She feared it was what every body else must think of and predict. It was not likely, however, that any body should have equalled her in the date of the plan, as it had entered her brain during the very first evening of Harriet's coming to Hartfield. The longer she considered it, the greater was her sense of its expediency. Mr. Elton's situation was most suitable, quite the gentleman himself, and without low connexions; at the same time, not of any family that could fairly object to the doubtful birth of Harriet. He had a comfortable home for her, and Emma imagined a very sufficient income; for though the vicarage of Highbury was not large, he was known to have some independent property; and she thought very highly of him as a good-humoured, well-meaning, respectable young man, without any deficiency of useful understanding or knowledge of the world (78).

While this passage is presented in the third-person narrative style, it is clear that Emma's voice is dominant, as can be observed in the vocabulary and dramatic tone. First, Emma's reference to Robert Martin as "the young farmer" demonstrates her lack of respect for him as a potential match for Harriet and her disregard for his valuable contribution to the Highbury community. While on its own this reference would give little reason for pause, it is contrasted against her evocation of Mr. Elton, whom she could have termed "the vicar" or "the clergyman." For Emma, Robert Martin is defined by his occupation and is therefore confined to a lower social class, whereas Mr. Elton's occupation affords him social mobility to associate with the upper echelons of the gentry. In terms of a match for Harriet, it is clear that Emma believes that Mr. Elton is the only suitable choice, despite the economic and social climate of 1815 England. Emma describes the match as "desirable, natural, and probable," which reveals her rigid and socially conservative outlook on marital partnerships. In particular, the word "natural" implies that there is a specific order or system to marital relationships, where one's match could fall in or out of what is considered appropriate, normal, or acceptable.

While "desirable" and "probable" amplify this message, it is "natural" that conjures up the antiquated social strictures of inherited rank rather than the modern ideals of class. It is important to recognize how this use of language excludes and diminishes individuals based on their birth title and perceived place in the social order. In fact, it is Emma's belief in Mr. Elton being "quite the gentleman himself" that convinces her of his suitability as a match for Harriet. As Samuelian argues, by the eighteenth century, discussions of "what constituted a gentleman occupied a good part of both fictional and non-fictional discourse" (19). Education, familial lineage, manners, and taste were all considered markers of gentlemanly breeding. Additionally, and specifically for Emma, are the important qualities of high "connexions" and "independent property." Emma's choice of language highlights the nexus of two of Bourdieu's powers: social capital and economic capital. Mr. Elton's social position in the insular world of Highbury associates him with, according to Emma, the right type of people, earning him social capital. And, while his vicarage "was not large," his "comfortable home" and "sufficient income" satisfy

Emma in earning him the appropriate economic capital. It is these particular forms and functions of capital that Robert Martin lacks and what, therefore, disqualifies him, in Emma's less-than-humble opinion, as a suitor for Harriet. Of course, all Emma's speculation and evaluation of the two men takes place in the shadow of Harriet's "doubtful birth," for which we know Emma has dramatically envisioned scenarios of landed families and inherited fortunes. To Emma, she is, of course, the "natural daughter of somebody" (Austen, *Emma* 68).

The above passage concludes with Emma's robust praise of Mr. Elton's character and connections: "a good-humoured, well-meaning, respectable young man, without any deficiency of useful understanding or knowledge of the world" (78). The extensive use of descriptive and admiring language in this statement captures Emma's dramatic and effusive spirit. It also makes Emma's rejection of Mr. Elton's proposal, only a few chapters later, all the more confounding. The irony of Emma's commendations is that while they seem genuine and unbiased, they are restricted and tethered to Mr. Elton's social position and his marriageable class. When Emma considers Mr. Elton in the context of marrying Harriet, he is suitable and desirable; when she considers him in the context of marrying herself, he is "violent" and improper (149). Through free indirect discourse, Austen slyly reveals Emma's inability to grasp shifting class structures by juxtaposing her misunderstanding with the more nuanced understanding of her readership. For example, the following passage details Emma's response to Robert Martin's letter to Harriet:

Emma was not sorry to be pressed. She read, and was surprized. The style of the letter was much above her expectation. There were not merely no grammatical errors, but as a composition it would not have disgraced a gentleman; the language, though plain, was, and the sentiments it conveyed very much to the credit of the writer. It was short, but expressed good sense, warm attachment, liberality, propriety, even delicacy of feeling. She paused over it, while Harriet stood anxiously watching for her opinion (89).

What is shown in this passage is that Emma falsely presumes two things: first, that Robert Martin does not hold the financial or social capital to be considered equal in status to a gentleman; and second, that Harriet's undetermined familial relations guarantee her a gentleman suitor. As Miles points out, "Emma believes Harriet is the daughter of a gentle-man and is

therefore fitting to take an elevated place within a country economy” (“A Fall in Bread” 80). Emma’s use of the word “gentleman” signals her consideration of social rank while evaluating this letter; however, she fails to recognize that the static social strictures that had previously siloed gentlemen away from the professional and working classes have begun to shift fundamentally. Emma is unable to appreciate the rising status of tenant farmers like Robert Martin and therefore misjudges his suitability as a match for Harriet.

Emma’s general distaste and exceedingly low expectations for Robert Martin come through clearly in the vocabulary of the passage. Emma is “surprized” that the style, grammar, and “composition” of the letter are of a gentlemanly quality; she admires the “strong and unaffected” language and the writer’s “delicacy of feeling.” And yet, despite the letter’s admirable qualities, and knowing, from Harriet, that the letter was composed by Robert Martin, Emma refuses to believe that he could have managed “so good a letter” on his own: “every thing considered, I think one of his sisters must have helped him. I can hardly imagine the young man whom I saw talking with you the other day could express himself so well, if left quite to his own powers” (Austen, *Emma* 89). Emma’s ungenerous evaluation of Robert Martin reveals far more about the character of the rentier heroine than it does about that of the tenant farmer. Emma’s assuredness of Robert Martin’s inabilities shows Emma to be both biased and rude. Significantly, Emma has never spoken to or engaged with Robert Martin directly; her entire opinion is based on his physical appearance and her knowledge of his occupation. In fact, Emma admits to Harriet, only a few pages earlier, that, despite encountering him several times, she has ignored Robert Martin because he is of little consequence to her:

That may be, and I may have seen him fifty times, but without having any idea of his name. A young farmer, whether on horseback or on foot, is the very last sort of person to raise my curiosity. The yeomanry are precisely the order of people with whom I feel I can have nothing to do (Austen, *Emma* 73-74).

Emma’s response to Harriet here makes it clear that the narrated passage above is focalized through the heroine, as it possesses the same disinterested and disillusioned tone. The snark of

the phrases “I may have seen him fifty times, but without having any idea of his name” and “the very last sort of person to raise my curiosity” are characteristic of Emma’s selfishness and her desire to maintain strict boundaries between social classes.

However, it is Emma’s specific selection of the word “yeomanry” that most acutely signifies her antiquated understanding of England’s rank and class, as well as her misconception of Robert Martin. Before the laws of enclosure and the consequent expansion of great English estates, yeomen made money by owning and working a small plot of land. However, the growth of capitalism and privatization that was ushered in by the nineteenth century made it more profitable and more common to take up work as a tenant farmer. While tenant farmers did not own land, they exchanged their labour for leased residencies and often worked collaboratively with the landowner to integrate new, more efficient farming practices. While the differences between these two occupations may appear slight, misunderstanding them represents an ideological misreading on Emma’s part. Robert Martin is clearly described and portrayed as a tenant farmer: Abbey-Mill farm is very much a part of the Donwell Abbey estate, and the working relationship between Robert Martin and Knightley—who are *both* referred to as high farmers—is often playing out on the wings of the narrative action. Emma’s mistake in classifying Robert Martin as a yeoman, rather than a tenant farmer, would have been recognizable to contemporary readers of Austen as a marker of her ignorance. The term signifies an outdated and obtuse understanding of the shifting social composition of market towns like Highbury.

In no singular example does Emma’s rigid worldview collide with the contemporary social landscape more strongly than in the following character portrait of the Coles. While the Coles are relatively inconsequential to the novel’s narrative, their place as a symbol of change and representation of a new, burgeoning social class is significant. The excerpt pairs specific language with the subtle use of punctuation and syntax to highlight the minute but palpable perceived social differences between Highbury’s established, old world elite and rising, cosmopolitan nouveau riche:

This was the occurrence:—The Coles had been settled some years in Highbury, and were very good sort of people—friendly, liberal, and unpretending; but, on the other hand, they were of low origin, in trade, and only moderately genteel. On their first coming into the country, they had lived in proportion to their income, quietly, keeping little company, and that little unexpensively; but the last year or two had brought them a considerable increase of means—the house in town had yielded greater profits, and fortune in general had smiled on them. With their wealth, their views increased; their want of a larger house, their inclination for more company. They added to their house, to their number of servants, to their expenses of every sort; and by this time were, in fortune and style of living, second only to the family at Hartfield. Their love of society, and their new dining-room, prepared every body for their keeping dinner-company; and a few parties, chiefly among the single men, had already taken place. The regular and best families Emma could hardly suppose they would presume to invite—neither Donwell, nor Hartfield, nor Randalls. Nothing should tempt *her* to go, if they did; and she regretted that her father's known habits would be giving her refusal less meaning than she could wish. The Coles were very respectable in their way, but they ought to be taught that it was not for them to arrange the terms on which the superior families would visit them. This lesson, she very much feared, they would receive only from herself; she had little hope of Mr. Knightley, none of Mr. Weston (203-204).

As Downie argues, through the use of free indirect discourse, this passage captures Emma's view on social class, wealth, and high society—not Austen's (73). The Coles are described as being settled “some years” in Highbury, which immediately contrasts with the substantial, storied histories of the town's other inhabitants. While the Coles are a “good sort of people,” their residence in Highbury marks a schism in the social composition of the town; their kindness and neighbourliness are juxtaposed against their occupation and origins: “friendly, liberal, and unpretending; but, on the other hand, they were of low origin, in trade, and only moderately genteel.” This is not the first time we have observed this type of character judgement from Emma: her earlier assessment of Robert Martin followed a similar trajectory. In fact, the term “genteel” is only used twice in the entire novel: once to characterize the Coles and once to characterize Robert Martin. The implied disparity between the slight linguistic differentiation of being a gentleman and being genteel emphasizes, again, how delicate the demarcations are between particular social classes. “Genteel” is chiefly defined as “[b]elonging to or included among the gentry; of a rank above the commonalty” (“genteel, adj.” n.p.). By this definition, the

text's use of the words "gentleman" and "genteel" seemingly articulate the same thing: that the persons being described and spoken about occupy the upper social echelons. However, the subsequent definitions of "genteel" demonstrate that this designation can refer not only to the actual rank or class of a person but also to the qualities they possess, for example, their dress, dwelling, employment, education, income, and "manners or style of living" (n.p.). Within the context of the novel, it is clear that the narrative, filtered through the perspective of Emma, wants to highlight this subtle difference and to make much of the differentiation between the gentlemanly class and a gentlemanly person.

Returning again to social theory, Bourdieu defines social power and social hierarchy as the possession of various forms of capital that govern social space: "The social world can be conceived as a multi-dimensional space that can be constructed empirically by discovering the main factors of differentiation which account for the difference observed in a given social universe" ("What Makes a Social Class?" 3-4). The Coles are an excellent example of how these factors function in a fictional world and how complex power negotiations are based on the relative endowment of economic, cultural, and social capital. The narrative explains that the Coles have garnered considerable economic capital over their recent tenure at Highbury and that their "increase of means" allowed them to establish a residence "second only to the family at Hartfield." However, despite this indisputable increase in economic power, their position in the social network of Highbury remains insecure. The free indirect discourse makes it clear; Emma is certain that "[N]othing should tempt *her* to" attend a party hosted by the Coles. The use of italics here emphasizes Emma's point of view and her perception of the Highbury social hierarchy. As Taylor asserts, "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows" dictates the reality of a specific social landscape (*Modern Social Imaginaries* 23). So, while the Coles may have the dining-room suitable for elegant and elitist dinner company, they do not have the social pedigree, according to Emma, that is necessary to socialize with the most prominent village families: the Knightleys, the Woodhouses, and the Westons.

Significantly, these families are identified in the passage, not by their surnames, but by the name of their estates. This underscores the biggest difference between the Coles and the other residents in Highbury: the longevity and legacy of their estate. Because the Coles established their financial success through the “low origin” of trade, it does not matter that they have now amassed enough economic capital to settle them as one of the wealthiest families in the village. The Coles are unable to attain the social and cultural capital necessary to maintain their prestige. While Emma admits that the Coles are “very respectable in their way,” they are not respectable on the terms of the “superior families” she is presuming the Coles would invite to visit them. Consider, once again, Emma’s assessment of Mr. Elton: when he is the potential husband of Harriet Smith, Emma regards Mr. Elton as “a good-humoured, well-meaning, respectable young man;” when he is the potential partner of Emma, Mr. Elton is no longer regarded as a serious prospect (Austen, *Emma* 78). The relativism of social standing in *Emma*—of the Coles, Robert Martin, Mr. Elton—is a defining feature of the novel’s narrative action, character arcs, and humour. It is clear through the language and perspective of the novel that Austen paid keen attention to the intricacies and inconsistencies of the Regency era’s evolving social space. In particular, through free indirect discourse, Emma, whose voice is often ventriloquized through the third-person narrative discourse, is imagined as a naive, ignorant foil to the adjusted, cognizant narrator and, eventually, the reader. As the final sentence of this excerpt demonstrates, Emma is so confident in her understanding of Highbury’s social landscape that she takes it upon herself to “educate” the Coles by teaching them “[t]his lesson.” Ironically, while Emma prides herself in being the only one willing to impart this wisdom, her message is folly—false, outdated, degenerative, and encumbered by social bias.

Emma’s opinions do progress and by the novel’s close we can see that she is endeavouring to have a more accepting, more adapting, and more modern outlook on her social world and residents of Highbury. Her folly is first confronted when Knightley reprimands her for her unkind and unpleasant treatment of Miss Bates. In their conversation, Knightley acknowledges that Miss Bates has “sunk from the comforts she was born to” and his lecture

strikes Emma at her heart (326). The chapter closes with this passage of free indirect discourse detailing Emma's emotional response to Knightley's moral appeal:

Never had she felt so agitated, mortified, grieved, at any circumstance in her life. She was most forcibly struck. The truth of this representation there was no denying. She felt it at her heart. How could she have been so brutal, so cruel to Miss Bates! How could she have exposed herself to such ill opinion in any one she valued! And how suffer him to leave her without saying one word of gratitude, of concurrence, of common kindness! (Austen, *Emma* 326).

Emma's disappointment in herself is palpable: she is "vexed," "agitated," "mortified," and "grieved." While the majority of the novel details Emma trapped in her mind, entertaining fantastic flights of fancy, here the reader witnesses Emma's feeling. She acknowledges the truth of Knightley's representation of her and feels ashamed by her "brutal," "cruel" behaviour. The dramatic language of the passage not only evidences its free indirect style but also underscores Emma's own shock at her exposed prejudice and pridefulness.

Only a few chapters later, after learning of the match between Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax, Emma is brought a second revelation. In this passage, she recognizes her "insufferable vanity" and "unpardonable arrogance," but is still unable to overcome them (354). While Emma does learn and regret her treatment of Miss Bates, she continues to cling to the rigid social consciousness of the past. Emma is caught up in the improbability of Knightley and Harriet's attachment *because* of their unequal social status. She describes the match as a "debasement" of Knightley's social position and imagines him being the subject of sneers and snide remarks (354). Of course, this passage is tinted by Emma's feelings for Knightley and her desire to be the object of his affection; she does not want to entertain the idea of him being attached to her friend instead of herself. It is possible that these emotions are what encourage her to so resent Knightley and Harriet's potential relationship. However, knowing what we do of Emma's character and her ingrained biases, it is just as probable that what Austen is doing in this passage is further exposing Emma's antiquated social ideals. Emma, like much of the Romantic public, is not immediately and eternally convinced of the new social order. As the previously rigid and

antagonistic vertical structure was to be replaced with more egalitarian principles and fluid social groups, this shift was met with resistance and trepidation as individuals whose positions were previously secure based on their title and rank sought to find their place in a renewed social economy. The transformation from a social stratum regulated by rank to a dynamic social environment governed by class is a process of fraught negotiation. What Emma's revelations and exchanges with Knightley symbolize are society entering into a difficult, and possibly contentious, dialogue.

Where we find Emma at the end of the novel is somewhere between the past and the present. On learning from Knightley that Harriet has been married to Robert Martin, Emma takes a moment alone to reflect on her thankfulness and to laugh at the settled state she finds herself in:

Serious she was, very serious in her thankfulness, and in her resolutions; and yet there was no preventing a laugh, sometimes in the very midst of them. She must laugh at such a close! Such an end of the doleful disappointment of five weeks back! Such a heart—such a Harriet! Now there would be pleasure in her returning—Every thing would be a pleasure. It would be a great pleasure to know Robert Martin (399).

The passage is punctuated by exclamation points, which strongly indicates that the passage is blending the narration with Emma's voice. The most pivotal line in this excerpt comes with the final sentence. Ironically, here the repetition of the word "pleasure" has the opposite effect of assuring Emma's feelings of satisfaction and joy. Instead, the passage reads as if Emma is trying to persuade herself that the residents of Highbury ended up in matrimonial perfection, despite not all the matches being up to her original liking or intention. Further, the passage indicates that Emma is still trying to convince herself that Robert Martin—a tenant farmer—would be a pleasing addition to her social circle. However, while Emma may still be stuck in the stagnant rank-based order and may still possess a desire to cleave to social constructions of the past, her marriage to Knightley, a modern gentleman with mature economic and social sensibilities, is a beacon of what can happen when society moves towards the future.

As Danielle Spratt argues, Austen's imperfect and ungenerous heroine underscores "the increasing extent to which the gentry and landed aristocracy could not address individually the effects of a transitional economy" (194). Emma's general discomfort with the economic and social developments of the new nineteenth century is demonstrated in her misunderstanding of evolving social norms, like her miscategorization of Robert Martin as a yeoman instead of a tenant farmer, and her tendency to cling to traditions of the past, like her expressed aversion to dining with the Coles. What Emma's character highlights is that abandoning rigid rank strictures for more fluid class categories requires negotiating entrenched power systems that are fraught with tension and competition, and are resistant to new-world values, politics, and ideals. As Simmel asserts, individuals are both within and in contradiction to society and lead "a double, or if one will, a half existence" (qtd. in Thompson 65). Significantly, Austen communicates these dramatic moments of tension and monumental shifts in social structure through her use of minute "cognitive linguistic features:" free indirect discourse (Gunn 39). Austen's strategic, judicious employment of expressive punctuation and idiomatic language creates a myriad of distinct, embodied voices that, together, facilitate a narrative cacophony. In particular, Emma is constructed as the "narrative equivalent of speaker" in the way the novel is focalized through her perspective (39). Juxtaposing Emma with the narrator facilitates the novel's dramatic irony, didacticism, and humour, and expresses the dialogic quality of modern social space.

At its core, *Emma* is a social history of the making and remaking of landed families (Grossman 158). By capturing the historical moment of 1815, *Emma* elucidates the economic, political, and social impacts of the Industrial Revolution that compelled the gentry classes to move towards the modern era. Published only two years before Austen's death, *Emma* stands out as the novelistic marker of Austen realizing her distinct narrative mode. The novel unites the voice of the heroine, the voice of the public, and the voice of the narrator in a layered trifecta that showcases Austen's authorial maturity and replicates the shifting social spaces of the era. Up until this point, Austen's style and subject fluctuated: sometimes succeeding immensely, sometimes falling flat or feeling forced. In terms of capturing the essence of free indirect

discourse, *Emma* is a nearly perfect model—particularly in the ways that the novel embraces the intimacy, ambiguity, and dichotomy of the dual voice. It is with her final completed text, *Persuasion*, that Austen leaps past classic linguistic definitions of the narrative mode to create a polyvocal, redefined, reenergized, and truly modern style.

Chapter 6: Voice

Persuasion represents the best of Austen's canon—both in terms of its seamless and effective use of free indirect discourse and its commentary on Britain's changing social structure. Austen scholars and enthusiasts have long remarked that *Persuasion* is doing something different from the other novels; while most Austen texts are more-or-less predictable in nature, *Persuasion* attempts something new, or at least renewed, in style and approach. Some say the difference can be observed in the novel's style, others say it is in the novel's character development, and still more claim it to be in the novel's modernity. However, what few critics have noted, and what I will demonstrate in this chapter, is that *Persuasion* is set apart by its introduction of a new class and social landscape and Austen's mastery of the narrative techniques to convey it. *Persuasion* exists in a liminal social space between two defined social ages of Britain's history. The novel emphasizes the emergence of modern capitalism—the final frontier in Britain's shift from a rank-based to a class-based society. This shift is represented in Austen's cast of characters; those with new money (the naval officers, Captain Wentworth and Admiral Croft, as well as Mrs. Croft) emerge as the heroes; by contrast, the stodgy Sir Walter Elliot represents the tried, fading, rank-based past. It is also seen in the movement from collective consciousness to individual identity. While previously norms were inherited, static factors of social life, the turn of the century ushered in new classes of people with conflicting values. The politics of equal recognition requires negotiation between unlike peoples in order to establish identity and social order—a mediation that Austen elegantly reflects in the narrative qualities of her fiction.

A central quality of Austen's unique approach to narrative stylistic and free indirect discourse is its inherently dialogic character. Written in 1815-1816 and published in December 1817, *Persuasion* is both Austen's final finished text and her most mature narrative endeavour.⁵⁰ The novel keenly exhibits how Austen's most developed, most refined, and most impactful use of free indirect discourse is determinately polyvocal—including and integrating multiple, often

⁵⁰ The published title page was given the year 1818.

competing voices under the umbrella of a singular, third-person narrative style. While Butler and Julia Prewitt Brown argue that *Persuasion*'s narration is exclusively aligned with the text's heroine, Anne Eliot, I will show in this chapter that the novel effectively and precisely captures the voices of many of the characters, solo and in chorus. While much of the novel's first half does face inward to the intimate, internal dialogue of its female protagonist, the second half of the novel is brimming with a cacophony of intertwined voices that create a truly polyvocal narrative landscape. In Austen's world and in the world of Austen, there is not a "single settled society" but rather "an active complicated sharply speculative process" (R. Williams 21). Through her use of free indirect discourse in this last novel, Austen depicts characters in conflict and conversation. In so doing, *Persuasion* captures the dynamism and multiplicity of modern British social hierarchy at a time of immense cultural, political, and economic change—making this novel at once a brilliant creation and pointed critique of social history.

Published posthumously in 1817 as a four-volume collection with *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion* has long stood apart to literary critics and enthusiastic commentators as a different type of Austen novel (Lynch, "Introduction" vii). After the quick, successive releases of four novels in a brief six-year period, all with similarly constructed plots (stories of sensibility that follow the journey of a female heroine to find a suitable husband) Austen's contemporary readers likely "believed that they knew just what characters, style, and story line" to expect from *Persuasion* before even cracking it open (vii). And yet, while it may have been immediately apparent to avid readers and critics of Austen that *Persuasion* was different, isolating the nature of that difference has proved a more elusive and challenging task. One of Austen's very first reviewers, Bishop Richard Whateley, in the 1821 *Quarterly Review*, deemed *Persuasion* to be exemplary of a new style of novel and among the best of Austen's canon given her authorial maturity (Lambin and Lambin 160-161). Whateley likens Austen's writing to a Flemish painting and praises her ability to portray "accurate and unexaggerated delineations of events and character" (Whateley 353). He draws comparisons between Austen's style and Edgeworth's, as well as underscoring the similarities in character development she shares with Shakespeare (358,

362). However, because the majority of the review speaks in general terms about Austen's last two published novels, and indeed her entire body of work, few passages can be excised as specifically commenting on *Persuasion*'s uniqueness and position in Austen's canon.⁵¹ In particular, Whateley argues that *Persuasion* possesses a "superiority" that surpasses all Austen's other publications: it is "tender," "elevated," and "elegant" (368). He excerpts and publishes large portions of the novel, the longest taking up nearly three pages of his twenty-five-page review, evidencing his appreciation for the style and substance of the novel. His explication of the novel leans more towards summary and sermon than it does towards sound literary criticism. The lengthy passages showcased by Whateley also contain a multitude of Austen's stylistic virtues.

Persuasion has also been lauded by more modern critics as a turning point in novelistic and authorial modernity. In 1937, exactly 110 years after the publication of *Persuasion*, Woolf expressed her admiration of the novel's "exceptional innovation and experiment" and noted that "Austen heads somewhere new" (Lynch, "Introduction" vii). Perhaps Woolf saw a kinship between Austen's final work and that of herself and other modernist writers. Certainly, F.R. Leavis observed the similarities: he deemed *Persuasion* to be the author's "most 'modern' work" and subsequently placed Austen at the beginning of the modern novel tradition (qtd. in Brown 128). Not only is *Persuasion* praised for its modern style and form, but also for its renewed depiction of Austen's historical moment. For example, in her dedicated study of the novel, Jocelyn Harris argues that the entire construction of *Persuasion*—its political, historical, satirical, intertextual, and sexualized frameworks—subvert the image of Austen as the maiden aunt whose stories of love and marriage espouse deeply Christian conservative values (12).

However, while I agree with Harris that the novel challenges expectations of Austen in all of these various ways, I also submit that these broad categories and sweeping generalizations fail to pinpoint how it operates differently on a narrative level. Of all the scholarly and literary critiques addressing *Persuasion*'s distinctness, the perspective that resonates most with my

⁵¹ This review was, of course, published more than three years after Austen's death. Incidentally, this collection was also the first to bear Austen's name rather than her anonymous caption "By A Lady".

interpretation and understanding of Austen's final finished work is that of Bree in her introduction to the Broadview edition of the novel. Bree suggests that *Persuasion's* departure from previous Austen texts is deeply felt in the novel's treatment of class and the social landscape of Regency Britain: "[f]or the first time Austen, whose novels were notable for celebrating the vigorous renewal of the country gentry and their landed estates [...] turned in *Persuasion* to a different, newer, less certain structure of values" (8). Further to this point, Alistair Duckworth argues that *Persuasion* abandons the gentry estate and, with it, the "center of traditional order" (*The Improvement of the Estate* 187). By dissociating the heroine from her estate, *Persuasion* is making "the most significant" departure "from the norms of Jane Austen's previous fiction" (203-204). This chapter draws on Bree's and Duckworth's assessments of *Persuasion's* newness, partnered with social and historical theory, to investigate how Austen uses the dialogic character of free indirect discourse to create a new narrative space that accommodates dissonance and reimagines a modern social order.

One of the other ways that *Persuasion* challenges the formula of Austen's previous publications is its commitment to extended metaphor, in particular to the affect and effect of time. Time frames both the narrative within the novel and the historical moment in which the novel exists. As Bree argues, *Persuasion* constantly marks the physical passing of time through its attention to numbers, clocks, and years (Bree 11). The novel opens on the scene of Sir Walter Elliot reading his familial entry in the *Baronetage*: a historical list of England's baronets that catalogues each entry in chronological order (Austen, *Persuasion* 45-46). In fact, Sir Walter's entry is reproduced for the reader and in a brief paragraph that contains no less than seven dates marking various births, a marriage, and a death. In addition, the entire premise of the heroine's story is based on the eight years that have passed between Wentworth's original proposal, which Anne refused, and his return to Somersetshire after the war. Even Anne's physical body stands in as a marker for passing time: "[a] few years before, Anne Elliot had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early" (48). In these ways, and in many others, *Persuasion* accounts for the many effects of time from alienation and memorialization to reification and renewal.

However, while Harris contends that *Persuasion* is more precisely grounded “in actual space, time, societies, and even meteorology” than Austen’s other texts, I argue that *Persuasion* is less interested in its finite moment and more interested in ushering in a new age (18). Unlike Austen’s earlier novels, *Persuasion* boldly introduces a revolutionary social order. Following the Napoleonic wars, Britons found themselves on the cusp of a new world order and were “invited to see themselves as time-travellers who had crossed a threshold and passed into a new historical era” (Lynch, “Introduction” ix-x). The conflict ruptured Britain’s previous social organization, thereby making way for a cultural restructuring. Following along with Q.D. Leavis’ presumption that Austen was in the “habit of constructing her novels on the current calendar,” I argue that *Persuasion* exists narratively within this timeline and critically alongside it—allowing for the imagining of a renegotiated social future (qtd. in Southam, “Mrs. Leavis and Miss Austen” 25). As Adele Kudish puts it, *Persuasion* is an “in-betweenness” (120). As much as “Catharine” bridged the gap between Austen’s youthful, satirical stories to her later, more subtle published works and “Lady Susan” connected Austen’s epistolary beginnings with her later third-person novels, *Persuasion* hints at another Austenian transformation in the movement from classic, sentimental fiction to a diverse, polyvocal narrative style. *Persuasion* does not follow the plot structure of the earlier novels where a young woman must find her match in order to preserve her life and livelihood; instead, it is a tale about rediscovery and individual identity in a newly demarcated and emerging social space.

As Brown argues, a “sense of individuality gathers intensity” over the course of *Persuasion* and the various conflicting identities allow readers to contemplate the novel’s creation of a realistic social structure in a systematic way (142). In this way, the novel imagines the changing reality of Austen and the contemporary public. Where *Emma* was written in a period of economic boom, *Persuasion* was written in an economic lull, or bust, both of which significantly impact the given novels’ context. With the effects of the war and the creation of industry, the persistence of agricultural hamlets began to give way to a more diverse, globalized, capital-driven way of life. This lifestyle change, in turn, introduced entirely new subsections of

the population to the British social schema and therefore introduced a society with new ideals, values, and an understanding of merit. As Lionel Trilling suggests, the novel form perpetually quests for reality (17). In *Persuasion*, I argue that this means imagining a post-war Britain where class contrast, and sometimes class conflict, are fully developed. While formerly birthright had dictated identity and economic potential, a new world of mobility made it possible for individuals to forge their own path in society—including dictating their own values. What was once a society based on inheritance was becoming a society based on merit. As Bree suggests, in *Persuasion* “Austen sets up a vivid conflict of values” that diametrically opposes the old moneyed, conservatively minded gentry characters against representations of the new capitalist world (15).

Certainly, the most obvious juxtaposition of characters comes in the comparison of Sir Walter Elliot and Admiral Croft, who, despite their significant differences in class and social values, are connected through the ownership and lease of the stately Kellynch Hall. Sir Walter is a snobbish man with deeply entrenched social biases. His conception of rank and class follows a rigid, hierarchical structure in which position is dictated by inheritance, titles, and birthrights. For Sir Walter, “a man having a profession would place him on an inferior social level to a landed gentleman” and therefore in the social landscape of *Persuasion* Sir Walter sees himself on top (Austen, *Persuasion* 17). However, the replacement of the Elliots with the Crofts as the inhabitants of Kellynch Hall speaks to a palpable change in the social landscape of Regency Britain; it stands as a powerful symbol of a shift in power and a democratization of resources. As both Nina Auerbach and Mary Poovey have highlighted, *Persuasion* attempts “to reform the landed gentry” and show that money—and the power that accompanies it—are passing from a class that inherited it to “those who actively labor” (Poovey 234). While the novel opens with Sir Walter consulting the baronetage, it closes with Anne standing alongside Captain Wentworth, which mirrors the image of the Crofts drawn throughout the novel. This contrast underscores the changing tides of British society and evinces Austen’s keen awareness and understanding of this foundational shift.

I contend that introducing social philosophy helps to theorize and conceptualize the importance and impact of what Austen is articulating across her novel canon and, specifically, in *Persuasion*. As previously noted, the social rupture that took place in the eighteenth century coincides with Austen's historical moment. Taylor argues that two monumental changes in the modern world shifted antiquated forms of recognition and identity, the first of which was the collapse of social hierarchies (*Multiculturalism* 26). First, the eighteenth century introduced the notion "that human beings are endowed with a moral sense, an intuitive feeling for what is right and wrong" (28). Second, this idea then morphed into what both Taylor and Trilling call authenticity: being a moral individual—a "true and full human being"—requires aligning with our emotions (28). Where older societies placed God or some higher power at the centre of being, now humankind ascended as the central and guiding figure of identity. Both dignity and authenticity were results of the "decline of hierarchical society" (31). Where earlier cultures marked identity by one's predetermined, largely fixed social position, modern cultures rely on self-defined roles. That said, the individual alone still does not solely interpret and define their identity. Instead, a person's understanding of who they are—their identity—is "partly shaped by recognition" by others that they fit into a specific contemporary class, political group, or social category (25). In this way, our self-understanding is formed from both interior and exterior processes; from judging ourselves and judging others. Identity, "as a crucial feature of human life," is fundamentally dialogical (32). We understand ourselves through rich languages of expression, and we learn these modes of communication through interaction with others: "[w]e define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us" (32-33). This same dialogic feature can be observed in Austen's evolved use of free indirect discourse.

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, *Persuasion* represents the pinnacle of Austen's narrative prowess, particularly when it comes to her innovative, masterful use of free indirect discourse. As Miles puts it, point of view is an "artful illusion," and I argue that Austen's deft use of the free indirect style seamlessly weaves together multiple points of view under the

auspice of a singular narrator or character (*Jane Austen* 62). Notably, Austen intertwines multiple narrative voices so effortlessly that many scholars erroneously argue that *Persuasion* is solely focused through the perspective of the heroine. For example, Butler contrasts *Emma* and *Persuasion* by asserting that *Emma* incorporates the tones of several characters' conversations, whereas *Persuasion* presents Anne and "no one else" (277). Similarly, Brown argues that *Persuasion* marks the "first time Jane Austen gives over the narrator's authority to a character almost completely" (130). What Butler, Brown, and others fail to recognize is that Austen's narrative voice in *Persuasion*, despite being framed in with singular, third-person syntax, is almost always capturing the perspectives of two or more fictional entities—be they the heroine, the narrator, an additional character, or the ever-elusive voice of the public. As Lynch argues, Austen stays away from isolated characters and singular voices and opts instead for more open lines of communication and conversation (*Economy* 210). Lynch characterizes this myriad of voices as Austen's attention to noise in narrative. Instead of channeling only the "self-confirming language" of her heroine's "inner voice," Austen, particularly in *Persuasion*, relies on amplifying the background "murmurs of a crowd" (*Economy* 210-211). Kenneth Moler also cites Austen's attention to the collective public perspective or what he terms "group voices" (17). Drawing on the narrative theory of Bakhtin, Moler argues that Austen's narrative voice is often mingled with the represented "general opinion" or "public" perspective (16). Not only does this technique lend itself to Austen's "characteristic irony," but it also assists in presenting the reader with a fuller, more "fleshed-out" fictional world (17). While Austen's novels may lack, comparatively at least, deep descriptions of the physical world, her ability to ventriloquize a plethora of voices heightens and draws attention to the complexity of the social world.

Further, as Lynch asserts, Austen's attention to the persistent, infiltrating voice of the crowd indicates her conception and representation of social life:

Austen understands social life, as Trilling, her reader, does, in terms of noise. She often positions her heroines so that they are excluded from others' colloquies but unable to avoid overhearing information of unexpected interest to themselves. This measure makes readers conscious of the auditory contingencies that impinge on communications.

Persuasion particularly, a novel notable for its poignant depiction of impasses in communications, is also a novel of noise (*Economy* 239)

What Lynch, and previously Trilling, make clear in this passage is that *Persuasion* is not, as Butler and Brown suggest, a novel centred on a singular heroine. Instead, the essence of *Persuasion* is found in the gaps: between characters, between communications, and between points of view. Austen's narrative style highlights the modes and methods of communication that facilitate social networks and circuits of exchange. Her ability to merge perspectives and represent a multitude of voices exemplifies the "subtlety and economy of her art" (Moler 20). In committing to representing the collective noise and public voice, Austen highlights "the ubiquity of the social" (Lynch, *Economy* 212). And, in the end, this is the reason why it is so vital to acknowledge the different viewpoints in *Persuasion*: they fundamentally impact the way that the novel is read and interpreted. As Bree argues, because *Persuasion* is centred on changes of mind and heart, the reader being outside the consciousness of a single character enables the novel to reach "a satisfactory resolution" (29). I would add that the novel is also greatly concerned with changes in class and value, which also necessitate contrasting points of view. By showcasing old world and new world principles alongside each other—in proximity, in conversation, in negotiation—*Persuasion* emulates the changing British social landscape.

This attention to, and recreation of, the dialogic social landscape of Britain's contemporary moment is facilitated through Austen's use of free indirect discourse. As a method, free indirect discourse encourages the writer to put voices in conversation by allowing the narration to occupy both the psychological space of an individual character and the shared space of the ephemeral public and/or the omniscient, omnipresent narrator at the same time. This affordance is particularly important in the case of *Persuasion* because of the novel's position in a liminal historical moment—where a modern class consciousness was emerging, and values were shifting from determination by the collective to discernment by the individual. Just as the negotiation of values came to define this moment in history, so too does Austen's use of free indirect discourse in *Persuasion* put characters, values, and conceptions of the past and present in

conflict. While *Emma* demonstrates the growing maturity and complexity of Austen's free indirect style, it is *Persuasion* that presents the most seamless and effective examples of her style. In *Persuasion*, Austen pushes free indirect discourse to be determinately polyvocal, a feat not previously accomplished by her predecessors and an advancement that has come to define modern literature.

The voice of the crowd that Austen develops in *Emma* becomes a defining feature of Austen's final completed work. With that said, a large portion of the novel's narrative remains focalized through Anne. This positioning of the reader within the mind of the heroine is an approach we have seen Austen discover, hone, and reenergize throughout her authorial career. In *Persuasion*, Austen demonstrates the nuance and skill with which she can ventriloquize her heroine through the technique of third-person narration and the perspective of an outside narrator. Unlike the passage in *Emma* (Austen 84) that uses a clumsy identification tag to signal to readers that they are moving into the mind of the heroine, in the passage below Austen proves that skilled employment of a character's idiom is the only demarcation needed for dual-voiced passages. It is evident that the following excerpt is a mature example of free indirect discourse because the audience is not directly advised, through an identification tag, that they are in Anne's mind but rather the passage relies on idiomatic language and perspective to manifest the heroine's voice:

Soon, however, she began to reason with herself, and try to be feeling less. Eight years, almost eight years had passed, since all had been given up. How absurd to be resuming the agitation which such an interval had banished into distance and indistinctness! What might not eight years do? Events of every description, changes, alienations, removals--all, all must be comprised in it, and oblivion of the past--how natural, how certain too! It included nearly a third part of her own life (Austen, *Persuasion* 94).

The passage immediately captures Anne's internal reflection as she tries to "reason with herself" and stifle her feelings. The narration is inward-facing and intimate. Anne's perspective is ventriloquized in the repetition of the phrase "eight years," which occurs three times in this brief excerpt. This repetition gives the passage a cyclical quality as it continually returns to the single

phrase, as if the narration is tethered to this idea. Save for Wentworth, Anne is the only character in the novel who would so strongly feel the burden of eight years of separation. Therefore, it is clear that this passage is focalized through the mind of a central character. The reader can rule out Wentworth because of the use of female-specific pronouns at both the beginning and the end of the excerpt; while Anne is never explicitly named as the speaker, the descriptive comparison of the eight years being “nearly a third part of her own life” (my emphasis added) is distinctly and singularly reflective of Anne’s voice.

The use of emotionally charged language, such as “agitation,” “banished,” “absurd,” “oblivion,” ventriloquizes Anne’s unique perspective and response to the situation at hand. Further, the repetition of “how” phrases—“how absurd,” “how natural,” “how certain”—make it abundantly clear that she views Wentworth’s return to Somersetshire with particular shock and dismay. This is bolstered by the inclusion of hyperbolic punctuation, namely em dashes and exclamation points, which capture the inflection of the heroine’s ideations. The em dashes give the passage a stream-of-consciousness quality and help to manifest the hurried, disjointed nature of Anne’s thoughts when she is confronted by her past. The exclamation points underscore her heightened emotions. Finally, the use of casual statements, like “given up,” gives the passage a colloquial quality reflective of inner emotional dialogue.

It is a credit to Austen’s command of her style that we can imagine this entire excerpt as an internal dialogue rather than a series of narratorial observations. The dual employment of idiomatic language and punctuation work to create a psychological environment specific to Anne. Further, the passage’s continual return to the passage of time is important in terms of the novel’s central themes. As discussed earlier, *Persuasion* is particularly attentive to the passing of time, both within the space of the novel and as it aligns with Austen’s era. While the specificity of eight years may not carry the emotional significance obvious in the above excerpt, contemporary readers would have surely recognized the social, political, and cultural shifts that took place across Britain from shortly following the turn of the century to the end of the Napoleonic Wars. In this way, not only does Anne’s attentiveness to the passage of time work as

a form of character development and as a plot device but so too does it re-emphasize the changing social landscape of the time.

The narration continually draws on Anne's voice to provide the reader with the necessary background information to understand and empathize with the story because, as Lynch succinctly puts it, "*Persuasion* reads as a follow-up to the typical 'Austen novel'" ("Introduction" x-xi). This is exemplified in the following passage where Anne recalls her attachment to Wentworth many years earlier and grapples with the apparent changes in their present relationship:

They had no conversation together, no intercourse but what the commonest civility required. Once so much to each other! Now nothing! There had been a time, when of all the large party now filling the drawing-room at Uppercross, they would have found it most difficult to cease to speak to one another. With the exception, perhaps, of Admiral and Mrs Croft, who seemed particularly attached and happy, (Anne could allow no other exceptions even among the married couples), there could have been no two hearts so open, no tastes so similar, no feelings so in unison, no countenances so beloved. Now they were as strangers; nay, worse than strangers, for they could never become acquainted. It was a perpetual estrangement (Austen, *Persuasion* 97).

As with the above excerpt, this passage brims with idiomatic language and expression directly attached to the novel's heroine. To start, the language focuses on the apparent lack of something central to Anne's relationship with Wentworth: "no conversation," "no intercourse," "[n]ow nothing!" These statements are punctuated by exclamation points that work to communicate the heroine's exasperation and despair. The passage oscillates between reflections on the past and an understanding of the future. Anne reminisces that, while "there had been a time" when she and Wentworth were so suitably matched and wholly attached, "now" they are separated more deeply than if they were strangers. The passage's access to the sentiments of the past underscores its deep connection with the sensibility of the heroine. The final line demonstrates a dramatic acceleration in Anne's perception of her relationship with Wentworth. The varied punctuation—semi-colon, commas, and full stop—breaks the statement into three categorizations, each more disheartening than the last: "strangers," "worse than strangers," "perpetual estrangement."

However, while the passage does align with the memories and emotions of the heroine, it is certainly not void of external interjections, in this instance from the narrator. Significantly, the parenthetical aside, located in the middle of this excerpt “(Anne could allow no other exceptions even among the married couples)” is an Austenian anomaly and therefore demands our consideration. The statement’s ambiguous, or dualistic, point of view is particularly of interest. On one hand, this remark can be understood as Anne’s internal dialogue: an interruptive, meta-reflection on her internal thought process. On the other hand, the aside can be read as the narrator’s interjection. The parenthetical aside does interfere with the flow of free indirect discourse and the use of the character’s name seems quite bizarre set amidst a train of her own thoughts. Further, the statement demonstrates a bit of a tonal shift. While in general Anne’s idiom carries a mix of shock, indignation, and careful consideration, this aside is cheeky and undercutting. The use of the word “allow” intimates that Anne controls or oversees the residents of Uppercross by admitting her judgments of their happiness while eschewing opinions of her. Further, the phrase “no other exceptions even among married couples” (my emphasis) puts a double emphasis on Anne’s apparent inability to find even one other pair to categorize alongside the Crofts as “attached and happy.” There also is a specific undercutting of marriage as the sentences single out this category of couple. This humorous, witty, and altogether parodic remark should, and I argue, be attributed to the narrator who is at once aligning with Anne but also presenting a satirical judgement of the novel’s other characters.

This passage is not the only one that introduces a competing voice in a single statement. In fact, while the above passage clearly illustrates focalization through a singular character, *Persuasion* often also demonstrates the intermingling of multiple voices. Perhaps not coincidentally, many of the passages that appear to be channeled through a solitary voice occur in the first part of the novel and it is in the second half of the story that we encounter more polyvocal passages. I argue that, by this progression, Austen constructs a particular reading experience. Because the narration is so tightly intertwined with the psychology of the heroine in the novel’s first half, the reader forms a particular bond with the character and adjusts to the

heroine's idiom and expressions. Once fully embedded in this perspective, Austen introduces the voices of other characters as a way to force the consideration of alternative points of view. This layering of voices creates conflict and underscores what Taylor argues is the fundamentally dialogic character of human life (*Multiculturalism* 32-33).

Through its effective use of free indirect discourse, *Persuasion* epitomizes the pinnacle of Austen's layered voices. In fact, as Flavin argues, there are several instances where Austen successfully integrates four voices in a single statement (139). Flavin makes this assertion somewhat offhandedly in an article primarily investigating *Mansfield Park*. Her remark, while definitive in nature, lacks any textual evidence: she provides neither a quotation nor directive footnote to demonstrate where such a polyvocal passage occurs. Believing that Flavin was likely correct but desiring to show exactly where and how Austen was able to achieve this nuanced narration prompted my own investigation into the claim. By turning my attention to the layering of voices and the almost imperceptible oscillation between points of view, I found clear evidence and can confidently argue that *Persuasion* consistently presents the reader with a cacophony of voices. Take, for example, the following passage that describes the infamous scene of Louisa Musgrove's fall in Lyme:

Anne found Captain Benwick again drawing near her. Lord Byron's "dark blue seas" could not fail of being brought forward by their present view, and she gladly gave him all her attention as long as attention was possible. It was soon drawn, perforce another way. There was too much wind to make the high part of the new Cobb pleasant for the ladies, and they agreed to get down the steps to the lower, and all were contented to pass quietly and carefully down the steep flight, excepting Louisa; she must be jumped down them by Captain Wentworth. In all their walks, he had had to jump her from the stiles; the sensation was delightful to her. The hardness of the pavement for her feet, made him less willing upon the present occasion; he did it, however. She was safely down, and instantly, to show her enjoyment, ran up the steps to be jumped down again. He advised her against it, thought the jar too great; but no, he reasoned and talked in vain, she smiled and said, "I am determined I will:" he put out his hands; she was too precipitate by half a second, she fell on the pavement on the Lower Cobb, and was taken up lifeless! There was no wound, no blood, no visible bruise; but her eyes were closed, she breathed not, her face was like death. The horror of the moment to all who stood around! (Austen, *Persuasion* 137-138).

In this passage, the perspectives of Louisa, Wentworth, Anne, and the communal voice of their company can be dissected and identified. The passage begins in the mind of Anne as she rephrases and reacts to her conversation with Captain Benwick. We can be certain we are in the mind of Anne as she admits, only internally, to being distracted: giving attention as “long as attention was possible.” At this point, the passage shifts into the voice of the group and their mutual decision that the high part of the Cobb is too windy for a pleasant stroll. The use of the phrases “they agreed” and “all were contented” signal to the reader that the narrative has moved beyond Anne’s internal thoughts and is now in the minds of the whole company. It is the subtlety of this shift in voice that makes Austen’s mastery of free indirect discourse so admirable.

Following the first semicolon, the narrative voice retreats again, moving from the sociological to the psychological perspective. This time, readers are placed in the mind of Louisa, who has determined that she must be jumped down the flight of stairs by Wentworth: “she must be jumped down them by Captain Wentworth. In all their walks, he had had to jump her from the stiles; the sensation was delightful to her.” The recollection of circumstances, namely, jumping the stiles, is described as bringing a “sensation of delight”—an emotion that is ripe with nostalgia and feelings known only to herself. Wentworth’s thoughts, emotions, and perspective occupy the middle portion of this excerpt, as is marked in the specific choice of language: “hardness,” “willing,” “safely,” “advised,” “reasoned.” Wentworth is a measured man, and the passage repeatedly returns to concerns of the feasibility and safety of Louisa’s stunt—sentiments much more likely to be described as the concerns of a practical, military veteran than a young, fanciful woman. Despite his sage instruction, Louisa, of course, attempts a second jump from the Cobb and injures herself.

The final few phrases return to the communal voice and the company’s horror at Louisa’s fall. The disjointed, haphazard fragments of the end of the excerpt capture the hurried, panicked emotions of the scene. This can be observed in the truncated phrases, separated by punctuation marks of various sorts, following Louisa’s declaration of certainty: “he put out his hands; she was too precipitate by half a second, she fell on the pavement on the Lower Cobb, and was taken

up lifeless!” While none of these phrases alone wholly depicts the action of the scene, they work together to capture the events and their attached emotions. It is as if each individual person in the party has witnessed a different moment and that their collective observations retell the scene. Further, the exclamation point that closes this passage reemphasizes the height of the trauma from the point of view of the crowd. It is significant that this passage of text ends here—in the sociological, polyvocal point of view—because immediately following this narrated excerpt the novel shifts into exasperated dialogue: Mary screaming, Wentworth calling for assistance, Anne issuing hurried instructions to the company. The same cacophony of voices brought to life through Austen’s free indirect discourse are continued in the direct dialogue. While readers may mark this shift in technique, narration to dialogue, as the place in the text where individual perspectives are introduced, it is clear through the above analysis that the reader is moving between the minds of various characters far ahead of this narrative shift.

This scene has a particularly cinematic quality given its movement through people and perspectives. In the past, Austen’s mode of writing has been compared to film; in fact, scholar Peter W. Graham draws a direct comparison between Austen and filmmaker Robert Altman. Graham claims that both Austen and Altman invent and reflect the social space of the English country house, whether in novelistic or cinematic form (211). Further to that, I would argue that Austen’s unique narrative style creates a cinematic experience in its ability to change seamlessly between points of view. In a similar way, free indirect discourse morphs among the voices of different characters or groups of characters to demonstrate differing social understandings so too does the changing perspective of the camera highlight different actors’ conceptions of the same situation. As Austen enacts narrative changes, one can imagine a camera lens zooming in and out of focus on specific characters while still capturing the collective drama of the scene. The viewer—or reader—does not stand away from the action in a purely observational position but rather sometimes has their understanding and perception of the scene filtered through the various, fallible, and sometimes incompatible points of view. The oscillation among moments of characteristic interiority and moments of observational exteriority set this passage apart as a

prime example of how Austen uses narrative techniques to create voices and converge viewpoints. The entire action, in real-time, would have consumed only mere moments: the characters' reflection on their previous walks, Louisa's decision to jump a second time, her accident, and the company's reaction.

But Austen takes the care to demonstrate how all of the individual characters—their thoughts, emotions, distractions, and values—are in conversation and conflict. This brings us back to Taylor and the “new understanding of individual identity that emerge[d] at the end of the eighteenth century” (*Multiculturalism* 28). As society turned to embrace the individualized, intuitive sense of right and wrong, the now-popular cliché of the “inner voice” emerged. What Taylor identifies as one's moral sense is what Rousseau described as following a voice within ourselves (30). These impulses are internal and depend on the individual (31). In this passage, Austen constructs the idea of multiple voices both grammatically and metaphorically. Grammatically, Austen dictates her narrative in the specific idioms of each character and juxtaposes their individual uses of language against one another. Metaphorically, Austen moves among the perspectives of characters by shifting tone, expression, and closeness of view. Significantly, this is achieved while remaining firmly in the third-person narrative style but by employing elements of free indirect discourse that allow for movement betwixt and between psychological and sociological perspectives. In this brief passage—less than 250 words—Austen changes the point of view five times. While this shift is certainly discernible and measurable by readers who are trained to look for these types of subtle narrative shifts or by readers returning to the novel for a second or third time, it remains almost undetectable by first-time readers. This seamless transition evidences the skill with which Austen negotiates between perspectives and sets her apart as a pioneer and perfectionist of the free indirect style.

The following is another passage that demonstrates Austen's ability to negotiate multiple points of view through a singular narrative perspective. It appears shortly after the incident on the Cobb where, following her transportation to the Harvilles' residence, Wentworth, Charles Musgrove, and Henrietta Musgrove discuss Louisa's care with what is described as an

“interchange of perplexity and terror.” Wentworth eventually decides that the party must split, with some staying behind to care for Louisa and others returning to Uppercross to deliver the news. This excerpt begins following a brief exchange in dialogue and is immediately focalized through Charles’ psyche:

Charles agreed, but declared his resolution of not going away. He would be as little incumbrance as possible to Captain and Mrs Harville; but as to leaving his sister in such a state, he neither ought, nor would. So far it was decided; and Henrietta at first declared the same. She, however, was soon persuaded to think differently. The usefulness of her staying! She who had not been able to remain in Louisa’s room, or to look at her, without sufferings which made her worse than helpless! She was forced to acknowledge that she could do no good, yet was still unwilling to be away, till, touched by the thought of her father and mother, she gave it up; she consented, she was anxious to be at home (Austen, *Persuasion* 141).

The emphatic language introduced at the beginning of this passage reflects Charles’ point of view and state of mind. He does not merely suggest his staying behind to care for Louisa but rather “declare[s] his resolution;” his confidence that he would be a little burden and his insistence that he neither should nor would leave “his sister in such a state” seen indicative of his idiom. However, at the phrase “[s]o far it was decided” there is a palpable shift in point of view from that of Charles to Henrietta. The decisiveness of the prior half of the passage gives way to the language of persuasion; the clear, precise punctuation is replaced with continuous commas and multiple exclamation points. In comparison to Charles who “declared” and “decided” his course of action, Henrietta is “persuaded” and “forced.” This gentler, more malleable spirit rings true to Henrietta’s character. Further, while Charles’ response is clearly dictated by logic, Henrietta seems more driven by emotion: her recalling her inability to attend to Louisa efficiently because she could not look at her “without sufferings which made her worse than helpless!” The final sentence of the excerpt captures the stream of consciousness that Austen so often uses in her passages of free indirect discourse. Measuring at over forty words in length, this final line contains four commas and a semicolon, which work to create a hurried, unfinished train of thoughts. The sentence begins with Henrietta’s realization that she would be useless to her

sister if she stayed; however, she still feels strongly compelled to stay, “yet was still unwilling to be away.” Her opinion then shifts, signalled by the word “till,” when she remembers her mother and father, and how awful the news will be for them. It is significant that the text uses the word “thought” because it is closely attached to the individual psyche and interior feelings. The final three phrases mirror each other in their structure by all beginning with “she” followed by action. They trace Henrietta’s movement from begrudgingly deciding to return home with Wentworth to her deeply desiring to be home at immediately. This excerpt keenly demonstrates how Austen leverages language and punctuation to transition seamlessly amongst the characters. While the passage does signal that it is moving between the psychology of Charles and the psychology of Henrietta with the phrases “Charles agreed” and “Henrietta at first declared,” these notations are subtle. The overwhelming force that determines the shifting point of view is the drastically different words and expressions exemplified in the first half and second half of the excerpt. Once again, under the guise of a singular narrator placed outside the action of the text, Austen renders a dual-voiced narrative passage that captures the essence of two tertiary characters.

While the above excerpt presents multiple distinct voices together in a single narrative statement, the following example shows Austen’s ability to move from the communal voice into the psychology of a solitary character. This scene appears after it is announced that “high-spirited, joyous-talking” Louisa Musgrove is engaged to the “dejected, thinking, feeling, reading” Captain Benwick:

The conclusion of the whole was, that if the woman who had been sensible of Captain Wentworth’s merits could be allowed to prefer another man, there was nothing in the engagement to excite lasting wonder; and if Captain Wentworth lost no friend by it, certainly nothing to be regretted. No, it was not regret which made Anne’s heart beat in spite of herself, and brought the colour into her cheeks when she thought of Captain Wentworth unshackled and free. She had some feelings which she was ashamed to investigate. They were too much like joy, senseless joy! (186).

The passage begins in the narrated voice of the community. Despite no individual character or group of characters being identified, the narration in the first half of this excerpt clearly relates to

the public, communal voice of the residents at Uppercross. While theoretically the passage could be understood as pure narration from an outside observing narrator, I argue that the biased language and shift in tone marks this excerpt as polyvocal free indirect discourse. For example, the choice of the word “conclusion” indicates that a consensus was reached by the group, and the few sentences following detail why and how the community feels about the love triangle among Wentworth, Louisa, and Captain Benwick. Further, the phrases “there was nothing in the engagement to excite lasting wonder” and “certainly nothing to be regretted” represent value judgments by the community on the impact or effect of the situation. These sentiments go beyond narratorial description and rely on particular points of view. Regardless of their lack of involvement or deserved stake in the status of the couples’ relationships, the community makes its verdict clear. While the statements are presented as a cohesive narrative, the reader should not assume that the passage is without conflict: the three opinions that matter most in this situation are visibly missing. By excluding Wentworth, Louisa, and Captain Benwick, the narration achieves two things. First, it creates comedic irony through purposeful exclusion. The reader is likely to be jarred immediately by the three missing voices and then is forced to reflect on how this is a bizarre, and yet truthful, reflection of community gossip and the forum of public opinion. Second, the narration creates an opening for conflict. While we are never privy to Wentworth’s, Louisa’s, or Captain Benwick’s thoughts on the situation at hand, we are left with an opening to assume or infer their positions may be in line with, or may be in opposition with, the group opinion.

The one person’s opinion we are invited to understand is Anne’s. Where the first half of this passage is dictated by opinion and reflects the thoughts of the community, the second half of the passage is dictated by emotion and reflects the thoughts of the novel’s heroine. The narration describes Anne’s physical response to the news, which we can then translate into her emotional response: her heart beating faster indicates excitement, and her cheeks blushing indicates romantic stimulation. Further, Anne clearly defines her feeling of “senseless joy” and couples the statement with an exclamation point, which heightens her dramatic response. Finally, the terms

“unshackled” and “free” definitely service a particular perspective on Wentworth’s previous engagement. While Louisa may have previously described Wentworth as attached or in courtship, Anne perceived Wentworth as being trapped. This, too, gestures towards the potential for conflicting voices: the language dictates that her perspective is highly individual. In this excerpt, Austen works in the inverse way: moving from the internal dialogue of a single character to the projected voice of the community. She brilliantly pivots from the sociological perspective to the psychological perspective. This passage evidences both how pervasive this type of narration is in *Persuasion* and also Austen’s ability to move betwixt and between points of view:

The absolute necessity of seeming like herself produced then an immediate struggle; but after a while she could do no more. She began not to understand a word they said, and was obliged to plead indisposition and excuse herself. They could then see that she looked very ill, were shocked and concerned, and would not stir without her for the world. This was dreadful. Would they only have gone away, and left her in the quiet possession of that room it would have been her cure; but to have them all standing or waiting around her was distracting, and in desperation, she said she would go home (246).

Focalizing through the heroine, Austen proves that the skilled employment of a character’s idiom is the only demarcation needed for dual-voiced passages. The capacity for this passage to unite two very different points of view marks Austen’s level of narrative skill. Joined in a single paragraph are a multitude of voices—some in agreement, amplifying one another and others in conflict, attempting to drown one another out. In both ways, this multiplicity of voices connects with Taylor’s politics of equal recognition, in particular to the dialogic quality of modern human identity. As the internal voice of the protagonist merges with the external voices of other characters, the voice of the collective, and the voice of the narrator, the reader experiences a negotiation of identity as a character’s perception of self collides with the perception of others. In this way, Austen ventriloquizes the genuine, emerging, and renewed social dialogue in the fictional space of her novels. By using free indirect discourse to critically imagine this new social landscape, *Persuasion* signifies both the rise of the modern novel and the rise of modern Britain.

One of the clearest ways to highlight *Persuasion*'s narrative prowess and embarkation on new beginnings is to compare the two alternative endings: the discarded ending that still exists in manuscript copy housed at the British Library and the chosen ending that readers have read, time and time again, since the novel's publication in 1818. As Butler argues, the original version presents a "strong comic plot of, a more or less traditional kind binds the events consequentially together" (281). The discarded chapters are burdened by unnecessary and wordy dialogue; they also present the reader with a conclusion of the plot that is too easy and, therefore, unsatisfying. Comparatively, the revised chapters highlight Austen's nuance as a writer: her ability to deviate from her common plot to provide a refreshed, unexpected ending and her dedication to maintaining *Persuasion*'s polyvocal narrative style through the novel's conclusion. Of course, there are parts of the original draft that were carried over to the completed novel, but what Austen demonstrates here is her commitment writing process—the "thinking and rethinking"—and her commitment to creating an honest and satisfying ending for her final finished story (Folsom 15-16).⁵²

The conversation between Captain Harville and Anne in the published ending, with Captain Wentworth overhearing them as he writes his impassioned letter, showcases the dialogic character of the novel through literal circumstance. Their conversation is, indeed, a negotiation between two characters representing different sexes *and* classes. Their debate on the steadfastness of men and women in love is informed by their specific positions: Harville as a married male naval officer and Anne as a single woman who was once left in love. Harville pleads for the constancy of men by citing the agonizing pain of taking a "last look at his wife and children" as they sail away (Austen, *Persuasion* 243). On the other hand, Anne lays claim to the lasting devotion of women by contrasting a woman's "quiet, confined" life with the distractions of a man's "profession, pursuits, [and] business" (241). Both of these characters are making arguments from their own subject positions, having experienced different types of love and loss.

⁵² Including the very Austenian phrase "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" (Austen, *Persuasion* 254).

In this way, the exchange between Harville and Anne underscores what Taylor is referencing when he notes the impact of democracy and the emergence of individual identity. The characters are negotiating identity partly through their interpretation of self, as shown above, and also in their interpretation of each other. This is demonstrated in Anne's argument that while a man's feelings "may be the strongest" their attachments are not because their life is not fully their own (242). Overall, what Harville and Anne's conversation stands to show is not only the dialogic determination of identity but also that not all negotiations end in resolve. As Harville states: "We shall never agree upon this question" (242). Austen's leaving this conversation unresolved underscores how continual negotiations of identity and values were in the newly emerged Romantic public.

Harville and Anne's conversation takes place in the shadow of Wentworth writing his letter. It is Wentworth retreating to write his letter that presents the opportunity in the plot for Anne and Harville to begin their conversation. Further, it is the assumed purpose of the letter—setting Captain Benwick's drawing for his new love interest—that initially sparks their debate. Further, the narrator is careful to inform the reader, through Anne's free indirect discourse, that Wentworth was near (though "not very near") and therefore we are led to assume that he is possibly overhearing parts of this conversation. In particular, the moment when Wentworth drops his pen is a notable interruption that cuts Harville off from responding to Anne's claims against emotional retort:

Captain Harville was beginning to say, when a slight noise called their attention to Captain Wentworth's hitherto perfectly quiet division of the room. It was nothing more than that his pen had fallen down; but Anne was startled at finding him nearer than she had supposed, and half inclined to suspect that the pen had only fallen because he had been occupied by them, striving to catch sounds, which yet she did not think he could have caught (242).

This moment of free indirect discourse brings us into the interiority of Anne's character immediately. Anne is shocked to find Wentworth nearer than she had originally surmised and wonders whether he has heard her debate: "half inclined to suspect that the pen had only fallen

because he had been occupied by them, striving to catch sounds.” She addresses this idea again just a couple of words later, but from the opposite point of view: “she did not think he could have caught.” Given the nature of her conversation with Harville, the height of her emotion (she ends the direct speech before this interjection with a “faltering voice”), and her relationship to Wentworth, it makes sense that Anne would be consumed by considerations of whether or not he could hear her. By pairing the interaction of Harville and Anne against the backdrop of Wentworth’s letter, the scene captures the cinematic quality featured earlier with Louisa’s fall in Lyme. The reader can envision the camera moving betwixt and between Anne and Harville’s lively conversation and Wentworth’s dialogue of his own—in the silent form of a letter. While the majority of this scene uses direct speech, this dialogue is achieved because of Austen’s unwavering commitment to, and command of, the free indirect style.

The final outcome of the novel ushers in new beginnings for a gentry-class woman entering a new world: Anne trades in a life as a domestic showpiece for a life as a companion and partner to her husband on the high seas (258). Overall, *Persuasion* breaks free of the antiquated social structures of the previous century by presenting the reader with a plot and a heroine that embrace Britain’s new social order. *Persuasion* imagines a world where the shifting economic landscape has rearranged the social landscape, and where the composition of cultural power is motivated by individual identity politics. *Persuasion* demonstrates Austen’s attention to capital, in all its various and changing forms. This is demonstrated in her most consistent and innovative use of free indirect discourse. Austen’s narrative takes on a cinematic quality as the perspectives of her characters are layered on top of one another in a way that highlights their differences and underscores their embodiment of the same social space. In sum, *Persuasion* presents the pinnacle of Austen’s free indirect style: syntactically nuanced, seamlessly polyvocal, and determinately dialogic.

Conclusion: Reimagining

While in terms of style and social space *Persuasion* epitomizes the best of Austen's fiction, I would be remiss to not acknowledge her final and unfinished work in this comprehensive investigation. If *Persuasion* is the pinnacle of Austen's mastery and employment of the free indirect style, then I argue that "Sanditon" marks Austen's embarkment on a new trajectory for her innovative narrative technique. Just as *Persuasion* riffed on the typical plot of an Austen novel, so too does "Sanditon" seemingly deviate from the common plot of the published texts by focusing on the renewal of the fictional, seaside town of Sanditon rather than the typical marriage plot. While much of the 120-page manuscript's action involves presumed heroine Charlotte Heywood, the focus of the novel is much more communal and diverse than Austen's previous works. As explored in the second chapter, the draft manuscript of "Sanditon" roughly comprises only one-fifth of a completed novel and, therefore, any conclusions drawn about Austen's intentions for the "Sanditon" are assumptions based on an unfinished product. However, the novel's ostensibly new framework demonstrates a significant deviation from Austen's recognizable genre and prompts the consideration that perhaps she was heading in a new direction.

Austen's taking up of a new mantle in "Sanditon" has been observed by historical and literary scholars alike (MacDonagh 146; Southam *Literary Manuscripts* 130; Sutherland "Jane Austen" 253). Partially, it is the novel's capturing of the "spirit of the age" that grants it a new tenor (MacDonagh 146). The restlessness and intensity of movement displayed in "Sanditon" was characteristic of the late Regency period, which was responding to Britain's recovery from the Napoleonic war (148). Oliver MacDonagh argues that a focus on health and wellness was a reciprocal response to the destruction and uncertainty of war, particularly because of the increased demand for medical practitioners to treat returning soldiers (157). This is evident in the novel's use of place for articulating a novelty of the Regency era: the healing seaside holiday. Austen's attention to place in "Sanditon"—in title and topic—is curious because place has very

little importance in the published novels, save for *Mansfield Park*.⁵³ Further, Austen focusing the text on a novelty so synonymous with new beginnings and the emergence of modernity makes her choice particularly striking. Not only is “Sanditon” representing a thoroughly modern place, but it also presents a collection of characters far more extensive than we find elsewhere in Austen’s writing (Southam, *Literary Manuscripts* 111). This diversity allows Austen to explore the relationships *between* classes rather than *within* classes. As Southam argues, the “leisurely and moneyed visitors” to Sanditon are contrasted with the “working neighbourhood” where the novel is set:

We learn something of the lives of the servants and tradesmen, especially as they are touched by Mr. Parker’s venture: his butler, Lady Denham’s gardener, from whom he buys vegetables, old Stringer and his son, whom he has encouraged to set up as market-gardeners, old Andrew, his own gardener, William Heeley, the shoemaker, Jebb’s, the milliners, and Whitby’s, the subscription library and general shop. To this extent Jane Austen’s fictional scene was widening to include the day-to-day concerns of people outside the conventional middle-class (111).

This broadening of the fictional social sphere parallels the shift Austen was witnessing as a part of the Romantic reality. Where her previous novels focused on negotiating the minute details of the relatively narrow gentry class and detailing the intricacies of this relatively homogeneous group’s social interactions, “Sanditon” opens up to a much wider world with a cast of characters that represent Britain’s burgeoning middle class. The presence of merchants and tradesmen in “Sanditon” signals the advancement of capital and the changing parameters of the marketplace. The world of “Sanditon” is a world of commerce; the agricultural origins of a pre-Industrial Britain, which dictated or complicated her previous novels, have all but faded from view. As Sutherland argues, the fictional world of “Sanditon” is unsettled and Austen’s attempt to reimagine the novel of social observation meant entering “new and dangerous waters” (“Jane Austen” 253).

⁵³ I argue for the importance of physical place in the creation of social space in Chapter 4: Space.

In addition to its responsiveness to the historical period and social milieu, the literary style of “Sanditon” has given critics pause. Specifically, “Sanditon” departs from the polished prose of the published novels, not only in its sketched form but also in its overarching tone. As Southam describes, “Sanditon” employs a vigorous and untiring style and design that captures the “buoyancy and zest” of the period (*Literary Manuscripts* 102). Paradoxically, while Southam’s periodization of “Sanditon” casts it as the most modern of Austen’s novels, the fragment also exhibits a “strong association” with Austen’s literary past, particularly the “broad comic fun and literary satire” of the juvenilia (103). Echoing these remarks and characterizing the novel as a “work of gusto,” Bree, Sabor, and Todd point to the caricatures and “larger-than-life grotesques” of “Sanditon” as also returning to the spirit of the juvenilia (33). While the theatricality of the juvenilia is revived in “Sanditon,” the fragment also “mixes the early with the mature style” (Tuite n.p.). This quality of being caught between the effusions of Austen’s youth and the established style of her published novels has sparked a debate in regards to the place of “Sanditon” in Austen’s authorial career and whether this marked stylistic departure was a passive result of the novel’s draft stage or an intentional modification by Austen to reimagine her narrative approach.

It was the view of famed Austen editor R.W. Chapman that Austen would have “smoothed the coarse strokes” of “Sanditon” in the novel’s final revisions and that the resulting manuscript would have resembled the novels immediately preceding it (*Facts and Problems* 208). This perspective is echoed by Levy who submits that what we encounter in “Sanditon” is an Austen novel at an earlier stage of composition, before she has circled back to attend to narrative symmetry and develop her sensible central characters (1026). On the other hand, Clara Tuite argues that “Sanditon” begs us to question what alternative novelistic trajectories Austen may have inspired or had in mind (n.p.). Further, Southam views Austen’s new presentation as a thoughtful stylistic repositioning. Specifically, Southam cites that the amendments represented in the manuscript demonstrate Austen heightening, not shying away from, the eccentricities of the draft novel as she attends in first revisions (*Literary Manuscripts* 130). Because of this Southam

contends that Austen was not planning to shape “Sanditon” in the same manner as her six previous narratives of the same genre and form. I agree with Southam: the ardent refusal of “Sanditon” to conform to the patterns of the previously published fiction is not a sign of “confusion or incoherence” on the part of Austen but rather a deliberate decision about the “intended features” of the text (109). Further, I concur with MacDonagh’s description of “Sanditon” as Austen’s final phase (146). Rather than, as Tuite suggests, seeing “Sanditon” as a “swerving away” from Austen’s use of free indirect discourse, I reason that this fragmentary manuscript shows Austen attempting a new version of her characteristic style, specifically by uniting the parodic sensationalism of the juvenilia with the nuanced free indirect discourse developed over the publication of her novel canon.

The following two passages demonstrate how Austen’s blends the caricaturist style of the juvenilia with the command of free indirect discourse she developed through her published novels. The first excerpt describes Mr. Parker, a hopeful, visionary man who has invested all of his capital—for better or for worse—on the potential that Sanditon might become a booming seaside resort:

Sanditon was a second wife and four Children to him—hardly less Dear—and certainly more engrossing. He could talk of it forever.—It had indeed the highest claims;—not only those of Birth place, Property and Home;—it was his Mine, his Lottery, his Speculation and his Hobby Horse; his Occupation his Hope and his Futurity.—He was extremely desirous of drawing his good friends at Willingden thither; and his endeavours in the cause, were as grateful and disinterested as they were warm.—He wanted to secure the promise of a visit—to get as many of the Family as his own house would contain, to follow him to Sanditon as soon as possible—and, healthy as they all undeniably were—foresaw that every one of them would be benefited by the sea (Austen, *Jane Austen’s Manuscript Works* 330).

The passage starts out clearly in the voice of the narrator with a witty, yet chiding, remark that Mr. Parker pays as nearly much attention and care to his investment in Sanditon as to any or all members of his family. Mr. Parker is painted as the ultimate salesman, a character that teenage Austen would have found amusing. While the sentence parodies the fanciful Mr. Parker it also takes a jab at his family, who both the narrator and Mr. Parker find to be less engrossing and

hardly dearer than the seaside village. The succeeding sentences shift into Austen's characteristic dual voice. The perspective of the narrator is still present, particularly in the leading clause "He could talk of it forever," which emphasizes Mr. Parker's loquacious quality. However, we also begin to hear Mr. Parker's internal dialogue. The passage ushers the reader through a description of Sanditon that is all-encompassing, both in terms of Mr. Parker's personal life and professional aspirations as well as his past, present, and future. This incessant listing not only stresses the importance of Sanditon to Mr. Parker from the perspective of an observer, but it also endears the reader to its place of prominence in Mr. Parker's mind. While the capitalization of vocabulary like "Home," "Lottery," "Occupation," and "Hope" could be conceived as the result of Austen's unsystematic and unedited draft, it also creates emphasis and almost personifies these descriptors—making them agents in Mr. Parker's mind. Further, the use of em dashes provides the passage with a hurried quality that is indicative of both the character's stream of consciousness and of the rapid tempo that characterizes the draft novel.

The final sentence of the passage typifies how Austen blends her caricaturist style with the dual voiced nature of free indirect discourse. Focalized through Mr. Parker, the reader is appraised of his deep desire to have all of his family members come to experience Sanditon, as a means of personal and financial assurance. In the final phrase, the narrative layers the perspective of the narrator with Mr. Parker: "healthy as they all undeniably were— foresaw that every one of them would be benefited by the sea." On one hand, we have Mr. Parker who believes, or wants to sell the idea, that the healing nature of the coast will affect his company. On the other hand, the narrator is explicitly parodying Mr. Parker's foolishness by plainly stating that his guests did not need the healing retreat they would, apparently, be benefitting from. Here, Austen's lampooning of Mr. Parker is united with the eloquence of her free indirect discourse to create a more overtly satirical, but nuanced, narrative style.

This merging of parody and proficient narration can be observed again in this passage detailing the gossiping hypochondriac, Miss Diana Parker:

It was not a week since Miss Diana Parker had been told by her feelings, that the Sea Air would probably in her present state, be the death of her, and now she was at Sanditon, intending to make some Stay, and without appearing to have the slightest recollection of having written or felt any such thing.—It was impossible for Charlotte not to suspect a good deal of fancy in such an extraordinary state of health.—Disorders and recoveries so very much out of the common way, seemed more like the amusement of eager Minds in want of employment than of actual afflictions and releif (370).

It is clear in this passage that the narrator is satirizing Miss Parker's dramatic and neurotic personality. In one breath, Miss Parker is described as being "told by her feelings" that remaining in Sanditon would "be the death of her" and in a second breath she is compelled to stay, without even an acknowledgment that she ever held an opposing sentiment. Miss Parker seemingly unites the neuroses of Mr. Woodhouse with the vanity of Sir Walter Elliot and the nattering, overbearing nature of Mrs. Bennet. By fusing these qualities in a single actor, Miss Parker appears as less of a character and more of a caricature, reminiscent of the juvenilia. However, at the first em dash, the passage shifts into more balanced free indirect discourse as we enter the mind of the presumed heroine, Charlotte Heywood. Charlotte articulates an opinion that further underscores how "extraordinary" and unbelievable Miss Parker's recovery is. She pulls back the curtain revealing how Miss Parker's behaviour is more motivated by a fallacious illness and a longing for attention than some "actual afflictions and relief." As with the published novels, this passage draws the reader into the heroine's perspective—building a connection and intimacy that outpaces any of the other characters' in the text.

Charlotte is a thoroughly modern heroine who introduces us to the thoroughly modern world of "Sanditon." The novel fragment's distinctive post-war setting and broadened spectrum of characters show Austen's movement away from the quaint country village and the more insular gentry (and pseudo-gentry) class. While the unfinished novel only permits scholarly conjecture on account of what Austen intended the story of "Sanditon" to be, I argue that the manuscript we have at hand marks a final evolution in Austen's style that a once returns to her earliest drafts and at the same time propels her established use free indirect discourse to a new dimension. As shown in the computational analysis of Chapter 2, "Sanditon" clusters most

readily with “The Watsons,” which resonates given that they are both draft, third-person novels of a relatively substantial length. While “Sanditon” does not readily cluster with the juvenilia, it is more in tempo and character, not style, that this novel fragment returns to the expressions of Austen’s youth. In terms of style, “Sanditon” possesses the dialogic and compelling narrative qualities indicative of Austen’s novels; importantly, “Sanditon” clusters at various points with *Persuasion* and *Emma*. By integrating the humour and cadence of the quixotic juvenilia with the nuanced free indirect style of the late novels, “Sanditon” reimagines the newly established social structure of modern Britain.

The overall objective of this dissertation was to demonstrate how Austen’s development of the novel’s form and style paralleled the shifting social structures of Romantic Britain in a necessary and imaginative way. Using opposing, yet complementary, methods and theoretical approaches, this project sustains an inclusive, cross-corpus investigation that figures Austen at the literary centre of the invention of the modern novel, and the figurative centre of the imagination of modern society. I argue that Austen’s development of the free indirect style “marks a crucial moment in the history of novelistic technique” (Finch and Bowen 3). In particular, Austen’s use of free indirect discourse was necessary to transform the novel genre into a rich, multiplicitous, and distinctly modern literary form that not only imagines but also foreshadows the changing class structures of Romantic Britain.

As Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 establish, Austen’s internalization of the narrative techniques of her sister novelists and her experimentation with the function of parody constructed a foundation for her development of the free indirect style. As Chapter 3 underscores, Austen’s progression as an author occurred in tandem with the novel’s rise as a genre. In her pursuit of a narrative approach that would render the most probable fiction, Austen placed pressure on the current form of the novel, which resulted in a transition from the epistolary style to the third person narrative. This pivot not only required that Austen revise and reconfigure her narrative method, but it also galvanized and refined her use of free indirect discourse. By the midpoint of Austen’s career, her mastery of free indirect discourse began to expertly facilitate her

interrogation of the shifting social texture of her contemporary moment. As Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6 demonstrate, it was the malleability and multivariate quality of Austen's free indirect style that allowed her to represent and respond to the shifting conditions of Britain's social sphere, particularly by allowing her to pay attention to the integral and changing parameters of space, community, and voice. Finally, prompted on one hand by her achievement of narrative finesse and on the other hand by her acknowledgment of a new social reality, Austen embarked on a final stylistic transformation, as is evidenced by the theme and tempo of her fragmentary manuscript "Sanditon." In sum, Austen's deft and evolving use of style facilitated her fiction's replication, examination, and negotiation of the competing voices and changing social spaces of the Romantic-era publics. The parallel evolutions of Austen's free indirect style and Romantic society are not to be understood as coincidence but rather as an effort, on behalf of a shrewd social critic and progressive literary artist, to imagine the shifting landscape of her contemporary social spaces. Further, I contend that we must recognize Austen's style as both a catalyst and a product of changing novel form. In conclusion, Austen's development of free indirect discourse ushered in an era of narrative modernity that we are still wrestling with over two centuries later.

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