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Women of Feeling:

Understanding Austen's Marginalized Heroines

Melissa Alexander

In the twenty-first century, it is difficult to rationalize heroines who let others push them to the sidelines, those who do not speak up for themselves or take action. Especially in the Jane Austen fandom, audiences gravitate toward characters that have the boisterous confidence of Emma Woodhouse (*Emma*), the impenetrable wit of Elizabeth Bennet (*Pride and Prejudice*), or the intense fits of passion of Marianne Dashwood (*Sense and Sensibility*). Even in Austen studies, the bias towards Austen's "popular" heroines is clear; scholars write fewer studies focused on her meeker heroines Catherine Moreland (*Northanger Abbey*), Anne Elliot (*Persuasion*), and Fanny Price (*Mansfield Park*). Although these characters seem passive and timid at the start, their characterization is unprecedented in the genre category where they are usually placed: sentimental fiction. The beautifully crafted emotional landscapes of characters Fanny Price and Anne Elliot rather resemble a new, emerging literary genre, dubbed "The Romantic Novel," which is an offshoot of the poetic period of Romanticism, and emphasizes the private experience of emotion and the workings of the mind. By contrast, Sentimental fiction emphasizes outward expression of emotion, namely fainting and blushing. I endeavor to study why Jane Austen focuses on the interior experience of emotion rather than externalized displays of emotion in her novels *Persuasion* and *Mansfield Park*, how the novels respond to the tradition of sentimental literature in the late 18th century. Finally, I assert that Austen's works deserve to be the central point of the genre of the Romantic Novel.

Critics have argued with much difficulty about the proper place that Jane Austen holds in the history of the novel. As Clifford Siskin points out, she straddles the 18th and 19th centuries exactly, producing the first drafts of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Northanger Abbey* at the end of the 18th century, followed by works *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*, and *Emma* produced at the beginning of the 19th century. Often, her works are cited as part of the “long” 18th century¹, which contains everything from sentimental fiction to gothic novels to travel narratives and the like. Others prefer to narrow in closer, claiming that, since Austen’s works were largely reactions to sentimental works, they belong in the same category. This is especially problematic when looking at *Northanger Abbey*, which reacted to gothic novels rather than the “cult of sensibility,” and examining her later works which seem to digress from sensibility entirely.

Some critics² attempt to establish a new subcategory to the poetic period of Romanticism for Austen and authors such as Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and William Earle dubbed “The Romantic Novel.” This genre seeks to set apart certain novels in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, since many do not seem to fit in the “rise of the novel” narrative. As Jillian Heydt-Stevenson and Charlotte Sussman note:

Rather than the linear trajectory we have been schooled to expect by the arrow-like image of ‘the rise of the novel,’ the novel during the Romantic-era ‘took off’ in all directions. It seemed to lose the coherence of a single genre, and to explode into a multiplicity of sub-genres: the gothic, the historical novel, the national tale, the oriental tale, the radical or ‘Jacobin’ novel, and the novel of manners, to name only some of the most studied.³

The acceptance of a departure from the “rise of the novel” is fundamental to recognizing the existence of the “Romantic novel,” a movement in the spirit of the six poets who traditionally exist in the category of Romanticism.⁴ Romantic novels are characterized by

“images of the sublime; the capacity for and fall from transcendence; an emphasis on the natural world as a critical space for revelation, danger, and salvation; acute sensitivity to the ties between the body and mental states; liminal and subliminal spaces for exploration of sexuality; and. . . inwardness. . . ‘everlasting longings for the lost.’”⁵ Austen, in fact, stands as a model of the emerging category of the Romantic novel, though most critics disregard or take her influence in the genre for granted. Through further study of Austen’s works, especially on *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*, one can see how Austen’s connection to sentimental fiction deteriorates and Austen truly is a hallmark for the genre of the Romantic novel.

As a means of understanding Austen’s literary moment, it is crucial to look at the function Austen, herself, saw in novels. In chapter 5 of *Northanger Abbey*⁶ Austen famously argues against those who dismiss novels as frivolous, claiming that, “[In novels,] the greatest powers of the mind are displayed . . . the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language.”⁷ Austen’s main purpose in this section of *Northanger Abbey* is to call out other novelists who write characters that are ashamed by novel reading; however, this quotation provides an excellent backdrop for studying the techniques Austen employs in her own novels, and those novels before her that she identifies with.

Authors have categorized Austen with writers in the late-18th century Sentimentalism literary movement because her novels often follow certain conventions of that period. For example, literary critic Matthew Wickman argues that sentimental fiction “bore a close but complex relation to the genre of romance,”⁸ which emphasized largely feudal scenes in which women of the upper classes were locked up in castles, swept away by knights, and occupied a very passive position overall. In Sentimentalism, the end goal is very similar; “instead of progress toward maturity, it deals sympathetically with the character who cannot grow up and find an active place in society.”⁹ Sentimental plots are marked by the heroine pursuing

marriage at any cost,¹⁰ rather than focusing on the development and maturation of the heroine, which results in a problematic and often disturbing treatment of emotion. Characters such as Evelina in Frances Burney's *Evelina* often find themselves so pitifully overwhelmed with emotion that they faint, blush, or otherwise withdraw from situations. For example, when Evelina receives a life-changing proposal from the wealthy Lord Orville, she is shocked into silence. She recounts:

I attempt not to describe my sensations at that moment; I scarce breathed; I doubted if I existed,—the blood forsook my cheeks, and my feet refused to sustain me: Lord Orville, hastily rising, supported me to a chair, upon which I sunk, almost lifeless. . . I cannot write the scene that followed, though every word is engraven on my heart: but his protestations, his expressions, were too flattering for repetition: nor would he, in spite of my repeated efforts to leave him, suffer me to escape; in short, my dear Sir, I was not proof against his solicitations—and he drew from me the most sacred secret of my heart!¹¹

The reader can see that Evelina is absolutely petrified by the idea that Lord Orville would even propose to her, causing her to nearly faint. However, she refuses to mention her actual feelings on the subject, and simply says that she is overwhelmed. A heroine's internal emotional experience is, in this way, disregarded in sentimental literature since it does not contribute to the marriage plot. Evelina's experience is limited solely to external displays that might cause her suitor to take notice.¹² On the other hand, novels with male protagonists such as *The Man of Feeling* emphasize an absolutely overwhelming emotional experience. Henry Mackenzie's overwrought Harley feels passionate love but rejects marriage because he might then be subjected to the ills of the world.¹³

Austen's earlier novels *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* might fulfill some of the conventions of sentimental literature; however, Austen largely uses conventions in order to

satirize sentimental novels and expose their misrepresentations of reality. The similarities between Austen's works and sentimental fiction degrade when one looks at her later novels, namely *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*. Pam Perkins argues that Austen utilizes early-19th century sentimental comedy¹⁴ in order to "show virtuous protagonists acting nobly in the face of adversity and eventually triumphing over impending disasters."¹⁵ She notes especially the manner in which Fanny communicates, for she often, "[expresses] herself most effectively through nonverbal signals,"¹⁶ and is very infrequently able to truly communicate through language. Perkins points out, "At times Fanny speaks as well as she observes, and especially at the beginning of the novel she does so in a manner that is almost comically evocative of the moral guide-books that Burney's heroines live by and exemplify. One of the first speeches we hear from the adult Fanny has a stilted, exclamatory style."¹⁷ Through this, Perkins argues that Austen is parodying the "moral guide-books" of the late 18th century through Fanny's character, especially in her mode of speaking. Instead of speaking in a natural way, "she often seems to be echoing uncomfortably closely literature—particularly educational and didactic literature"¹⁸. Despite Perkins' argument that Austen uses Fanny to parody sentimental comedy, she emphasizes that the characters in *Mansfield Park* are, "complex, realistic characters whose conflicting behavior and principles are not reducible to preexisting sets of literary rules."¹⁹ Austen's adherence to sentimental comedic modes in *Mansfield Park* serves purely to provide irony; this is not enough to categorize her novels as part of the sentimental fiction movement.

Critics frequently cite Austen as part of the new genre of the Romantic novel, but do not focus on her characters' experience of emotion. In fact, most authors who claim Austen as part of the Romantic novel "canon" focus, instead, on topics such as nostalgia, poetic language, or global issues. Indeed, Austen's position within this literary genre is precarious since *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* are not often seen as the "hallmarks" of the genre. Austen's emphasis

on marginalized heroines, in fact, ought to be seen as crucial parts of the Romantic novel “puzzle”, since it is such a departure from her earlier novels and novels of the late 18th century in general. I argue that Austen is truly a hallmark of the Romantic novel due to her treatment of emotion in *Persuasion* and *Mansfield Park*. In these novels, instead of seeing expressive and boisterous heroines, the reader sees heroines who are pushed to the sidelines because of their inability to communicate their emotions. This is crucial to the development of the Romantic novel, of which “inwardness” is key. The pure fact that Fanny and Anne are unable to express themselves outwardly exposes their interior emotional landscape to the reader, a landscape previously disregarded by other novelists. Austen, in fact, echoes the Romantic poets in her exposure of the all-encompassing emotions which Fanny and Anne are affected by in her novels.

Mary Jacobus argues that the emotional scar of *Persuasion*²⁰ is particularly Romantic because “it is [interstitial] space that renders *Persuasion* the most Romantic and private of Austen’s novels.”²¹ Although Anne as a character is frequently muted by her surroundings, and rarely ever says what she feels, the way that the narrator describes her longing to close the distance is remarkably Romantic in language and theme.²² Other critics attempt to understand Austen through other venues: Valerie Shaw categorizes Austen as a “social novelist”, attempting to paint a social and emotional landscape in these novels so that the reader might understand the experiences of her heroines. Shaw points out that, “the ironic Austen seems as subdued as her heroines Fanny and Anne,” and Austen’s classic narrative voice is no longer quite the same as in her earlier novels. She goes on further to argue that the quiet irony in these later novels “grows out of the author’s intimate involvement in her heroines and their feelings.”²³ She particularly emphasizes Austen’s descriptions of Fanny’s obsession with “right reason”, which causes her to “mistrust decisions based on feeling.”²⁴ Furthermore, in opposition to the conventions of sentimentality, Shaw argues that, “In *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* it is the hero, not the

heroine, who misjudges appearances, and this puts the happy ending more at risk since he had the marriage initiative.”²⁵ Despite Shaw’s apt descriptions of the misgivings of both Fanny Price and Anne Elliot²⁶, she fails to mention the importance of how Fanny and Anne communicate their emotions and express themselves in social situations. If one takes into account their mutual inability to express their feelings in the public sphere, Fanny’s obsession with “right reason,” and Anne’s paralysis when encountering Captain Wentworth, become even clearer; these are not character flaws, but rather Austen’s experiments in crafting delicate and subtle heroines.

Beth Lau argues that Austen epitomizes what Anne Mellor labels “feminine Romanticism”, which does not only reflect the Romantic “spirit of the age”, but also reinvents the genre in order to fulfill the ideal of feminine literature.²⁷ Feminine literature refers not only to literature written by women, but also literature written for largely female audiences; the expansion of the period of Romanticism to include these authors is crucial, since the “Big Six” poets of Romanticism were all male, writing for largely male audiences. Lau specifically emphasizes Austen’s “dramatic ventriloquism,”²⁸ along with her “negative capability,” a term coined by Keats in order to describe how an author negates their own personality, to “project oneself into the thoughts and feelings of others, and remain open to a variety of points of view.”²⁹ Lau uses this order to compare her to poetic authors of the movement of Romanticism, especially in the way that Austen utilizes free indirect discourse to expose the inner emotional workings of her characters. Lau’s argument, however, focuses on the language and structures Austen utilizes, rather than actual emotional capability and external expressions of emotion. Her argument falls short because she disregards the importance of the actual characters Austen writes, focusing instead on literary structure.

Fanny Price’s experience in the first volume of *Mansfield Park* is absolutely essential to upholding Jane Austen as a hallmark of the Romantic novel. In the first volume, the reader traces Fanny’s experience from a very young age,³⁰ up to the age of eighteen. While

this structure might resemble a coming-of-age story, in fact, Fanny changes very little throughout the span of the first volume of *Mansfield Park*. She begins the novel as an awkward, quiet girl, and very much ends the first volume as the same girl with more womanly features and more moral turmoil. She frequently withdraws from situations that press her to express emotion,³¹ and avoids people who express ideals that are at odds with her own moral code.³² Her character in the first volume is crucial because it exposes the intricacies of Fanny's character and sets the foundation for her interactions in the rest of the novel.

The narrator very aptly describes Fanny when she says, "Her diligence and her silence concealed a very absent, anxious mind."³³ Fanny frequently uses the excuse of morality (diligence) and a simple refusal to speak (silence) in order to hide what she truly fears, since she is so terrified of the consequences of actually exposing her emotions. Edmund, her cousin, is the only person in whom she can confide in the first volume,³⁴ but when her attachment to him grows even weaker, she grows all the more quiet. Early in the novel, an interesting instance occurs which sets *Mansfield Park* apart from the cult of sentimentality altogether. When Sir Thomas leaves for his plantation on Antigua, Julia and Maria Bertram find Fanny a very unsatisfactory sentimental heroine. The narrator recounts:

Fanny's relief, and her consciousness of it, were quite equal to her cousins'; but a *more tender nature* suggested that her feelings were *ungrateful*, and she really grieved because she could not grieve. 'Sir Thomas, who had done so much for her and her brothers, and who was gone perhaps never to return! that she should see him go without a tear! it was a shameful *insensibility*. . .' But [Sir Thomas] had ended his speech in a way to sink her in sad mortification, by adding, 'If William does come to Mansfield. . . I fear, he must find his sister at sixteen in some respects too much like his sister at ten.' She cried bitterly over this reflection when her uncle was gone;

and her cousins, on seeing her with red eyes, set her down as a hypocrite.³⁵

In this instance, Maria and Julia are frustrated with Fanny because of her inability to project her emotions; since she does not cry when her uncle departs for Antigua, she must be a wicked, “insensible” girl who is “ungrateful” for all that Sir Thomas has done for her and her family. Their conviction in her ungratefulness is strengthened when they catch her crying after Sir Thomas insults her, accusing her of being able to cry but not utilizing her tears in the most important circumstances. Since Fanny does not live up to these feminine ideals of the cult of sentimentality, Julia and Maria take it upon themselves to chastise her. Bearing this instance in mind, it is impossible to claim that all of Austen’s works fall in line with the traditions of sentimental fiction. Since Fanny is so unable and so unwilling to cry at the departure of Sir Thomas, and instead cries by herself as a reaction to insult, she cannot be marked as a sentimental heroine.

Fanny Price is emblematic of a Romantic heroine, especially exposed through her sensitivity to the ties between the body and the mental state.³⁶ One instance of this, in particular, occurs when Fanny witnesses the mutual joy of Edmund and Mary Crawford while they ride together.³⁷ The narrator describes, “A happy party it appeared to her, all interested in one object: cheerful beyond a doubt, for the sound of merriment ascended even to her. It was a sound which did not make *her* cheerful; she wondered that Edmund should forget her, and felt a pang.”³⁸ Fanny’s “pang” is truly the marriage of emotions and body, for she feels physical pain at the thought of Edmund forgetting her needs. Despite this deeply felt emotion of betrayal, Fanny says nothing to Edmund or Mary, and, in fact, is all civility and kindness. She bears it all silently, ignoring her “pangs” and suffering in silence. She allows for Mary to ride her pony for so many days that Fanny actually falls ill because she is unable to “take the air” on her horse. When Edmund finally realizes the state of her health, he attempts to comfort her, but it is truly “too little, too late.” The narrator describes Fanny’s turmoil in response to his attention: “the

tears, which a variety of feelings created, made it easier to swallow than to speak. . . she had been feeling neglected, and been struggling against discontent and envy for some days past. As she leant on the sofa, to which she had retreated that *she might not be seen*, the pain of her mind had been much beyond that in her head.”³⁹ Here, Fanny cries because she is overwhelmed by so many emotions, much like sentimental heroines; however, instead of making her crying public, she rather retreats to a place where she might hide her face and refrain from public view. Her struggles with “discontent and envy,” along with her attempt to hide her emotions when they did rise to the surface, make Fanny a model for the romantic heroine. Fanny’s “inward” experience of emotion led to the connection of her body and her mental state, albeit briefly, two markers of the Romantic novel which are upheld in Austen’s work.

One very important feature of Fanny as a heroine is her “negative capability.” Along with being extremely in touch with her emotions, Fanny is also able to sense the nuances of other characters’ emotions, especially those that are unsaid. After the visit to Sotherton, which included a very comical and innuendo-filled garden scene (much to Fanny’s chagrin), Fanny takes respite from reflecting on her own feelings of disappointment in the visit⁴⁰ and takes note of the other individuals in the party. The author notes, “She felt, as she looked at Julia and Mr. Rushworth, that hers was not the only dissatisfied bosom amongst them: there was gloom on the face of each.”⁴¹ Fanny’s ability to understand the unspoken emotions of those around her strengthens her position as a Romantic heroine, since she has the “negative capability” which John Keats spoke of as so important. This ability is greatly in contrast with other Austen heroines, for example, Elizabeth Bennet, who is so engrossed with her own feelings and emotions that she frequently is unable to see things from others’ points of view.

Yet another hallmark of the Romantic novel, Fanny has the unique ability to reflect on natural surroundings in a very poetic

manner. One evening she calls Edmund to step away from the party and reflect on their natural surroundings. The narrator recounts:

The scene . . . where all that was solemn, and soothing, and lovely, appeared in the brilliancy of an unclouded night, and the contrast of the deep shade of the woods. Fanny spoke her feelings. "Here's harmony!" said she; "here's repose! Here's what may leave all painting and all music behind, and what poetry only can attempt to describe! Here's what may tranquillize every care, and lift the heart to rapture! When I look out on such a night as this, I feel as if there could be neither wickedness nor sorrow in the world; and there certainly would be less of both if the sublimity of Nature were more attended to, and people were carried more out of themselves by contemplating such a scene."⁴²

Fanny's reflection, here, is unabashedly Romantic, invoking so many hallmarks of the Romantic novel and Romantic poets in general that it would be silly to list them. Along with echoing Romantic poetic language, Fanny also connects the scene to feeling, claiming that such a scene might "lift the heart to rapture." This speech, also, is one of the first times in which the reader sees a lengthy reflection by Fanny outside of her normal circumstances. Speeches previous to this one are usually much shorter and involve much less poetic language; here is an instance in which one might see the adult Fanny really gaining a foothold. Her use of poetic language, as well as emphasis on the connection between nature and emotions, is another strong reason as to why readers and critics ought to uphold Fanny as a true Romantic heroine, and Jane Austen as a true Romantic novelist.

Anne Elliot's experiences are also highly internalized, as are Fanny's, but in *Persuasion* she experiences a very different facet of the Romantic novel than Fanny does: what Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman call "everlasting longings for the lost."⁴³ Anne is substantially older than Fanny and experiences the pain of encountering a previous suitor, Captain Wentworth.⁴⁴ When he comes into contact with her family again, interactions with him are

almost unbearable, causing palpable tension in the situations in which they meet. Anne, although she says very little to Wentworth or her family about her discomfort around Wentworth, is obsessed with the idea of the years they have spent apart from each other and the value of the time that they were so close. The narrator recounts her reflections on their reunion: “[Anne] 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!”⁴⁵ Anne attempts to stave off the feelings that arise in herself after meeting Wentworth again, but she cannot stop dwelling on all of the years she spent apart from him. Seeing him again dredges up new feelings, those that took years to bury, which completely encompass her soul whenever Wentworth is around. Anne even shames herself for the perceived pain she caused Wentworth so many years ago, beating herself up because of her lack of fortitude at such a young age: “She had used him ill, deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity.”⁴⁶ Anne’s inner turmoil over the consequences of her previous attachment to Captain Wentworth fester inside of her, causing her to close herself off to those in her family who obsess themselves with his presence. One can see that Anne is also a true Romantic heroine due to her “everlasting longings for the lost” (her friendship with Captain Wentworth), as well as the inward nature of her reflections.

In order to solve the fundamental problem of Jane Austen not fitting into the cut-and-dry narrative of the “rise of the novel,” one might uphold Jane Austen as an emblem of the Romantic novel, rather than attempting to argue for her connection to sentimental fiction, 18th century fiction, or 19th century fiction. Although some critics argue that Austen is a part of sentimental fiction due to her satirizing of those literary conventions, these comparisons are

baseless when considering two of her later novels, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*. Instead, Austen ought to be upheld as a center point of the emerging genre of the Romantic novel due to how her heroines, Fanny Price and Anne Elliot, experience emotion. Austen's inclusion as a hallmark author of the Romantic novel shifts the focus of the genre away from diction and conventions of poetry, towards the human experience. Through this genre, one can see that the novel does not "rise" so much as "branch out," not following a linear trajectory, but forming many subcategories and genres with their own conventions. In *Mansfield Park*, Fanny Price is very soft-spoken since she is often overcome with emotions that she cannot put into words. She is also uniquely able to understand the emotions of others, as well as the importance of nature to the human experience. In *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot exposes another facet of the Romantic novel in that she has "everlasting longings for the lost," namely, her estrangement from her former lover, Captain Wentworth. Austen's characterization of these two heroines is vital to the development of the emerging genre of the Romantic novel, since they experience emotion so internally, a feature unprecedented before Austen.

Notes

¹ The dates of which vary extremely depending on the scholar or publication one is working with. For example, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century* places the long 18th century between the years 1660 (Restoration) and 1785 (the end of the French revolution). However, others claim it extends to 1815, the Battle of Waterloo, while others extend this period as far as the year 1830.

² Jillian Heydt-Stevenson and Charlotte Sussman, Anne K. Mellor and Richard E. Matlak, and David Perkins have all written extensively about the difficult 1780-1830 period of British literature and poetry.

³ See Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman, 13-14.

⁴ William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Lord Byron are the "Big Six" of Romantic period.

⁵ See Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman, 17.

⁶ It is important to note that *Northanger Abbey* was published posthumously in 1818, and since it was written in the late 18th century and edited almost 20 years later in the early 19th century, it represents two very different portions of Austen's writing career. It is impossible to know whether the Chapter 5 discourse on novels was included in the first draft, or added by an older Austen.

⁷ See Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, chapter 5.

⁸ See Wickman, 59.

⁹ See Bender, David, Seidel, 197.

¹⁰ Sentimental heroines often die at the close of the novel if they do not marry.

¹¹ See Burney, 352.

¹² See Bender, David, Seidel, 197.

¹³ *Ibid*, 188-189.

¹⁴ "Comedy", in this sense, rather refers to "any movement from despair to happiness", and the term "sentimental comedy" is used in contrast to a "laughing" comedy one might find in *Pride and Prejudice*. See Perkins, 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 5-6.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 6. One of these speeches occurs after Lady Bertram told Fanny that she was to move in with Aunt Norris. Fanny says, "[Edmund,] you are too kind. . . how shall I ever thank you as I ought, for thinking so well of me? Oh! cousin, if I am to go away, I shall remember your goodness, to the last moment of my life." See Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 21

¹⁸ Perkins, 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

²⁰ "Scar" is used in reference to the cancelled relationship between Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth.

²¹ See Jacobus, 237.

²² Miranda Burgess describes the connections between methods of transport and transmission of affect in Romantic poetry and prose. In using this concept, the reader can see that Anne's desire to close the distance between her and Captain Wentworth is, in a way, symbolic of her desire for his feelings to synchronize with hers. See Burgess, 234.

²³ See Shaw, 284.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 293.

²⁵ Ibid, 294.

²⁶ She describes Anne Elliot as “literally nobody” due to her deep-seated desire to feel needed.

²⁷ See Lau, 81.

²⁸ “Dramatic ventriloquism” emphasizes Austen’s unique ability to voice her own thoughts through the persona of her narrator. See Lau, 87.

²⁹ Ibid., 84.

³⁰ The reader first sees Fanny when she is sent away from her mother’s house in London to stay with her aunt, Lady Bertram, in the country, because Fanny’s mother does not have room for her. Austen, *Mansfield Park*, chapter 1.

³¹ The concept of acting is especially abhorrent to Fanny because it involves the scandalous practice of exposing the emotions of other people.

³² The Crawford siblings, for example, and Julia Bertram all trouble Fanny because of their loose concepts of loyalty and morality.

³³ Austen, Jane. *Mansfield Park*, 131.

³⁴ Although Fanny relies heavily on Edmund as a confidant, she forsakes him when she realized his romantic attachment to Mary Crawford and trusts him even less when his personality and conviction are altered by his connection to her.

³⁵ See Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 26. Emphasis added.

³⁶ One of the markers of Romantic novels, as noted by Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman, 17.

³⁷ In this instance, Mary Crawford is actually riding Fanny’s pony, which Edmund has lent to Mary with Fanny’s consent. Although he promised that Fanny would be able to ride her pony after Mary, time slipped away from them and they were out riding for much longer than Fanny expected.

³⁸ See Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 53.

³⁹ Ibid., 59. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰ The best example of Fanny’s success in hiding her emotions from her family also comes as a result of the Sotherton trip. Her aunt Norris, having completely ignored Fanny for the whole trip, exclaims to her on the carriage ride back, “Well, Fanny, this has been a fine day for you, upon my word Nothing but pleasure from beginning to end! I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to your aunt Bertram and me for contriving to let you go. A pretty good day’s amusement you have had!” Fanny, of course, sits in quiet

complaisance, since she had a very rotten day, indeed. See Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 83.

⁴¹ See Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 83.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴³ See Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman, 16.

⁴⁴ It is important to note that Anne originally denied Captain Wentworth's offers of marriage because her family greatly disapproved of the match, since Wentworth occupied a lower position in the Navy at the time of his advances.

⁴⁵ Austen, *Persuasion*, 54.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

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