

Animating Inanimates: Motion, Depth, and Potentiality in Austen's Characters

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ABSTRACT

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Elvina Koay

The development of three-dimensional characters in Jane Austen's novels is influenced by the works of Ann Radcliffe, Frances Burney, and Maria Edgeworth. By examining the elements of Gothicism and nationalism in her contemporaries' works, this thesis attempts to trace the ways in which they each collate the realities of the material world and the internal world of the novel. The blurring of boundaries between the interior and exterior creates depth and mobility in characters, making them seem more realistic.

Radcliffe's novels illustrate the psychological projections and internalisation of the physical world in Gothicism while Burney's works introduce a sociological correlative to the Gothic. Austen follows in her contemporaries' footsteps by depicting the interconnection between interiority and exteriority and by constructing multiple voices which further provide dimensionality and potentiality for change in her characters.

Edgeworth shows that, despite the mutability of national identity, individual choice over identity is restricted by factors of gender and class. Austen's characters overcome such obstacles through subversive maneuvers or within a new commercial class. They have greater fluidity of identity, and their individuality interacts more dynamically with their network of social relationships. Perpetual motion and potential for change, grounded by readers' knowledge of characters and their social imperatives, allow for the projection of imagination within the realm of probability. This thesis analyses Austen's derivation of techniques and themes from her precursors to create round characters which have the potential to escape the narrative frame of her novels.

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This thesis is dedicated to Mum and Dad whose chief concern is when I would graduate. Thank you for your ceaselessly blatant and overtly enthusiastic encouragement (and for the “humour gene”).

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Introduction

Jane Austen's contributions to the formal developments of the novel and her skills in perceiving and capturing the social interactions between individuals have been highly acclaimed from the moment her first novel was published. Critics from the Romantic period such as Sir Walter Scott and Richard Whately praised her "knowledge of the world, and the peculiar tact with which she presents characters that the reader cannot fail to recognize," likening her works to the Flemish school of painting, Shakespearean prose, and "the perfect appearance of reality" (*Pride and Prejudice*, 289; *Persuasion*, 201). The development of free indirect discourse in her novels and her ability to portray realistic characters raise her status as novelist in the eyes of critics and reviewers alike even till this day. Her works are compared to novels by other female writers of her day and are often noted to be far more refined and more complex.

In 1870, Richard Simpson astutely observed that the realism of Austen's characters is due to the depiction of good and bad qualities within each individual, a consequence of their subjection to social demands. Simpson highlighted Austen's consciousness "that man is a social being, and that apart from society there is not even the individual" (295). The unending tension between individual and society results in characters in motion: "a dramatic sketch, a living history, a composite force, which could only exhibit what it was by exhibiting what it did" (295). Decades later, critics like Franco Moretti and Clifford Siskin would recognise Austen's naturalisation of changes and contradictions as one of her most significant contributions to the genre of the novel. Moretti's study of the *Bildungsroman* reveals that the youth ideology embodied within the subgenre "is inevitably a process of 'mobility,' but also one of 'interiority,' the

anticipatory restlessness of a search both beyond and within that ultimately entails the contradiction between ‘normality’ and ‘individuality,’ ‘socialization’ and ‘self-determination’” (McKeon, 489). For Siskin, the ideology of development which he proposes shows that “social position was effectively psychologised into a state of mind” (578).

These critics’ observations help highlight the dynamism of Austen’s characters, pointing to, not only the characters’ dimensionality, but their inherent potentiality as well. The term “dynamism” itself suggests a continuous flow of motion, an exchange of influences, or forces interacting with one another. Like energy which can only be transferred from one form to another, the forces which affect the characters’ interiority and exteriority are interrelated. Characters’ psychological state affects the material world or their perceptions of the material world which would, in turn, act upon their thoughts and emotions. This ongoing exchange of influences can be seen as sociological, as each realm does not exist in isolation. Character “potentiality,” in its usage in this thesis, refers to the character’s ability to navigate through this network of influences and to create possibilities through their interaction with the internal and external realms. Characters who have potentiality *can* do certain things, be affected, undergo changes, form ideas, and the like (or they *can* elect to remain unchanged). Whether the characters actually go through with their decisions or processes is less important than the fact that they have or seem to have the capacity to do so. It is this potentiality which makes Austen’s characters seem more dimensional and larger than life.

The thesis will analyse the ways in which Austen builds upon the themes and narrative techniques of three female contemporaries – Radcliffe, Burney, and Edgeworth

-- to show the ways each one develops the means for collating the realities of the material world and the internal world of the novel. The interconnection between these two realms and the influence they each have on one another introduce sociological and psychological dimensions to the novel. These correlatives create a network of influence which, through the usage of various techniques, extends beyond the characters and narrative frame to affect readers as well. By using and refining techniques borrowed from her contemporaries, including free indirect discourse, Austen is able to establish multiple narratives which produce the dynamism and the depth in characters noted by Simpson.

In this thesis, the concept of free indirect discourse takes on a Bakhtinian approach whereby the narratorial voice and the adopted character voice are dialogising with one another. In discussing what he terms “nondirect speaking” and “quasi-direct discourse,” Bakhtin explains how each language, “with its own belief system filled with... objects, meanings and emotional expressions,” interacts with one another in a “dialogic tension” (313-319). For Bakhtin, this “hybridization” of languages which occurs during free indirect discourse erases the boundaries between authorial speech and the speech of others (320). Bakhtin goes on to conceptualise “character zone,” “a sphere of influence on the authorial context surrounding [the character], a sphere that extends – and often quite far – beyond the boundaries of the direct discourse allotted to him” (320). This zone is dialogised, whereby the author and characters are constantly engaged in discourse, “not a dramatic dialogue broken up into statement-and-response, but that special type of novelistic dialogue that realizes itself within the boundaries of constructions that externally resemble monologues” (320). This dialogic relationship, whereby multiple narratives are intersecting, is not necessarily or readily visible. More

importantly, the character zone creates the “potential for such dialogue” (320). The zone, then, is akin to a network of influences and narratives, pointing to the perpetual interaction between character and authorial voices. Like other critics’ concept of free indirect discourse, Bakhtin focuses upon the author’s or narrator’s usage of character’s voice. In this thesis, however, the term free indirect discourse is recasted to include the ability of characters in adopting the voices of other characters. If certain characters have potentiality and zones in which they are constantly engaged in multiple discourses, it is conceivable that they can assume the voices of others as a narrator or author does. Even though the original voice of the speaker seems to be subsumed by the assumed voice, the two narratives exist simultaneously and even interact with one another. As Bakhtin points out, the speech is presented “not *in* language but *through* language, through the linguistic medium of another” (313). With the constant engagement of narratives in discourse, the technique of free indirect discourse can be said to reflect the sociological aspect of Austen’s novels.

While the inclusion of sociological correlatives points to the significance of social networks, Austen’s characters’ potential for change and personal choice reflects their individuality and lifelike qualities, thus distinguishing them from other flat character types which are easier to duplicate. In light of Austen’s mastery in creating multiple layers of influences and her constant navigation between them, it becomes almost essential that one make intertextual comparisons so as to fully identify and understand her dependency upon and divergence from contemporary forms. Even though Austen is influenced by a wider and more varied circle of contemporaries than is assumed by those who celebrate her singular genius, a closer examination of a few select female novelists

would further illustrate the extent of Austen's individualism, especially in view of existing gender limitations which restrict female autonomy and independence. Rather than focussing upon more canonical works, such as those by Fielding and Richardson, the comparison of texts between female contemporaries would also help provide recognition for the contributions of other late eighteenth-century women writers to the genre of the novel.

Some reviewers and critics who recognise Austen's innovative techniques also play down the significance of her precursors' works. Critic A. Walton Litz, for instance, states that Austen's early novel-reading allows her to see "the form's possibilities so clearly because she realized that the popular objections were based on false distinctions and bad examples" (265). Viewed retrospectively, it can be seen that "she was the first to work from a renewed faith in the novel's potentialities as an art form" (265). As Siskin notes, Ian Watt's study of the "rise" of the novel emphasises the lack of quality in novels of the second half of the eighteenth century: "His history's elision of a half-century of writing thus necessarily increases the critical need for Jane Austen. She *must* be inserted at the end of the argument – that is to say, of the eighteenth century – to climax a rising form or, to put it more accurately, to revive a sagging one" (128). In contrast to Austen's novels, Ann Radcliffe's Gothic works are often criticised for being formulaic and following a set of lifeless conventions. However, despite parodying Radcliffean Gothic in *Northanger Abbey* and the refining of the narrative techniques borrowed from Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth, Austen is actually more indebted to her contemporaries and their works than is often noted. The links between the three female novelists and Austen are visible in *Northanger Abbey* in which they are mentioned and in which the

narrator criticises authors and readers who attempt to dissociate themselves from the writing and reading of novels. Rather than adding to the abuse of novels, the narrator asks that novelists “not desert one another” for they are “an injured body,” suggesting the connectivity of authors’ works (22).

This thesis is divided into two chapters with readings based upon the ideas and issues of Gothicism and national identity. Both Gothicism and national identity are generally believed to depend greatly upon elements of the material world. Gothic conventions consist of historical or aged settings and mechanisms for inducing terror while national identity is thought to be determined by birth. While the physicality of the Gothic and of nationalism remains significant, its relationship to the psychological and sociological needs to be further analysed. Gothic conventions and concepts of national identity are redefined to illustrate the interrelationship between the external and internal realms. The exchange of influences between each domain reflects the difficulty in determining the meanings of terms like “national identity” and provides a greater opportunity for mutability, mobility, and autonomy.

The first chapter of this thesis studies Austen’s recognition of the Gothic’s psychological implications and her introduction of a sociological correlative to Gothic representation. Despite criticisms of the superficiality of Radcliffe’s novels, the Gothic conventions utilised by the author present the material world as affecting and being affected by characters’ states of mind and emotion. Changes in sociocultural patterns in the eighteenth century led to greater investment of sentiments in the external realm, blurring the distinction between exteriority and interiority and allowing for temporal and spatial continuity. The close analysis of Radcliffe’s novels, *Romance of the Forest* and

The Mysteries of Udolpho, reveals that psychological projections and the internalisation of the physical world are naturalised to the extent that transitions between mind and matter become possible. While Austen parodies Gothic conventions in *Northanger Abbey*, she also utilises them to depict the interrelationship between the physical and the psychological. She displaces Gothic elements onto the domestic realm, showing the actual proximity of dangers depicted in Gothic novels. In spite of Henry Tilney's insistence that Gothic horrors do not occur in England, the patriarchal tyranny which is central to Radcliffean novels exists in the Tilney household in *Northanger Abbey*. Rather than seeing oppression as being invested in the visibility of Gothic conventions, Austen's protagonist realises that such occurrences often lie below the surface in the form of psychological abuse. The fact that Henry is oblivious to his father's cruelty further accentuates the irony of the situation. The defamiliarisation of everyday life then allows characters and readers to undergo a process of self-reflection and development.

If Austen derives the psychological aspect of Gothicism from Radcliffe, she obtains the social correlative of the domestic and narrative technique of free indirect discourse from Burney who also portrays Gothic elements in everyday social settings. *Cecilia*'s protagonist must constantly navigate between her psychological state and the conventions of her class and gender, highlighting the necessity for narratives which would mirror and re-enact such experiences for the readers. The use of free indirect discourse, through which characters' voices are adopted by narrators and other characters, means that individual voices, though generalised, are still sufficiently distinct to be recognised. The ability to present idioms as belonging to one's self or others suggests characters' depth and allows for the constant act of donning and discarding

exterior properties which may or may not correspond to their interiority. The multiplicity of voices simultaneously and continuously intersecting at various levels proliferate the number of possible interpretations. Austen provides closures required by readers in the conventional endings which highlight the tension between the differing voices, calling upon readers' participation in recognising social codes as well as knowledge of characters and in projecting forth that which is left unsaid. As such, Austen's realism is based upon the characters' potential for change and the understanding that such capacity which marks their individuality is circumscribed by social imperatives. While the Gothicism of Austen's and Burney's novels share the same sociological concerns, Austen utilises Gothic conventions in a more upfront manner to highlight their significance. When she subverts them, she does so not to minimise the importance of superficial mechanisms, but to illustrate the different levels of severity which they might be said to represent. Rather than portraying the employment of conventions in the binary of meaningful and meaningless, Austen's usage suggests a wider range of possibilities with varying degrees of meaning. As such, there is greater flexibility in interpretation.

The second chapter further examines the psychological and sociological correlatives in Austen's novels but focuses upon the comparison between Austen's treatment of national identity and that found in the writings of Maria Edgeworth. Following in Edgeworth's footsteps, Austen shows that national identity no longer depends upon one's blood relationship or geographical origin but, instead, is mutable. Issues of the nation are displaced onto the social and domestic circles, allowing various spheres of influences from multiple domains to intersect. Edgeworth's novels, which mainly concentrate on the state of the Anglo-Irish gentry, provide astute observations of

the blurring of physical boundaries due to British imperialism and reflect the contending arguments which attempt to redefine the meaning of patriotism and nationalism. With the rise of imperialism, British influence was spread across its dominions while the nation's market was flooded with foreign products which had an impact on British culture. Even today, the exchange of influences between two nations are more apparent at the boundaries where one is more likely to find people who are susceptible to influences from both sides of the border. Sociocultural changes due to the exchange of influences between nations and internal heterogeneity within the nation itself contribute to the difficulty in streamlining diversity to form the concept of national identity. The formation of national identity thus becomes a constant process of redefinition, of blurring and redrawing boundaries. Rather than viewing the works of those like Edgeworth as nationalist texts, it is perhaps more accurate to regard them as depictions of cosmopolitanism. The centrality of small communities in Austen's novels marks her recognition of the difficulty in conceptualising the idea of nation. Meanwhile, the intrusion of outsiders into the community and the movement of the military at a distance from the community provide a sense of motion and dimensional perspective, helping to reinforce the dynamic quality of Austen's narratives.

While identification is not synonymous with identity, there is a need to present national identity as a matter of consent rather than coercion, even if the end result serves to reaffirm the identities provided at birth. Although characters are able to alter their own nationality, suggesting the availability of individual choice, they are nevertheless restricted by numerous factors including that of gender and class. While Austen's novels reflect the same tension between individuals and their sociocultural structures as depicted

in Edgeworth's texts, Austen rejects the advocacy of paternalism as a form of resolution. Instead, Austen allows her characters more individual autonomy, autonomy which can be obtained through subversive maneuvers or within a new commercial class consisting of nonlanded professionals like the Gardiners and the Bingleys in *Pride and Prejudice* and the Knightleys in *Emma*. As David Spring proposes, Austen's portrayal of this rising "pseudo-gentry" reflects her interest in a class with social mobility and independence (396). The "pseudo-gentry" are devoted "to acquiring the trappings of gentry status" including "an appropriate income, which Jane Austen called 'independence,' that most desirable of all social states" (396). As such, her characters have more fluidity of identity and a greater extent of dynamism between their individuality and the network of social relationships.

For Austen, perpetual motion is the key to creating dimensionality and realism. Even when a character seems to be at stasis, there is a constant exchange of influences between the character's interior and exterior domains. The balance between society and individual requires a network which has some limiting factors but which also allows for autonomy and mobility. By imbuing her characters and narratives with continuous fluidity and the potential for change, Austen manages to create an interactive relationship between her novels and her readership, grounding her readers with the substance of her texts and yet providing enough scope for the projection of imagination. While much indebted to her contemporaries, Radcliffe, Burney, and Edgeworth, it is essentially what Austen does with the narrative techniques and themes borrowed from them which further paves the path for future development of the novelistic genre.

**Blurred Boundaries:
Fluidity of the Interior-Exterior Interconnection
in the Gothicism of Radcliffe, Burney, and Austen**

Before the development of psychologically complex characters by the Fanny Burney school of authors, many eighteenth-century novelists were accused of creating what is commonly known as flat characters. In discussing the need for novelists to apologise for or defend their genre in that era, critic A. Walton Litz supposes that one of the reasons for the “stunted and erratic growth” of novels is “the lack of a coherent theory of fiction that could direct the development of the genre and defend it against purely moralistic objections” (265). The Gothic genre, in particular, became the subject of burlesques and satires after its short-lived popularity, and many critics have commented upon the artificiality of Gothic conventions and the significance of the physical, as exemplified by the “recipe” quoted in Litz’s essay. The fact that even those from the period of its origin believed that a Gothic novel could be concocted according to a formulaic list of ingredients illustrates the general assumption that the genre was wholly dependent upon superficial mechanisms of surface representation. Although the genre was the subject of numerous parodies, Austen’s treatment of these conventions in her novels, including in *Northanger Abbey*, displays the understanding that Gothic representation had greater psychological and sociological implications than many of its contemporaries appreciated.

Austen builds upon the Gothic’s psychological significance and includes the sociological correlatives that help develop depth in characters. Gothic features such as psychological projection and internalisation, enabled through the investment of

sentimental values and memories in material objects as well as the blurring of distinction between the external and internal world, highlight the interrelationship between characters' interiority and exteriority. However, for Austen, character depth is not only psychological, for even characters' interiority is a form of social space, influenced by social relationships between individuals, regardless whether real or imagined. In fact, Austen extends the psychological and social experience beyond her characters to her readers, allowing them opportunities to identify with but yet differentiate themselves from the characters. Expanding upon the Gothic, Austen shows that the interior and the exterior are connected to each other in a dynamic network whereby each realm is able to affect and be affected by the other. As such, in order to fully understand and appreciate Austen's contributions to the novel genre, it is essential to analyse how she portrays and utilises the relationships between these two domains.

In response to the increasing number of critics who are “‘*plung[ed]* into feeling’ to find ‘a new dimension’” of the Gothic’s psychological aspect, other critics, such as Eve Sedgwick, Adela Pinch, and Diane Hoeveler, have reminded us of the importance of surfaces themselves in Gothic fiction (Sedgwick , 255). Sedgwick’s analysis of Ann Radcliffe’s novels investigates the sexual function of veils and physical markings in relation to sexual identity and languages. Her account influenced Pinch’s exploration of the circulation and imposition of feelings through the imagery of tears upon hands. Much of Hoeveler’s recent readings of the outer world as representing the female rites of passage and the change from incestuous/clan marriages to exogamous alliances is also indebted to Sedgwick’s speculations. However, what these critics tend to focus on is the “thematic attention to surfaces,” the motifs which recur throughout Radcliffe’s novels

(Sedgwick, 225). They pay little or no attention to the relationship between these surfaces and interiority. In other words, they are mostly concerned with *what* the surfaces represent and not *how* the surfaces correlate with interiority, even though they are not always distinct. Analysing Austen's unity, however, presents the opportunity to focus on the correlation by way of specifying what she learns from the Gothic. While the critics' claims that the protagonists are "all the same woman" and that "Gothic characters seem devitalized or two-dimensional" may be justified, such conclusions contribute insufficiently to the question of Gothic's legacy to novelistic character development (Hoeveler, 96; Sedgwick, 256). Instead of posing the Gothic and the *Bildungsroman* as opposites, it might be more productive to trace the development of rounded characters out of them both. Rather than seeing the novel of manners as departing from the Gothic, it is time perhaps to perceive it as building upon the Gothic.

The interrelationship between the external world of setting and internal world of character is perhaps most apparent in Gothic novels in which temporal and spatial continuity play an essential role in influencing characters' and readers' states of emotion. The investment of feelings and memories in the physical world, one way of linking the interior to the exterior, creates a connection between the past, present, and future. Remembrance of the past, whether through memory or oral narratives, coupled with material evidences, affect the psyche to the extent that psychological projection becomes possible. In Bakhtin's discussion of the castle motif in historical and Gothic novels, historical time is shown to be materialised, acting as a reminder of the past to those no longer living in it. Alongside tangible artefacts, Bakhtin even cites "legends and traditions" as historical reminders (246). By using Sir Walter Scott as an example,

Bakhtin suggests that what makes the castle historical in novels is not simply its material antiquity, but the cultural, intellectual, and sentimental values invested in it, the “organic cohesion of spatial and temporal aspects and categories” and the “historical intensity of this chronotope” (246). The identity, status, personality, and events surrounding the life of the proprietor become just as important as or even more important than the physical object itself. It is the interrelationship between the intangible and the physical which interests novelists, as it prevents them from falling into “excessive antiquarianism” and allows for the indulgence of romantic sensibility and imagination (246).

Oral narratives in the form of legends, gossip, and stories create a sense of temporal and spatial continuity, allowing the supernatural to exist in the present. The continuity comes, not only from the reproduction of narratives from generation to generation, but also from one’s ability to contribute to and modify these narratives. It would seem as though the connection between individuals affected by and affecting the narratives extends along a horizontal as well as a vertical axis which crosses socio-economic class boundaries. In Radcliffe’s *The Romance of the Forest*, although the protagonist is a fairly well-educated, aristocratic lady, like the manservant, she is not exempt from being affected by the stories surrounding the isolated ruined abbey. Empty of inhabitants and far away from civilised community, the site is embedded with memories of the past, memories which are formed, not only by the physical traces of decay and disrepair, but also by the rumours surrounding it. According to Peter, the manservant, the information gathered from the local peasants tells of a tragic story of intrigue and criminality, which forms the foundation of the locals’ belief that the castle is haunted:

It was reported, that some person, was soon after it came to the present possessor, brought secretly to the abbey, and confined in these apartments; who, or what he was, had never been conjectured, and what became of him nobody knew. The report died gradually away, and many persons entirely disbelieved the whole of it...

The circumstance had at first excited surprise, and various reports arose in consequence, but it was difficult to know what ought to be believed. Among the rest, it was said, that strange appearances had been observed at the abbey, and uncommon noises heard; and though this report had been ridiculed by sensible persons as idle superstition of ignorance, it had fastened so strongly upon the minds of the common people, that for the last seventeen years none of the peasantry had ventured to approach the spot. The abbey was now, therefore, abandoned to decay. (89)

When the narrative provided by the community is being related, the voice switches from Peter's to the narrator's, displaying the possibility for the narrative to be adopted by any individual. Its impersonality exemplifies the narrative's universal ability to affect and be incorporated by anyone regardless of socio-economic status and personal ties to the actual physical location or object. Although the local narratives are simply dismissed as "idle superstition of ignorance," at the end of the novel, they prove not to be unfounded. A person had been brought to the abbey to be confined, and given the deserted and deteriorating conditions of the castle, with it becoming a "residence of birds of prey" and bats, it is little wonder that strange appearances and noises were observed (82). The speculative imaginings of the peasants, combined with the physical condition of the castle, provide a historicity for the region. Even though the real time of the historical events has passed, continuity exists through the combination of remembrance and physical evidence.

Even before Adeline and the La Mottes come to know the local stories, however, they are already affected by the ruins' physical decay. The passing of time, as evidenced by the external deterioration in the surroundings, makes it possible for the characters to

conceptualise a connection between the present and the past. La Motte, for example, thinks of his mortality when he witnesses the abbey's degeneration. In visualising the place as it had once been, La Motte's feels "a sensation of sublimity rising into terror – a suspension of mingled astonishment and awe" as "fancy bore him back to the past ages" (83). Affected by his own comparison between himself and the decaying chapel, he believes that, within a few years, he "shall become like the mortals on whose reliques [he] now [gazes]" (83). However, paradoxically, in thinking about his death in relation to the deaths of others before him, La Motte essentially validates his own immortality or, rather, continuity in time. He envisions his own death which, in turn, can possibly "be the subject of meditation to a succeeding generation" (83). It is the physical condition of the ruins that induces La Motte to contemplate the spirituality of the dead inhabitants which, then, prompts him to imagine a state of being which can similarly affect another in the future.

The paradoxical relationship between death as physical termination and death as spiritual continuity is due to the shift in attitudes toward death and dying in European culture, as Terry Castle explains in her discussion of Phillipe Ariès's hypothesis in her essay, "The Spectralization of the Other". In contrast to earlier periods, when death was accepted as an organic experience, death in the eighteenth century began to undergo a process of spiritualisation. Pinpointing "changing affectional patterns, the breakdown of communal social life, and the increasingly individualistic and secular nature of modern experience" as main causes for the intensification of bodily repression in the face of death, Ariès explains how the new "romantic cult of the dead" invokes a "growing subjective fascination with idealized images of the deceased" and a belief that "physical

separations were only temporary” (242-3). Objects, like “consolatory literatures”, “grave inscriptions and monuments”, “mementos”, and the “garden of remembrance” become new subjects of emotional investments (242-3). As Castle goes on to explain, the change in the way of perceiving death not only reaffirms the continuity of those who are dead, but also the continuity of those who are still living: “to undo the death of another by meditating on his visionary form is also a compelling way of negating one’s own death” and to “‘see’ the dead live again is to know that one too will live forever” (248). With the fading of the distinction between the tangible and the intangible, Castle would support Todorov’s argument that “‘the transition from mind to matter has become possible’.

Ordinary distinctions between fantasy and reality, mind and matter, subject and object, break down. The boundary between psychic experience and the physical world collapses, and ‘the idea becomes a matter of perception’” (239). One who has a “refined sentiment”, “a feeling heart”, and “sympathetic imagination” is capable of projecting his/her state of emotions and mind outwards onto the material world in what Castle terms as “the supernaturalization of everyday life” (234). Conversely, one is also capable of internalising the physical realm, changing “sensory experience” into “an absorption in illusion” in what is termed as “the spectralization of the other” (246 and 237).

With the collapse of the boundaries between the internal and external world, it becomes easier for the characters in novels both to be psychologically affected by and to affect the physical world. Compared to the characters in the works of earlier novelists, like Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* and Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* or *Robinson Crusoe*, whose present moment is what matters, the characters in Radcliffe’s fiction have greater continuity to their past and even their future. Not only is there little or no obstacle in the

transition from mind to matter, but the past, present, and future converge together in corresponding spaces. As Moretti suggests, a present that is “individualised” is the constant work of reorganization of what has taken place, as well as a projection of what is to come” (44). In *Romance of the Forest*, for example, upon Adeline’s arrival at the abbey, her emotions reflect her subconscious awareness of the past and future time of that particular space:

The partial gleams thrown across the fabric seemed to make its desolation more solemn, while the obscurity of the greater part of the pile heightened its sublimity, and led fancy on to scenes of horror. Adeline, who had hitherto remained silent, now uttered an exclamation of mingled admiration and fear. A kind of pleasing dread thrilled her bosom, and filled all her soul. Tears started to her eyes – she hung upon the arm of La Motte, and looked at him with a sort of hesitating interrogation. (83-4)

The diction used to describe Adeline’s emotions, a paradoxical coupling of “admiration and fear” and “pleasing dread”, as well as her “hesitating interrogation” of her indecisive benefactor seem to foreshadow the discovery of her connection to the abbey and Marquis de Montalt. Adeline’s conflicting emotions, fears and desires, forged by the nature of the setting, continue to grow as she stays in the castle, to the extent that her dreams foreshadow her discovery of the past crimes which had been committed at the abbey and which are, essentially, related to her through her bloodline, a discovery which she makes only at the end of the novel.

In order for psychological projections and internalisations to take place, it is essential that the object or space be imbued with sentimental values, be the values personal, cultural, or socio-historical. As Castle explains in her essay about Radcliffe’s Gothic novels, “To be ‘at home’ [in Radcliffe’s castles or abbeys] is to be possessed by memory, to dwell with spirits of the dead” (234). In Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of the*

Udolpho, Emily's entrance into a familiar place, the library, shortly after her father's death triggers her imagination so much that, even though she tries to dispel her visions and subdue her imagination through reason, she finds herself incapable of controlling her psychical activities. The setting "[heightens] the solemnity of her feelings" so that "she almost [fancies] she [sees] him before her" (266). Every object in the library and the very room itself "speak" of her father as though the inanimate were capable of action. The invocation of her father's memory allows her to almost psychologically project an image of him back into the material realm, "almost" due to the attempt in self-censorship. Although she tries to "[check] the illusions of a distempered imagination", she finds herself contemplating the state of the afterlife and a past emotional conversation her father has had shortly before his death (266). Her psychological condition at that moment, caused by the "subject she [has] been considering" and "the present tone of her spirits", makes her vulnerable to external impressions and, in the dark, she mistakes her dog for a spirit of the dead (266). As such, even when she tries to repress her imagination, her reason betrays her belief in the physicality of the intangible. Rather than having a belief in the concrete, Emily considers the possibility of spirits returning.

It is Emily's state of deep mourning and sentimental imagination which cause her to be not only psychologically affected and project outwards, but to be physically affected by her own thoughts and memories as well. When she returns to her cabin alone, for example, her reflections were not about the death of her father but, rather, the *body* of the deceased. The perception of the physicality impresses upon her, penetrating both her consciousness and subconsciousness. She dreams that she sees her father and hears sweet music only to be awakened by actual aural strains. At this point, Emily is in a state of

uncertainty, unable to discern whether the music is the effect of her subconscious mind or her conscious senses: “She doubted, listened, raised herself in the bed, and again listened” before finally deciding that it is not a creation of her imagination (261). However, affected by both her dreams and the musical harmony, she allows the music to “bear away the listening soul to heaven” and into a past conversation with St. Aubert, both scenarios allowing for a reunion with her deceased parent (261). These impressions, then, act on her physically, causing her to stop crying and to feel chills and a pressing upon her heart.

The fact that Emily’s mental and emotional projection occurs in a state of semi-consciousness, between sleeping and waking, illustrates the blurring of boundaries between the psychological and physical states. Like Emily, Adeline’s dreams in *The Romance of the Forest* prove to be significant in illustrating the connection between the internal and external worlds. In fact, Radcliffe does not provide a satisfactory rational explanation for the similarities between the dream images and Adeline’s discovery of the chamber which had previously been her father’s prison and in which the protagonist finds the dagger and the manuscript. Upon entering the chamber, Adeline instantly recalls her dreams and has a “confused remembrance of one through which she [has] passed” even though the “chamber [is] not much like that in which she had seen chavalier” (121). When she finally comes across a chamber which looks exactly like the one in her dreams, “the remembrance struck so forcibly upon her imagination, that she was in danger of fainting” (121-2). What seems to be merely déjà vu in the beginning turns into a re-enactment of her dream in reality. Prior to her discovery of the final chamber, when she awakes from her dreams, she feels that her visions have “struck her” just as it does when

she enters the chamber, as though these imaginings are not only psychological but physical. The forcefulness of her visions almost renders her unconscious and they are “strongly impressed upon her memory,” so much so that she believes she still hears and sees the images and voices of her dreams (120). Dwelling upon her dreams, she finds that they are “so very terrible, returned so often, and [seem] to be so connected with each other that she could hardly think them accidental; yet why they should be supernatural, she could not tell” (120). At the moment of her exploration of the chambers, there is no clear differentiation of the external world as an influence on Adeline’s imagination from the “reality” projected by her imagination. She remembers her dreams upon entering the first chamber even though it does not resemble the room in her dreams, and all that she has is the uncertainty of memory, the collision of her external and internal worlds.

Adeline’s dreams are significant because they display the psychical and physical connection between herself and the abbey, for it is at this dismal location that her father was imprisoned and murdered. It is at this abbey, then, that Adeline can and should recover her lost bloodline. The novel plots Adeline’s progression from a homeless, abused orphan to a young lady who discovers her true lineage and a place of belonging. The disclosure of her true parents and her marriage at the end of the novel mark the completion of the plot development. However, in terms of character development, there is little to differentiate Adeline from Emily or any of Radcliffe’s other protagonists. Like the characters of novels from the earlier decades of the century, such as Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* and Henry Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews*, Adeline’s recovery of her identity is as much the restoration of her socio-economic status as it is the discovery of her personal individuality. This lack of interior change and the reliance upon

conventional surface developments are noted by critics like Sedgwick and Hoeveler who discuss the “interchangeableness of the women” (Hoeveler, 55). Aside from the ascertainment of her roots and the reattainment of her material wealth and social class, Adeline does not learn from her experiences, nor does she undergo any form of personal change. However, the exploration of the interaction of setting and character marks the beginning of the development of character dimensional psychology in a legacy which Austen later develops.

Many critics have debated whether Austen is criticising Radcliffe in her parody, *Northanger Abbey*, or is actually indebted to her. As Susan Fraiman states about Austen’s lampoon of Radcliffe’s Gothic novels, “Clearly Austen means to mock the improbable plots, extreme characters, and emotional hyperbole of much popular fiction – and to school its avid readers in her own less sensational mode” (ix). However, as Fraiman points out, other critics have managed to prove that “Austen may not reject Radcliffe’s scenarios of terror so much as reconfigure them” (ix). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar both agree that “if *Northanger Abbey* is a parody of novelistic clichés, it also resembles the rest of the juvenilia in its tendency to rely on these very conventions for its own shape” and, “[rather] than rejecting the gothic conventions she burlesques, Austen is very clearly criticizing female gothic in order to reinvest it with authority” (282 and 284). In discussing the way in which Austen displaces the Gothic elements politically and geographically onto a more immediate chronotope and, therefore, more contemporary concerns, Litz echoes Lionel Trilling in saying that “Catherine’s belief in a violent and uncertain life lurking beneath the surface of English society is nearer the truth than the complacent conviction, shared by the readers of Mrs. Radcliffe, that life in the Home

Counties is always sane and orderly” (271). His hypothesis is reinforced by Robert Hopkins who believes that the political passages in *Northanger Abbey* serve as a symbol of the turbulent post-revolutionary political world (301). Presenting a feminist reading of the novel, Claudia Johnson suggests that “*Northanger Abbey* does not refute, but rather clarifies and reclaims, gothic conventions in distinctly political ways”; while Austen dismisses the gothic machinery, she retains the central gothic figure -- the tyrannical patriarch -- and its threats (310-1). As such, because of Austen’s parody of Radcliffe in *Northanger Abbey* and because she uses and depicts the interrelationship between the exterior world and the psychological, the former does follow the footsteps of her precursor in many aspects.

Deidre Lynch’s *The Economy of Character* is very helpful in providing a different perspective on the changes in characterisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. By examining the socioeconomic relations of rising consumer culture, Lynch shows how the way readers perceive and interact with characters changed as the desire and seeming need for individualisation became more pronounced with the advent of print technology and proliferation of material goods. She argues that the shift from physiognomic legibility in characters to the development of psychological dimension, from caricatures in the works of Hogarth and Fielding to round characters in the novels of Burney and Austen, is due to the concern over increasing amounts of copies and visibility in a newly commercialised society. Aside from personalising properties available in the consumer market, the ability to discern deep “truths” about characters helps readers feel as though they are distinguishing themselves from the crowd, for it requires the act of “proper” reading which reflects the discerning tastes of the readers. Seen in this light, Austen’s

novels, which demand and advocate the process of rereading in order to find hidden meanings beyond the surface, highlight the characters' and readers' interiority and, essentially, individuality. Ironically, however, the desire for and attempt to render oneself distinct from the crowd essentially likens one to the crowd as many strive to acquire and exhibit such tastes and singularity. Lynch argues that, in order to create depth, Austen juxtaposes character interiority against the "buzz" of "the social machine", not only by depicting inner lives as being contrary to social perceptions and by using superficial foils but also by allowing thoughts and emotions to go beyond the sayable when characters use general opinions as a cover (239). For Lynch, then, Austen uses characters in a way which exploits the tensions between individual and society.

In *The Economy of Character*, Lynch brings up Gothic fiction, especially the works of Ann Radcliffe, to highlight the disassociation between the protagonists' visibility and their legibility (or, rather, between seeing and knowing) and to use the protagonists as examples of readers with discerning tastes. These readings serve to show the similarities between Gothic's depiction of characters and Austen's own characterisation in her novels. However, that is as far as Lynch goes in investigating Gothic's contributions to the development of character depth. Although this chapter extrapolates much from Lynch's work, it also provides an alternative vision by placing Austen's works within the context of Radcliffe's and Burney's Gothicism. While Lynch's conclusion portrays the individual and society as "a relation of mismatching," the blurring of boundaries between the material world and the psychological world displays the interconnection between the two realms and helps reconfigure our understanding of inner and outer dimensions so that they appear indistinct (251). Psychological

projections, induced by the internalisation of settings and objects that are invested with sociocultural and/or personal values, create a sense of depth and mobility. Not only can one's thoughts and emotions flow from one dimension to another, but one's properties and self identity also become seemingly inseparable. The Gothic accentuates the interrelationship between the physical and the psychological through defamiliarisation, displaying the mechanisms which stimulate the imagination of the characters and which lay hidden beneath the surface in their everyday lives. These mechanisms, appearing in the form of social demands and cultural values, help ground the projections which readers may make regarding round characters, thus allowing for the freedom of imaginative possibilities, yet framing the speculations within the realm of probability.

Although Northanger Abbey has been modernised, unlike the ruins in *The Romance of the Forest*, the site is still embedded with sentiments related to the general's late wife. As Eleanor Tilney tells of the fir grove, "I used to walk here so often with [my mother]... though I never loved it then, as I have loved it since. At that time indeed I used to wonder at her choice. But her memory endears it now" (123). What makes the location essential to her is not any its physical features but, rather, the mental and emotional values which Eleanor invests in the setting. The image of her mother, invoked by the sight of the grove, allows the remembrance of the past and, hence, the ability for the image of the mother to live in the present. According to Castle, setting becomes a background for the fantasy of continuity whereby "[nature] itself becomes a mere screen – the sublime backdrop against which the potent fancies of mourning are played out" (245). Shared memories, embedded in the physical realm, create a circular link between interiority and exteriority. Despite the apparent stress on social conformity in novels of

manners, psychological continuity is also equally important, for it is the ability to reconceptualise the past, to psychologically recreate a “reality” from that specific temporal and spatial moment as Wordsworth does through his “spots of time”, that enables character growth (l. 288). As Lynch suggests, Austen’s protagonists have to learn how to reread people and situations. Just as Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice* has to reanalyse her first impressions of Mr. Darcy and tries to re-enact the past by asking him to “account for having ever fallen in love with her”, the protagonist of *Northanger Abbey* has to reflect upon her past actions and the character of the General (248). The possibility of discrepancy between the interior and exterior selves also makes the concept of rereading possible, as the inaccuracy of surface representation means that one has to constantly analyse and interpret the outer dimensions in order to identify the inner self.

Even before Catherine arrives at the abbey, her imagination, stimulated by her passion for Gothic romances, has already projected an image of what she wants the abbey to look like and to signify. Her passion for historical buildings is comparable to her passion for Henry Tilney and, in fact, acts as a stand in for “those reveries which his image did not fill” (96). For Catherine, the idea of fulfilling her deepest desires themselves, highlighted by her belief of the near impossibility of such an opportunity ever occurring, heightens her imagination, causing her not only to visualise the abbey, but to fantasise about the narratives pertaining to the locality. Already, her mind is at work and she cannot “entirely subdue the hope of some traditional legends, some awful memorials of an injured and ill-fated nun” (96). Further fed by a combination of novel-reading and Henry Tilney’s teasing, the protagonist’s imagination causes her to speculate about the possibility of hidden secrets and crimes committed by General Tilney to the

extent that she imposes her visions upon the physical world, despite the fact that she considers the setting “odd and inconsistent” with her representation, incapable of giving her the consciousness of being in an abbey, and “to an imagination which had hoped for the smallest divisions, and the heaviest stone-work, for painted glass, dirt and cobwebs,... very distressing” (110-1). Her psychological state prepares her to be affected by her surroundings, especially when a storm animates the world around her and provides a continuity to the past: the storm makes “everything [seem] to speak the awfulness of her situation” and reminds her of the “countless variety of dreadful situations, and horrid scenes which such buildings had witnessed, and such storms ushered in” (114-5). Even though Catherine is, to an extent, aware of the discrepancies between what she perceives and what her reason tells her, she continues to project upon various objects, notably an old high chest, a cabinet, and a roll of papers which she finds inside the cabinet. When she discovers the cabinet, for instance, she recognises that it is “not absolutely ebony and gold; but it [is] Japan, black and yellow Japan of the handsomest kind” (115). Nevertheless, she persists in believing that “the yellow [have] very much the effect of gold” in the candlelight, thus matching the material object to the image she has in her mind (115). Every time the protagonist externalises her visual fabrications, she continues to feed her own imagination which then causes her physical self to be afflicted. Her physical conditions are agitated by symptoms ranging from trembling, cold sweat, heart palpitations, to the chilling of her blood. In fact, her senses become so hypersensitive that she feels or imagines that she feels the animation of the external world. The blast of the wind seems “fraught with awful intelligence” and the noises created by the storm

“[strike] at intervals on her startled ear”, as though the former has a message to convey to her and the latter is physically abusing her (117).

Later on, her desire to discover the past manifests itself in the belief that the general's late wife had been or is still imprisoned and abused. She even spins an entire narrative around it, speculating that his motive may have been “jealousy perhaps, or wanton cruelty” (129). When she realises that she had allowed her imagination to supersede her reason, she becomes ashamed, but yet she is convinced of the ability of the material world to provide continuity to the past and insight into the nature of people:

There were two other doors in the chamber, leading probably into dressing-closets; but she had no inclination to open either. Would the veil in which Mrs. Tilney had last walked, or the volume in which she had last read, remain to tell what nothing else was allowed to whisper? No: whatever might have been the General's crimes, he had certainly too much wit to let them sue for detection. (133)

Catherine reads her surroundings the way she would Radcliffean novels. The room is presented as a volume capable of having different tonalities and hidden meanings. Over the course of the novel, Catherine learns to change her way of reading. What she manages to achieve is to alter and to control her interpretation of the surface of the text as well as the meanings hidden within the text. She understands that all which she had experienced have been the creation of her own state of emotions and mind, “all a voluntary, self-created delusion”, “an imagination resolved on alarm”, and “a mind which, before she entered the Abbey, had been craving to be frightened” (137). Litz suggests that Austen's “criticism of Catherine's imagination is not that it is ridiculous or dangerous *per se*, but that it is uncontrolled by judgment” (273). However, she also learns that reading requires the analysis of the relationships between herself, as the reader, and

the text as well as the text and its context, as the boundaries between the materiality of the text and its intangible signification are not clear cut and distinct.

From Henry, Catherine understands that the dangers presented in Gothic fiction may be restricted to the imaginary or strange worlds created by the author. She considers the idea that, in England, it is not in the nature of the natives to commit such horrific deeds and, even if there are some who are capable, the local laws and manners would expose them (138). Though her view is limited according to geographical locations, not having travelled out of England before, Catherine's method of thinking develops from ascertaining types to identifying degrees:

Among the Alps and the Pyrenees, perhaps, there were no mixed characters. There, such as were not as spotless as an angel, might have the disposition of a fiend. But in England it was not so; among the English, she believed, in their hearts and habits, there was a general though unequal mixture of good and bad. Upon this conviction, she would not be surprized if even in Henry and Eleanor Tilney, some slight imperfection might hereafter appear; and upon this conviction she need not fear to acknowledge some actual specks in the character of their father who, though cleared from the grossly injurious suspicions which she must ever blush to have entertained, she did believe, upon serious consideration, to be not perfectly amiable. (138)

When she is later told the mercenary reasons for General Tilney's treatment of her, she decides that she has, "at any rate, heard enough to feel, that in suspecting General Tilney of either murdering or shutting up his wife, she had scarcely sinned against his character, or magnified his cruelty" (170). As such, Catherine is not only judging the General in terms of character type, but the gradation of malevolence as well. According to Gilbert and Gubar, Catherine's imaginings of the General's wife's victimisation is actually her own feelings of confinement and constraint in the General's house and is the result "when a woman is made to disregard her personal sense of danger, to accept as real what

contradicts her perception of her own situation” (290 and 292). What she had previously believed to be a figment of her imagination caused by her romantic sensitivity and susceptibility to external influences turns out to be an exaggerated but not entirely incorrect reading of her surroundings. Hopkins, Gilbert, and Gubar concur that, while *Northanger Abbey* is not an exact replication of Radcliffe’s gothic scenes, the novel does provide indications of the political threats and paranoia of the period or, as Hopkins puts it, “the nightmarish political world of the 1790s and very early 1800s” (301).

Radcliffe’s Gothicism is mainly psychological, based upon the supernaturalisation of everyday life and the spectralisation of the other to form temporal and spatial continuity between the past and the present and among characters. The supernatural occurrences in her novel are easily explained away, and those for which the author provides no account are simply dismissed. For Austen, the displacement of the Gothic into everyday life provides an opportunity for the characters’ self-reflection and self-development. While Austen borrows from Radcliffe the psychological projection and internalisation for the expression of the interrelationship between the interior and the exterior, she goes further than her precursor in utilising this relationship to provide depth in her characters as well as to change her contemporary readers’ method of reading. Through the formal development of her novels, Austen attempts to fashion, for the readers, the actual experiences of her characters, their lives, and developments themselves. As Clifford Siskin points out, “The ‘ordinary extraordinary,’ that problematic Romantic relationship between what we experience and how we experience it, was a central concern of Austen in her novels” (580). Hence, to further create dimensionality in

her writing, she utilises and interpolates from another of her contemporaries, Frances Burney.

The plot of Burney's *Cecilia* turns on the relationship between property and self insofar as it concerns the fate of Cecilia who can inherit only if the man she marries takes on her last name. Her problem is further complicated when she loses most of her own coming-of-age money to the debt she has incurred by helping Mr. Harrel and the poor. The elements of Gothicism first make their appearance in the chapter entitled "A Man of Business", where Mr. Harrel commits suicide and, later, in "A Pursuit" in which the protagonist is driven to madness. During these instances, the boundary between what is considered normal and what is not is rendered indistinct; the psychological world of imagination and dreams become interlaced with and as uncanny as the social and cultural world of surfaces. For Burney, the blurring of interior and exterior worlds has a social correlative, as the exterior world is no longer simply a backdrop for psychological projections and internalisation. Both interiority and exteriority are parts of a multi-dimensional network consisting of relationships among individuals and their inner beings which have to be navigated through.

In the scene at Vauxhall, Mr. Harrel acts outside of social norms and decides to gather together an unusual group of characters from different classes for supper: his creditors and the family members whom he is supposed to support. His actions escalate the emotional suspense of Cecilia and his wife, who are distressed over his previous threat to commit suicide and are aware of his dire financial straits and intoxication. Brought together, the lower class characters defamiliarise, for the readers, the characters of the upper class society who have been introduced prior to this scene. Most of the upper

class characters seem to be merely caricatures, the kind of characters Henry Fielding has been accused of creating in his novels.¹ Characters like Mr. Meadows, Morrice, and Captain Aresby, exhibit very little depth but, instead, display many highly individualistic and eccentric particularities. Mr. Meadows, for example, is boredom personified while Captain Aresby's only claim to distinction in the novel is his inappropriate incorporation of foreign words in his speech. The eighteenth-century concern about the number of character strokes which defines the boundaries between a well-drawn character and an exaggerated caricature, as discussed in *The Economy of Character*, is here being highlighted. For these upper class characters whose function in terms of plot development is almost inconsequential, their presence is accepted rather easily by readers as well as by other characters. As such, the encounter between the upper and lower class characters draws attention to the lack of interiority in characters, regardless of their social status, and to disclose the complacency with which such caricatures have been received. In the Vauxhall scene, however, even the indifferent Mr. Meadows is shaken out of his usual appearance of ennui. Faced with those who are not from his social circle, he can "no longer seem unconscious of what had passed" and does "himself so much violence as to arise, and ask if the ladies would be seated" (394). Mr. Harrel's financial indebtedness to Mr. Hobson and Mr. Simkins and Sir Robert Floyer's identification of the two men's professions by sight remind readers of the daily interaction between the two classes which takes place, for the most part, behind the scenes or, perhaps more significantly, in

¹ Lynch, for instance, states that, despite Fielding's and Hogarth's attempts to differentiate characters from caricatures, it appears in their definitions as though there is only a fine "dividing line between good and bad characterizing [and the line itself] becomes the cause of... physiognomic distortion" (66). Ian Watt and Clifford Siskin also draw attention to Fielding's interest in exteriority over interiority when they discuss "the objective mode cultivated by the public man Henry Fielding" and Austen's combination of "Fielding's 'outer' view and Richardson's 'inner' view'" (Lynch, 212; Siskin, 574)

a public sphere denied to women. Even when Cecilia interacts with lower class characters, she does so, like Emma from Austen's novel, in order to perform acts of charity as befitting women of their class. Beyond the world of appearances and consumption lies a hidden network of transactions where class boundaries are dissolved, even if barriers of gender and social conventions are not. Everyday "reality" does not only consist of relationships which are readily or visually apprehensible, especially by women, but those which are not as well. For Burney, then, there is a need to consider the social in addition to the psychological when trying to accentuate character depth.

While the other characters' discomfiture stems from their apprehension of being seen with lower class people, Cecilia's uneasiness has very much to do with her psychological state. She has "anxious suspicions of some new scheme [of Mr. Harrel's], and a terrified wonder in what all these transactions would terminate" (388). During supper, though somewhat conscious of the impropriety of the situation, Cecilia is consumed by her thoughts and feelings. Compared to Mrs. Harrel who "[grows] every instant more restless and miserable" due to her "[shock] to be seen in such mixed company", Cecilia "scarce [hears]" when she is talked to, is "half distracted to think how they [are] to get home", and "[passes] all her time in making secret vows that if once again she [is] delivered from Mr. Harrel she would never see him more" (395 and 402). Eerily, Cecilia's final thoughts become a foreshadowing of the scene's outcome for she no longer gets to see Mr. Harrel after he runs off to shoot himself and her chief concern after the suicide, aside from tending to her newly-widowed friend, is to find a way home without showing preference for either Sir Robert Floyer or Mr. Marriot. Even at moments like these, Cecilia has to negotiate among her feelings, both her "repugnance" for the

baronet and “her fear of his resentment,” her and Mrs. Harrel’s physical safety, and the code of convention (410). All this requires a balanced awareness of her psychological state and her physical state. The interconnection between personal interiority and society as well as the act of negotiation with the self are social interactions. As such, Burney’s Gothicism diverges from Radcliffe’s in that it is not merely psychological, but sociological as well.

Rather than supposing that the changes in the turn-of-the-century novel of manners reflect the struggle to replace the body with the “real” self or vice versa through the involvement in the consumer culture, Lynch suggests that the function of material circulation is the fostering of “a notion of the self as different from the body and separate from the culture”, “a notion of a self that is dislocated from the body and that is the object of a purely private act of intellection: precisely the fluid, virtual subjectivity ready to try on and discard identities” (184). The fact that one can disclaim the exterior image as misrepresenting one’s interiority reflects the interior self’s ability to view the exterior self the way others do and to recognise the fact that “one’s properties – one’s things or one’s attributes – will never be personal enough” (183 and 185). As such, there is a need for constant “[negotiation of] body and soul” whereby “‘having’ a body while ‘being’ oneself becomes a dynamic activity” (189). In trying to determine what is “me” as opposed to “not me”, the dynamic activity performs two essential functions: in addition to creating depth, it creates mobility. By further elaborating on Mark Seltzer’s writing about still-life painting, Lynch explains that the ability to identify the difference between that which has the ability to move and that which does not is a reaffirmation of agency itself (186). It forges a “cooperative relation that links psychological fiction’s promise of

self-discovery to consumer culture's promise of reembodiment" and "increases the scope or the jurisdiction of subjectivity, because it gives the self more to *do* with the self" (185 and 190). As such, when protagonists like Burney's Cecilia try to address their internal feelings and their outward appearance simultaneously, they are constantly engaged in acts of perpetual motion which essentially creates the depth of the characters. In the scene at Vauxhall, then, Cecilia's ability to discern the direness of her situation and the consequences of her decision as to whose coach she shall ride home in shows that she is able to step out of herself in order to get an outside perspective of herself while being sensible to her own emotions.

Towards the end of the novel, when Cecilia goes mad, her reasoning faculties are overwhelmed by her emotional state and mental imaginings and, as such, she is unable to navigate between her psychological self and the external world. It is perhaps telling that signs of madness begin to emerge when her attempt to look for Delvile is stalled by a disagreement over the coach fare between Mr. Simkins and the coachman.

Psychologically distraught over Delvile's accusation of her infidelity and believing that Delvile might be lost to her, Cecilia decides to surrender all her material possessions in order to physically liberate herself and to prevent a scenario which she believes will be a reality and, eventually, is internalised as a reality (873-4). She tells Mr. Simkins to "pay [the coachman] anything" and to "give him everything he desires" (874). Since Cecilia's identity and property are interconnected, with the condition of her inheritance being that her spouse takes on her family name, it is not surprising that, the moment she decides to give up her properties, her body and her mind both become vividly impersonal and subject to claims by others. The coachman, "who still [holds] her arm, [swears] he would

have his right", and a gentleman "very freely [seizes] her hand" (874). While a mob gathers around her, Cecilia becomes "wholly overpowered; terror for Delvile, horror for herself, hurry, confusion, heat and fatigue, all assailing her at once, while all means of repelling them [are] denied her, the attack [is] too strong for her fears, feelings, and faculties, and her reason suddenly, yet totally [fails] her," and she turns mad (874-5). Hence, Cecilia's insanity is described as being caused by assaults from not only internal but also external causes.

When Cecilia finally loses her mind, "her senses [are] wholly disordered; she [forgets] her situation, her intention, and herself; the single idea of Delvile's danger took sole possession of her brain, though all connection with its occasion was lost" (875). All she remembers is an isolated image, void of any association that would ascribe meaning or value to it. She pictures him to be dying and sees "the image before her eyes", believing it to be real to the extent that it "[takes] such full possession of her senses" and she "[fancies] it in view" (876). Cecilia, then, becomes wholly consumed by her imagination as though, by renouncing her material possessions, she is completely detached from the physical world, its workings, and any association to it. As the material world is related to human psychology, Cecilia also becomes separate from her internal self or, rather, her supposed "true" self: "a stubbornness, wholly foreign to her genuine character, now made her stern and positive" (883). She recognises neither her physical condition nor her psychological state. Aside from her visions of Delvile dying and his death, the only other thing which Cecilia bears in mind is Delvile's name. As Cecilia informs her husband whom she does not recognise at all, "'Tis a name...I well remember to have heard, and once loved it, and three times I called upon it in the dead of night. And

when I was cold and wretched, I cherished it; and when I was abandoned and left alone, I repeated it and sung to it" (885). What Cecilia remembers, then, is an empty signifier, a sign which has no relation to any concrete substance or idea. As such, Delvile becomes pure form. In the brief moment when her fever abates, she recognises that she is in "a circumstance of horror", for "the same returning reason...[enables] her to take this view of her own situation" and "[brings] also to mind that in which she had left Delvile" (878). Reason and consciousness are aligned with the inner consciousness's ability to move outside of oneself in order to have an external perspective but yet be able to recognise the interrelation between the inner and outer selves. As such, the interconnection between the interiority and exteriority, between the psychological and the physical realm, and the fluidity needed to navigate between them, highlight the depth of the character.

The dynamism of interiority and exteriority extends beyond the novel to readers when Burney attempts to recreate the experiences of her characters on a formal level. While describing Cecilia's trauma, the language of the text becomes more urgent and has a rather staccato rhythm. The sentences become more punctuated just as Cecilia's speeches become shorter and filled with dashes. Chasing after the image of Delvile, for example, the narration takes on a form which mirrors Cecilia's actions as well as her psychological state:

No Delvile was there! – she turned the corner; yet saw nothing of him; she still went on, though unknowing whither, the distraction of her mind every instant growing greater, from the inflammation of fatigue, heat, and disappointment. She was spoken to repeatedly; she was even caught once or twice by her riding habit; but she forced herself along by her own vehement rapidity, not hearing what was said, not heeding what was thought. ..She scarce touched the ground; she scarce felt her own motion; she seemed as if endued with supernatural speed, gliding from place to place, from street to street, with no consciousness of any plan, and following no other direction than that of darting forward wherever there

was most room, and turning back when she met with any obstruction; till, quite spent and exhausted, she abruptly ran into a yet open shop, where, breathless and panting, she sunk upon the floor, and with a look disconsolate and helpless, sat for some time without speaking. (877-8)

With the form reflecting the content, the narrator is able to draw out and utilise the voice of Cecilia's thoughts and emotions. Readers are not only able to follow the ongoing action and discern Cecilia's thoughts and emotions, but they are able to identify with the protagonist as well. As one reads the heavily-punctuated sentences, the numerous short pauses among the long sentences almost force one to catch one's breath. The simultaneous identification with the character as well as the recognition that Cecilia has, in fact, become mad allows the reader to not only perceive the depth of the character, but of the reader him/herself. Therefore, character empathy becomes both a psychological and a social experience. Throughout the novel, by allowing her narrator and characters to utilise the voice of other characters, Burney is able to bring out the depth of her characters in what seems to be early steps towards the development of free indirect discourse, a technique which would, approximately a decade later, be refined by Austen.

By utilising and developing Burney's free indirect discourse technique, Austen manages to create the same three-dimensional effect in her characters and show the interrelationship between their internal lives and the external world. Instead of madness, in *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen uses illness as a way to show how a character's psychological state is able to be projected upon the material world, which, in turn, acts upon the state of emotions and mind. Marianne, described as being "eager in everything" and having "no moderation" and an excess of...sensitivity", is a character who most feelingly and openly imposes her emotions upon her external environment (8). First, she mistakes Edward Ferrars for Willoughby, claiming that he has "his air, his coat, his

horse” (64). Then, when believing that good weather is what prevents Willoughby from coming to see her, she starts to convince herself that the frost is coming. She “[perseveres], and [sees] every night in the brightness of the fire, and every morning in the appearance of the atmosphere, the certain symptoms of approaching frost” even though, as Elinor’s perception suggests, the weather has not worsened (119). While she is in London, eager to see Willoughby, she has had very little food and sleep, surviving mainly on her psychological intensity. Her body depends on her mind which, in turn, has been “supported by the fever of suspense” (131).

Her imagination culminates when she goes to Cleveland where she arrives “with a heart swelling with emotion from the consciousness of being only eighty miles from Barton, and not thirty from Combe Magna” (214). It is the awareness of the distance between her location and Willoughby’s which intensifies Marianne’s sensibilities to the point that she “[fancies] that from [the summits of some distant hills] Combe Magna might be seen” and makes her resolve to occupy herself “in the indulgence of... such solitary rambles” (214). These rambles, made to the most picturesque but also the worst conditioned areas of the grounds, are what cause Marianne to fall sick, and her sickness forces her own attention upon herself (216). Marianne’s failure is due to her inability to successfully navigate between her inner state and the world of nature and society. For Marianne, the exterior world is purely a duplicate of her psychological condition, and she completely detaches herself from the social world, refusing to perceive herself from an outside perspective and to recognise social imperatives. As though a purgation, Marianne’s illness forces her on a road to recovery, both physically and psychologically. When she recovers from her illness, she tells her sister that her “illness has made [her]

think” and “has given [her] leisure and calmness for serious recollection” (244). Her emotional distress has taken a physical toll on her, and her bodily ailments, in turn, have caused her to reconsider her past actions through different eyes. Even before she is able to talk (or perhaps because she is unable to talk), she recognises that her “own feelings had prepared her sufferings, and that [her] want of fortitude under them had almost led [her] to the grave. [Her] illness... had been entirely brought on by [herself] by such negligence of [her] own health, as [she] had felt even at the time to be wrong” (244). In her acknowledgment of the extremity of her social and psychological self-isolation, Marianne admits that she has been imprudent towards herself and unkind towards others (244).

While Marianne expresses her emotions and thoughts openly and directly, Elinor keeps her feelings and opinions to herself. Austen sets up the two sisters in opposing approaches to similar situations in order to show the different ways which they are perceived, to illustrate character interiority in a rather circular manner, and essentially, to explore the sociological aspect of the interior-exterior correlation. Elinor’s frequent use of free indirect discourse, in which she adopts the voice of the community, points to what she is not expressing. Hidden by a cover of conventionality and generality, then, this domain of unspoken thought and feelings can be considered a form of private space. When asked her opinion of Edward, for example, Elinor presents the community’s general opinion and even speaks in negation. She starts off by saying that “[of] his sense and his goodness... no one can... be in doubt, who has seen him often enough to engage him in unreserved conversation” (17). As Lynch explains, “the heroine’s adherence to the code of manners – her association with safe topics and the usual inquiries – can as easily

be viewed as a manipulation that makes manners into a cover for privacy” (236). When Marianne is overwhelmed with emotion and refuses to talk during the trip to London, or when Edward discovers Elinor and Lucy in the same room for the first time, Elinor refuses to allow her or her sister’s feelings and thoughts to be displayed. Hence, she puts conversation into motion, resorting to the use of common civilities. What is essential here is actually not just what Elinor says, but what she does not say. The tension between the social conventions and the character’s own self-expression is what creates the sense that “the depths of character exceed what is sayable (and in this sense that tension is self-enhancing)” (Lynch, 236). However, the adoption of someone else’s voice is not only for appearance; it penetrates beneath the surface. Interiority, as Lynch further suggests, is a social space, for Elinor’s mind is filled with other people’s feelings as well as the usual civilities (238). Her thoughts and feelings are both personal and impersonal at the same time.

The characters of Austen’s other novels, such as Jane Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice*, Fanny Price from *Mansfield Park*, Jane Fairfax from *Emma*, and Anne Elliot from *Persuasion*, also incorporate the general opinion and conventional manners both to cover up their true feelings and thoughts and to index their very existence. What the narrator of Austen’s novels informs readers often exposes the hidden thread of narrative or unspoken dimension that is simultaneously taking place. Anne Elliot, busily musing over Captain Wentworth’s helping her into the Crofts’ carriage and her own emotions in response to that, is unaware of her participation in the conversation with the Crofts. As such, her “answers to the kindness and the remarks of her companions [which are] at first unconsciously given” direct the readers’ attention not only her interiority, but her

exteriority as well (61). While the paragraph prior to her realisation of the ongoing conversation displays the psychological narrative of the novel, the revelation that, in fact, Anne is also outwardly engaging herself in society is evidence of the coexistence of inner and outer narratives. Her involvement in multiple narratives at the same time and the need to navigate successfully between them is an indication of the social imperative in the relationship between her interiority and exteriority.

The multiplicity of narratives is perhaps most distinctive in this final novel of Austen, as Anne and Captain Wentworth have a history which dates back to a time even before the novel begins. As such, there is a realisation that, alongside the main narrative of the novel, there is a narrative which escapes the frame of the novel, a narrative which is continued internally not only by Anne, but by Wentworth as well. According to Lynch, Wentworth is able to revert to the year of their engagement because of his participation in the public life of the nation whereas Anne's remembrance of the past is forced into silence (215). He is able to talk openly about the events that occurred before or in 1806 while "the 'dialogue of Anne's mind with itself'" becomes a manifestation of a "form of privation, as if interiority had as its necessary consequence an impassive, incommunicative exterior" (Lynch, 215-6). For the critic, Anne's inability to express herself openly and the intimation of the past between Anne and Wentworth cause readers to identify with her feelings better and more easily, as the irony of Anne's situation. The discrepancy between her true feelings or thoughts and the comments made by those around her, becomes more accentuated. Anne's speculations, however, reminds readers that what Wentworth is able to articulate is fundamentally different from the narrative which goes on within him:

Whether former feelings were to be renewed, must be brought to the proof; former times must undoubtedly be brought to the recollection of each; *they* could not but be reverted to... and though his voice did not falter, and though she had no reason to suppose his eye wandering towards her while he spoke, Anne felt the utter impossibility, from her knowledge of his mind, that he could be unvisited by remembrance any more than herself. There must be the same immediate association of thought, though she was very far from conceiving it to be of equal pain. (42)

Hence, Anne's unspoken certainty of the discrepancy between Wentworth's outward narration and his psychological narration is suggestive of both characters' depth. He and Anne can only relate to one another through the spatial and temporal continuity of shared memory. Even though Wentworth's participation in the public sphere may allow him more freedom of expression, essentially, like Anne, he cannot refer to the emotional events which occurred during that period. Austen, however, can show the intersection of multiple narratives during that one moment: the interior narratives of each character, the exterior narratives of the characters, the narration which frames the novel, and the narrative existing outside the novel which can only be referred to through remembrance.

Multiple narratives operating at the same time provide the possibility of numerous points of view which, according to critic Franco Moretti, make novels realistic. Drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin's and Yuri Lotman's narrative theories, Moretti suggests that the element of realism exists because "there is no exhaustive, finite interpretation", and "the text's 'truth' is thus no longer found in a privileged perspective, but in the reader's ability to master the 'intersection of various subjective positions'" (97). What lies at the core of the modern novel for these theorists is irony, as the relativity of differing perspectives, which each seem to operate in isolation, comes to light. Irony, as Lynch explains, reveals the discrepancy between appearance and "truth", and the recognition of this discrepancy presents readers with the opportunity to reaffirm their virtuosity, highlighting not only the

depths of the characters, but of the readers themselves (116). It is through this method of reading, this distinction of sensibility and taste, that readers are able to distinguish themselves from the general reading public whose habit of copying without understanding or feeling is a subject of distaste and representation of lower-class orders. Reading, then, becomes both a psychological and sociological process, being a self-enhancing experience dependent upon the ability to empathise with others that, at the same time, draws boundaries between classes of readers.

According to Moretti, Bakhtin and Lotman believe that “the heterogeneous multiplicity of points of view encourages a ‘dialogic’ and ‘experimental’ frame of mind, an attitude towards the world that is eager and adaptable, open, empirical, responsible. In a word: ‘mature’” (98). In terms of the history of the novel, the proliferation of interpretation also allows writers to continuously “improve” upon the formal methods of their predecessors, becoming “a form for which the ante might always be upped”, an endless call for each generation of writers to “round and reanimate character anew”, and stimulating the market for novel production (Lynch, 254). Like Lynch, Moretti believes that the consumer world or, rather, capitalism creates mobility and interiority that are “perennially dissatisfied and restless,” a condition he considers to be symbolising “modern youth” (4). For youth to have meaning, its limits have to be shown; in other words, youth has to be short-lived, curbed by maturity. Maturity is attained when protagonists determine the plot of their own lives to strengthen their sense of belonging to society, fulfilling the narrative logic of classical *Bildungsroman* which is to provide meaning to life by opening up the internal plot to the external network of social relationships (18-19). To reach maturity, then, “one must first of all learn to control the

imagination” (46). As such, while agreeing with Lynch that the diversification of perspectives prompts a more dialogic experience for readers with their texts, Moretti argues that the infinite possibilities of interpretation caused by the vast number of viewpoints lead to scepticism, indecision, confusion, and ultimately exhaustion in the readers. What readers want is not continuous interpretation, but a sense of closure, the abolishment of interpretation caused by the protagonists’ individualistic attributes. Endless interpretation would mean a recognition of an alterity between the subject and his/her world and that the subject has established an isolated, particular culture (63). An individual yearns for “a symbolic form that may heal the gap between the values ‘within’ and the world ‘without’”, a world whose rules the individual has to, nevertheless, respect and submit to (68). It is the survival of the individual, and not of the social system, which this illusion of free consent preserves.

Catering to the readers’ need for closure, Austen, as Lynch suggests, provides conventional endings to her marriage plots in a way which highlight the tension between what is expressed and the creative imagination which uses these forms of expression. Just as the characters in Austen’s novels adopt the voices of others to underscore what is not being stated, so, too, do her narrators at the end of the end of her novels. In *Sense and Sensibility*, the narrator tells the readers that “in what manner [Edward] expressed himself, and how he was received, need not be particularly told” (255). In *Emma*, when proposed to, the protagonist “spoke then, on being so entreated. – What did she say? – Just what she ought, of course. A lady always does” and, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy “expressed himself on the occasion as sensibly and as warmly as a man violently in love can be supposed to do” (*E* 283; *PP* 239). The narrators call upon the readers’

knowledge and assumptions, legitimatising the parallel between the conventions of the readers' world and the world within the novels and yet allowing for the autonomy of psychological projection and expression. When Austen points to the conventional mechanism which directs the form of her writing, "she is both catering to our pleasure as convention-spotters in being *knowing* ourselves, and encouraging us to apprehend this recourse to the pro forma as the very sign of meaningfulness that resists formalization" (Lynch, 237). As such, she is invoking the impersonal knowledge of social conventions and the personal projection of meaning and sentiments. Furthermore, as Moretti notes, such conventions and social relationships are presented in a personalised form because "anything that is personalized is also, in a certain sense, 'humanized': it becomes more balanced, tolerable, resistible" (54). Hence, by allowing readers to fill in the blanks by recognising and projecting forth conventions of social relationships, Austen is portraying the social world, both of her characters and her readers, in a way which seems to allow for consensual choice between accepting or resisting the social network and its trappings.

With the simultaneity of multiple narratives occurring in Austen's novels, it becomes almost a necessity that Austen hierarchise the narratives in order to properly channel the sympathies of her readers. As Lynch warns through the example of Doug Allen's comic strip, two-dimensional characters' existence in novels of the Romantic period and their tendency to mainly show one side of their personality present the risk of mistaking them as round characters (3). The continued appearance of flat characters in novels even in the nineteenth century is noted by Moretti who speculates that the reason for their constant appearance is to provide meaning through the creation a dynamic nexus. Rather than subscribing to the narrative theory of the rise of realism, Moretti

believes that these characters help focus the investment of feelings upon the polyparadigmatic characters and allow for the development of round characters through an interchange of values. To Moretti, “[it] is therefore not a question of representing things or people in a more *truthful* way, but of deciding that a certain aspect of existence is more *meaningful* than others”, as the allocation of multiple traits to limited numbers of characters has a “‘central’ function that puts the narration into perspective: and the ‘network’ plot... has its center, in fact, in the multilateral development of the protagonist” (42). Austen uses the multiplicity of narratives to both display her characters’ depth and to draw the boundaries between the three-dimensional characters, with whom readers are supposed to identify, and the rest of society who, though sometimes display a certain level of interiority, essentially act as a foil.

Just as two-dimensional characters present the risk of tricking the readers into thinking them round by displaying only a certain facet of their characters, three-dimensional characters are, in turn, in danger of turning into categories where they each cannot be differentiated from one another but, instead, can be duplicated. Lynch states that “Austen underscores how her characters are contributing to the crowdedness of the crowd” and that “her characterization enables us to watch the characters turn into type”, as though a typography produced from the print culture (227). Ironically, it is the characters’ pursuit of personal distinction which places them in the crowd, for everyone has that same desire and ambition during the Romantic period, a period when the development of print processes increases the quantity and frequency of copies made from originals. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Edward says that Marianne “would buy up every copy... to prevent their falling into unworthy hands” if she were rich, exemplifying her

desire to distinguish one's particular standard of taste. However, his prior statement that "she would buy them all over and over again" shows that her act is, in itself, monotonously repetitive (68). Even though Marianne agrees with Elinor that "not every one... has [her] passion for dead leaves", she, too, admits that sometimes her feelings are shared and understood (65). In another conversation with her sister, Marianne fails to recognise that her "[erring] against every common-place notion of decorum" by not talking "only of the weather and the roads" is not what separates her from the crowd (37). Instead, Marianne's ascertainment that Willoughby's tastes in subjects ranging from literature to picturesque beauty to marriages match her own helps make her a portrait of predictability and conventionality. Similarly, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's desire to be able to recollect accurately the scenery of the Lakes unlike other travellers essentially likens her to them, as the act of ascertaining and copying (even if only in thought) unique and sublime sights has become a popular activity for domestic travellers. As such, there is a need for Austen to properly distinguish her three-dimensional characters from other characters who may present the illusion of depth and to prevent her protagonists from turning into duplicable forms of character.

If a character's desire to stand out from the crowd makes him or her a part of it, then, the character cannot simply attempt to be an individual. In addition to her characters' depth which reflects an interiority connected to the exteriority and requires constant reinterpretation of the surface, Austen further distinguishes her protagonists by providing them with the potential for change. The capacity for alteration, which is emphasised by the characters' dynamic activity of negotiating between their psychological selves and the societies in which they live, imbues the characters with a

lifelike quality, as though having a “life of its own... [which] leads off the page” and a “‘residue of intelligence or will’ that enables it to transcend the requirements of plot” (Lynch, 132). If we consider Lynch’s hypothesis that “in romantic aesthetics we don’t terminate interpretation” and Moretti’s belief in the need for closure, characters’ capacity for change allows for a range of interpretation which is yet grounded upon readers’ knowledge of the characters and their societies (132). As much as Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy might reveal to one another by the end of *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, readers may be surprised to discover that she hides from her husband her financial assistance to Lydia and Wickam. Similarly, Elinor’s sudden act of running out of the room to cry upon her discovery that Edward is not married may leave the readers, like those who witness her emotional outburst, in “the greatest astonishment and perplexity... a perplexity which they had no means of lessening but by their own conjectures” (255). Unlike other characters who do display certain dimensions, such as Jane Bennet and *Emma*’s Jane Fairfax, it is the characters who can tread the fine line between predictability and unpredictability, between being an individual and a part of society, who are rendered distinct by being more individualised and rounded.

Austen’s use of the free indirect discourse technique in her novels creates an interplay of voices between characters, allowing characters and narrators to adopt other characters’ voices. However, while the narrators and the protagonists of her novels are able to borrow other people’s voices, the form of thought or opinion which is incorporable are expressions arrived at through surface reading or those which relate to the surface. They are also detachable from their context, having no temporal or spatial continuity, thus, allowing the statements to be impersonal and transferable. For example,

the voice in the opening line of *Pride and Prejudice* which the narrator uses is generally attributed to Mrs. Bennet and seems to be a personal observation based upon the arrival of the Bingleys and Mr. Darcy to the community. However, what is conveyed is the community's accepted belief in the tradition of patrilineal inheritance and women's financial dependency upon men. Despite the novel's romanticised ending, the economic pressure which the Bennet daughters face should they remain unmarried is a real and fairly common threat within the culture, as suggested by Mrs. Bennet's anxiety over the entail in the will and Charlotte Lucas's concern over her own financial future. As such, while the ironic universal truth about rich men in need of wives appears to be Mrs. Bennet's personal view, it is, in actual fact, a general conventionalised belief which can be expressed and incorporated by anyone.

Austen's indebtedness to her precursors, Radcliffe and Burney, is great indeed, even if the author's acknowledgment of Radcliffe's work appears in the form of a parody. While Radcliffe's Gothic explores the relationship between the psychological and the physical through projection and internalisation, Burney introduces a sociological element to Gothicism. The sociological correlative helps create depth in characters, a quality which Radcliffe's novels have often been criticised for lacking. Characters are no longer subject only to their own psychological states and the physical world, but they also have to negotiate their way between society and self, dynamically utilising and discarding the impersonal covers offered by conventions to create private spaces and recognising the hidden dimensions in others. The effect of multiple narratives and dimensions even extends beyond the novel to sensitise readers to their own network of inner and outer realities. With the dissolution of boundaries between the material and the psychological,

however, Austen diverges from her contemporaries by accentuating the need to classify and hierarchise in order to properly guide readers' emotional and intellectual identification and understanding. Hence, even more than Burney, Austen's novels are psychologising and socialising experiences, for both characters in them as well as readers of them.

Cosmopolitanism at Home:

Mutable Identities in the Novels of Edgeworth and Austen

In Austen's novels, character development is linked to the establishment of psychological and sociological correlatives. More specifically, in aspects of characters' identities, Austen describes a form of social experience which depends upon a coordination of the establishment and dissolution of boundaries. In this chapter, I extend the analysis of Austen and her contemporaries to examine the influence of Maria Edgeworth. Austen develops Edgeworth's representational strategies to show that patriotism and the concept of nation depend upon a balance of diverse and uniform components. Moving away from the determination of one's identity through the process of "othering" according to geographical locations and origins, Austen's novels follow Edgeworth's works in reflecting the interpenetration of cultures as well as the redefinition of British nationalism in relation to territorial expansion.

The reconfiguration of sentimental values, with local attachments being displaced elsewhere or even being simply mutable, is also highly suggestive of the instability of the concept of national identity. Edgeworth's novels, which arguably portray an intersection between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, dissociate national identity from blood relationships and, instead, present them as a matter of affiliation. Individual identity becomes entangled with social and national identity, as imperialism displaces the nation's horizon, further extending British dominion but also bringing external influence to the domestic realm. A prolonged consideration of Edgeworth's works would reveal that, like her precursor, Austen perceives education and the exchanges of influences to be significant factors in the development of choices in various domains, including to the

decision of one's own national identity. However, unlike her precursor who seems to advocate a modified form of Rousseauan paternalism, Austen allows her female characters more freedom of choice and social mobility. She thus illustrates the changing tension between individual autonomy and social conventions. Although Austen's novels may seem to focus mainly upon a tightly enclosed network of social relations and communities, befitting the author's own minimalisation of her works into "a little bit of ivory, two inches wide," they do suggest significant and mutually affecting interrelationships between these communities and the world at large.

In *Britons*, Linda Colley has argued that the "othering" by the English of their subjugated peripheries and their continental neighbours, particularly the French, gave rise to feelings of francophobia and regional nationalism. Britain's topography, its "physical identity, its very shape and place on the map," further reinforces the Britons' belief "that they were different from those beyond their shores... Not so much consensus or homogeneity or centralization at home, as a strong sense of dissimilarity from those without proved to be the essential cement" (Colley, 17-18). Ormond, the protagonist of Edgeworth's novel of the same name, for instance, reaffirms his own nationality by contrasting it with French culture and society. After a few months, the "impression which French gaiety and the brilliancy of Parisian society" had made upon him are "of essential service in confirming his principles, setting his character, and deciding for ever his taste and judgment, after full opportunity of comparison, in favour of his own country" (296). In *Belinda*, an explicit display of francophobia occurs when Clarence wisely manipulates the emotional intensity of the mob by turning the pig and turkey race between him and a French officer into a question of national competition. Incited by Clarence's shout of

“Old England for ever,” “the crowd [follows] Clarence with loud acclamations” while the French officer is “followed with groans and hisses” (59). Despite the illusion of national animosity, however, Clarence is actually a follower of French philosophy, having “read the works of Rousseau” (362). The “full impression” that “this eloquent writer’s sense made... upon Clarence’s understanding” and the disillusionment with superficial and uncaring Parisian women cause him to form the project of educating a wife for himself (362). Through Clarence, who finally realises the error in attempting such an undertaking, Edgeworth shows the susceptibility to impressions from the outside world, suggesting an existing tension between the process of “othering” and the exchange of influences between the worlds. While Edgeworth may not be a complete Rousseauan, seemingly rejecting the philosopher’s ideas of education according to the natural order of gender roles, her works reflect a recognition of the paternal guidance espoused by Rousseau and the advantages of intercultural influences as seen, for example, in Ormond’s acquaintance with abbé Morellet and the Parisian “men of letters”.

The tension which paradoxically divides and yet unifies in its mutual influence is not only apparent in Britain’s international relationships. In the domestic realm, while the English, Welsh, Irish, and Scottish are segregated in their political, sociocultural, religious, and economic differences, they are also interrelated through these domains. Physical boundaries and places become displaced by sentiments and intangible values, and the material world becomes invested with feelings, as can be seen, for instance, in attitudes towards, or perception of, particular lands. While the conditions of the peripheral lands symbolise the local people’s cultural and moral depravity to the English, the Irish and the Scottish response to the reformation of their lands reflect the belief in

English oppression and the effacement of their history and cultures. The English have a “quasi-theological sense of the bog as a source of sin and sloth, a site of social and moral darkness” (Trumpener, 52). On the other hand, for the nationalists, it is a historical landscape with surfaces that “serve as an accretive national annal, bearing the visible marks of many centuries of continuous human presence, the scars of military battles, and the traces of occupation” (52). Sentiments regarding the lands are not necessarily demarcated according to blood relations or nationality, as can be seen in Edgeworth’s novels. For example, in *Castle Rackrent*, Sir Murtagh’s efforts in changing his Irish tenants’ lifestyle are seen as being foreign, and he is said to be “making English tenants out of them” (69). The definition of the term “English tenant” which the Editor provides in the glossary reflects the “common prejudice in Ireland” that English tenants pay their rents on the day they are due (127). Perhaps more significantly, it also points to the idea of the English as being disloyal, for if “a tenant disoblige his landlord by voting against him, or against his opinion, at an election, the tenant is immediately informed by the agent, that he must become an *English tenant*” (127). It is not surprising then that the author decides to portray Anglo-Irish protagonists in many of her novels in order to explore the middling state of those whose identities are uncertain and who paradoxically belong to both and neither regions.

Some critics have argued that Edgeworth’s investigation of the intersecting spheres of influence and the mutability of national identity contradict her status as a nationalist writer. Instead, critics like Esther Wohlgenut and Katy Brundan suggest that Edgeworth’s novels reflect various notions of cosmopolitanism which converge with nationalism. After all, as Brundan notes, recent debates about cosmopolitanism have

redefined it as being beyond “the form of the gentleman traveller,” in recognition of “other, less privileged but perhaps more genuinely transnational, figures” such as migrants and exiles (123). Current definitions of cosmopolitanism “point to the fluidity of a concept that defies definition...and find themselves embroiled with other contested notions such as nationalism, culturalism, and universalism” (124). By focusing upon Edgeworth’s novel, *Ennui*, Brundan speculates that Edgeworth “appears invested in the notion of being rooted locally but being open culturally to the transnational influences of other people and places” (124). Put in this light, Edgeworth’s utilisation of characters who have no real sense of belonging and who are not accepted on either side of the border can be seen as an exploration of the ideas of cosmopolitanism.

The Anglo-Irish protagonists like Ormond and Lord Glenthorn (from *Ennui*) do not truly belong in any of the societies they have been brought up to inhabit. Although they later develop attachments to certain localities and cultures and form their own national identities, these qualities have to be learnt and remain mutable. Lord Glenthorn, an absentee landlord living in England, suffers from ennui until he returns to Ireland where he tries to enact changes which are not well-received by the locals. His alienation from the Irish is highlighted when he is disappointed in his failed attempts at improving the domicile of his wetnurse, whom he later discovers to be his mother. He does not consider “that it must take time to change local and national habits and prejudices...In the pettishness of [his] disappointment, [he decides] that it [is] in vain to attempt to improve and civilize such people as the Irish” (200). As such, he is estranged from the Irish society to which he finally returns at the end of the novel just as he is from the English amongst which he spends his earlier years. Similarly, Ormond, who has been raised by

the Anglo-Irish politician Sir Ulick and the latter's traditional cousin in the Black Islands, is forced to move from place to place, as he belongs to neither location despite the reassurances of both guardians. In an analysis of Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*, critic Kate Cochran notes that the tension between the English Editor and the Irish narrator "underscores the irony of Edgeworth's own position as Anglo-Irish – sympathetic to both sides of the conflict of colonial rule but belonging wholly to neither" (67). The function of characters who are caught in the middle, who belong to neither and both regions, is to illustrate the instability and mutability of their identities. Wohlgemut suggests that, if national identity is based upon a sociocultural foundation whereby local bonds and transnational understanding intersect, "nationness [is redefined] so as to encompass the possibility of hybrids and Anglo-Irishness" while "foreignness [is redefined] as a mobile and temporary condition rather than permanent classification" (650). For Edgeworth, "the Anglo-Irish identity is not a static deadlock or incongruity, but rather an active and ongoing reconciliation of contradiction" (654). As such, national identity continuously undergoes changes and becomes a matter of choice which is influenced by various sociocultural, economic, and political factors. After all, if the position of foreignness is transient and the notion of nationness can be redefined to be inclusive rather than exclusive, the boundaries once used to define one's sense of belonging seem less or even no longer applicable. However, while the constant mutability of national identity may seem like an indication of autonomy, Edgeworth further problematises the question of identity by exploring the limitations on its formation by factors such as class and gender.

Edgeworth's *Ormond*, for instance, reflects the differences in opinions concerning land preservation and reformation and reflects the conflict over national identity and what

it means to be patriotic. The conversation between Sir Ulick and king Corny which illustrates the connection between land and mannerism reveals the various layers of meanings, from agricultural to sexual and political, that are tied to the land. When king Corny makes the analogy between Sir Ulick's empty declarations of being a reformed rake and the latter's reclamation of bogs, Sir Ulick retaliates by insinuating that Corny's agricultural practice of ploughing by the tail is uncivilised and unproductive. Sir Ulick's response then provides Corny with the opportunity to link the economic with politics by stating that his "comical ploughing" is "better and more profitable *nor* the tragic-comic ploughing [Sir Ulick practises] every sason in Dublin", referring to the courtiers' habit of pacing about while waiting to petition government officials (51). Corny then proceeds to tie Sir Ulick's political means with his domestic life by terming the latter's decision to send Ormond away, supposedly due to "domestic reasons", as a practise of "Continental policy" (48). Although both Corny and Sir Ulick are landowners who are well-established in their Irish communities, yet appropriate ways of reclaiming land becomes a question of national loyalty and status. On the one hand, those who are like Corny believe that land and economic reformation destroys Irish traditions; on the other, those whose views are not unlike the ones expressed by Sir Ulick believe that such changes are imperative to the development and modernisation of the state's economy and, indirectly, to its social and cultural progress.

The interconnection between land and politics, economy, and the domestic sphere is further displayed through the dislike that Moriarty and king Corny have for White Connal, a grazier from an old Irish Catholic family who has become one of the upwardly mobile Catholics. Because king Corny has made a drunken promise to White Connal's

father, he has to accept White Connal as his future son-in-law even though he disapproves of what he deems to be the degeneration of the old Irish nobility. White Connal's economical ways go against the customs of the ancient Irish family and even his indulgence in cock-fighting, a traditional pursuit of the old gentry, is in the interest of his own financial profits. Hence, to the locals like Moriarty, White Connal "has not the look of a gentleman... nor hasn't it in him, inside no more than outside" and is "a very bad character" (80-1). In fact, Moriarty goes so far as to link White Connal's personal interest with patriotism, saying that "[t]is little the man thinks of the country that never thought of anything but himself" (81). Meanwhile Corny who wonders about the differences between White Connal and his father attributes "the difference to White Connal's having turned grazier" which caused him to "[derogate] from the dignity of an idle gentleman" (83). In fact, Corny describes White Connal as a "purse-proud grazier and mean man – not a remnant of a gentleman! as the father was" (99). This same occupation of White Connal's also becomes "his chief fault in king Corny's eyes; so that the only point in Connal's character and conduct for which he deserved esteem was that for which his intended father-in-law despised him" (83). The reservations that Corny and Moriarty have against White Connal very likely stem from their anxiety over social mobility and the destruction of pre-existing social structures. According to Kevin Whelan's study of middlemen in eighteenth-century Ireland, graziers' need for larger amounts of land to meet the demands of an expanding export market led to the replacement of the rundale system, based upon communal life, by regular large fields (Connolly, xxiii). The process of recreating the landscape to meet the needs of the graziers, deemed a necessity for the economic improvement of Ireland by some, resulted in a barren landscape, evictions, and

the weakening of existing social structures. Hence, the rise of a bourgeois class consisting of graziers, land-jobbers, and middle-men created an anxiety over class mobility for they were deemed to be denying the natural order of things by refusing to stay in their appointed place. Similar to his perspective on Sir Ulick's political and economic standpoint, Corny views White Connal's vocation as being treacherous to the culture and lifestyle of Irish communities.

Another segment of Irish society which Edgeworth examines and highly criticises consists of absentee landlords. Landowners who are able to make new capital investments during the rise of the capitalist economy "often succeed in consolidating their local economic and political standing. Those without such investment capital, however, often suffer acute loss of prestige and local importance" (Trumpener, 21). For Edgeworth, the absentee landlords "desert their local responsibilities and make continual, unreasonable financial demands on their impoverished Irish tenants, in a vain bid to win status and recognition in London (21). Instead, the English regard them as "backward representatives of a backward people", further highlighting the landlords' indeterminate identity and alienation by either sides of the border (21). Due to the landlords' refusal to invest and participate in land developments, tenants continue to remain destitute, thus seeming to further justify English disregard for their lack of advancement. The state of the landed minority and the middlemen trying to climb up the social ladder is not unlike the Scots who, in the early stage of the Act of Union, "were torn between anger at the loss of Scotland's ancient independence and a natural desire for a wider stage than their own homeland could afford them" (Colley, 12). Ironically, the English, too, paradoxically perceived the Union as both "a piece of cultural and political imperialism foisted on the

hapless Scots” and the giving way of “English” and “England” to “British” and “Britain” whereby resources in terms of trade and jobs would have to be shared (12-3). Edgeworth believes that this vicious circle can be broken through “a renewed, nationalist identification with Ireland, as a state whose marginality can and must be reversed,” and by “ignoring the judgments of London and taking pride, instead, in local improvement and accomplishments” (Trumpener, 21). However, those like White Connal and Thady’s son who purchased lands from Sir Condry in *Castle Rackrent* are criticised for their involvement in the capitalist economy. Furthermore, as Trumpener suggests, only the landowners who can cement their local standing are capable of making capital investments. As such, it remains unclear whether the sort of local changes that can be considered “improvements” are acceptable and by whom.

In *Ormond*, the protagonist questions the effectiveness of the economic systems of his two guardians, Sir Ulick and King Corny. Although Sir Ulick is the one who finally becomes bankrupt, the Black Islands’ system of economy, too, is considered deficient in many respects. Ormond, “in consequence of his slight commerce with the world,” is able to form some comparisons and reflections concerning Corny’s identification with old feudal loyalties and responsibilities (44). He questions “the utility and grandeur of some of those things which had struck his childish imagination” and doubts that it is better for a gentleman to be his own workman, “whether it were not better managed in society, where these things are performed by different tradesmen” (44). Considering the fact that, in other economic models where specialisation in trade decreases cost and increases productivity and quality, it is not surprising that Ormond’s admiration for Corny in this domain has decreased. However, Ormond also recognises the positive values of Corny’s

economic system, acknowledging the sense of independence it provides and the value it places an item based upon the creator's identity (and modes of production). Ormond's consideration of these advantages suggests the reassessment of the society's value system. Although the way of life on the Black Islands may not exhibit superiority in product quality and monetary profit nor receive recognition from the upper social circles of the parliament, there seems to exist a sense of cultural and sentimental appreciation for Corny's status and individuality as well as the community's self-sufficiency.

Ormond's judgment is later reaffirmed by his host's own recognition of his system's flaws. When showing Mademoiselle O'Faley around the castle, Corny was both "proud and ashamed of his palace: proud of the various instances it exhibited of his taste, originality, and daring; ashamed of the deficiencies and want of comfort and finish" (76). What this instance also displays is Corny's awareness of other cultures' value systems and economic methods for, even though Corny may be secluded in the Black Islands, he is not exempt from transnational influences. The fact that Ormond's evaluation of the Black Islands' political economy is followed by the thought of his reduced esteem of Corny's hunts indicates a sociocultural link to the land as well. Just as Ormond begins to question Corny's economic decisions, so, too, does he question the way the locals' pastime is conducted: "he had since seen hunts in a very different style, and he could no longer admire the rabbit rout" (44). The discrepancy between different economic systems and the cultural lifestyle associated with them also appears in *Ennui*. While Glenthorn seems to support the traditional economic lifestyle, believing that his tenants would "grow rich and *independent*, if they made everything at *home* that they wanted", his agent echoes Ormond in thinking that ideas according to "the division of labour, and Smith's

Wealth of Nations” would be more cost-effective (191). Glenthorn’s dismissal of Smith’s theories, saying that “Smith’s a Scotchman”, only serves to highlight how an issue of economic improvement intersects with that of national identity (191).

Despite her focus on smaller communities and more regional areas, Austen is also able to illustrate the influences of transnational cultures by displacing them further onto everyday domestic and social experiences. The novel which probably draws the most attention to the connection between the community and the world beyond it is *Mansfield Park*, which critic Edward Said uses in his discussion of the advent of the imperialist unconscious. Said believes that “Austen fails to perceive the incongruity between Bertram’s two sites of control, between what he stands for domestically and what he stands for internationally” and, when Fanny Price’s question about slavery is followed by silence, he speculates that the novel “reflects contemporary consciousness and denial about the empire” (Trumpener, 162). However, rather than evasion, Trumpener reads the silence as an unspoken understanding of contemporary debates concerning abolition. What is significant about both critics’ hypotheses is the acknowledgment of the connection between the domestic and international domains. Although the characters’ experiences and choices are primarily domestic or, at best, occur within a small social circle, they also provide indications as to the characters’ own concept of nationalism.

After all, small communities such as the ones in *Persuasion* can be considered to be microcosms of the nation, exemplifying the unification of diversity within a specific location. At Uppercross, both the house and the family residing there are “in a state of alteration, perhaps of improvement” (28). The parents are in “the old English style”, good sort of people, friendly and hospitable, not much educated, and not at all elegant” while

their children, being “in the new”, have “more modern minds and manners” (28). Rather than reverting to the “comfortable feeling of superiority”, however, the narrator reminds the readers that, like Anne, we are “saved” from that sentiment through our “[wish] for the possibility of exchange” for they seem to have “perfect good understanding and agreement together” and “good-humored mutual affection” (28). Anne recognises that “removal from one set of people to another, though at a distance of only three miles apart, will often include a total change of conversation, opinion and idea” (28). She even acknowledges “it to be fitting, that every little social commonwealth should dictate its own matters of discourse” (28). Her perception of the discrepancy between the communities at Uppercross and Kellynch Hall prompts her to feel it “highly incumbent” that she indulge in the new shift in cultural experience, that she “clothe her imagination, her memory, and all her ideas in as much of Uppercross as possible” (29).

In *Mansfield Park*, Sir Thomas Bertram’s slave plantations in Antigua reflect the state of affairs at home. Sir Thomas’s presence at home is found to be oppressive and, to his daughters, “his absence [is] unhappily most welcome” (377). Maria, his eldest daughter, once metaphorically describes her situation as being encaged with an iron gate at a ha-ha which invokes in her “a feeling of restraint and hardship” (408). Her sensations of entrapment are further displayed when the narrator supposes that “Maria [is] more to be pitied than Julia; for to [Maria] the father brought a husband,” suggesting her transferability from one man to another, as though a plantation slave (412). The change in Sir Thomas’s physical appearance and attitude after his return from the West Indies also links the colonies to Mansfield Park. In terms of his behaviour, “he is so kind, so *very* kind” to Fanny and his “manner [seems] changed, his voice [is] quick from the agitation

of joy; and all that had been awful in his dignity [seems] lost in tenderness” (444).

Physically, he has “grown thinner” and has the “burnt, fagged, worn look of fatigue and a hot climate” (444). His experience in Antigua converts Mansfield Park into the slave plantations, highlighting the similarities between the systems of the two locations.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Norris runs the household as though a plantation manager, abusing those she deems below her station and catering to or manipulating others. The attitude which Britain has towards its colonies is also shown in the way Mrs. Norris and the Bertrams perceive the Price family. The Prices are perceived as a family of “poverty and neglect”, “gross ignorance, some meanness of opinions, and very distressing vulgarity of manner” and, as such, is believed to be in need of improvement (365-366). Brought to Mansfield Park, Fanny is taught the values of the society there and she learns to “transfer in its favour much of her attachment to her former home” (371).

However, her psychological and social transition could not be completed without a return visit to Portsmouth, a step deemed necessary by Sir Thomas in order to cure “his niece’s understanding, which he must consider at present diseased” due to her refusal to obey him in accepting Henry Crawford’s proposal (533). The need for Fanny to compare the different ways of life at alternative locations is not unlike Ormond’s recognition of the distinction in the economic systems of Castle Hermitage and the Black Islands. Before her visit to Portsmouth, Fanny imagines it to be a scene of familial harmony and affection. When she is faced with the prospect of returning to Portsmouth, the “remembrance of all her earliest pleasures, and of what she had suffered in being torn from them, [comes] over her with renewed strength, and it [seems] as if to be at home again would heal every pain that had since grown out of the separation” (533). It is a

place where she believes she can love “without fear or restraint”, where she can be an equal and safe from reproach (533). However, upon her arrival at Portsmouth, she realises that, “it was not such a home, she had not such a welcome” (539). Instead, her judgment of the world of Portsmouth is similar to Mrs. Norris’s and the Bertrams’:

William was gone; and the home he had left her in was... in almost every respect the very reverse of what she could have wished. It was the abode of noise, disorder and impropriety. Nobody was in their right place, nothing was done as it ought to be. She could not respect her parents as she had hoped... As for any society in Portsmouth, that could at all make amends for deficiencies at home, there was none within the circle of her father’s and mother’s acquaintance to afford her the smallest satisfaction... The men appeared to her all coarse, the women all pert, everybody underbred. (542 and 545)

The comparison between Mansfield Park and Portsmouth allows Fanny to choose which location she considers her home, which belief system she values, and where she can best help make improvements. She realises that “[when] she had been coming to Portsmouth, she had loved to call it her home; the word had been very dear to her, and so it still [is], but it must be applied to Mansfield. *That* [is] now the home. Portsmouth [is] Portsmouth; Mansfield [is] home” (563). As such, rather than considering her identity as static and tied to her place of origin, Fanny redefines what “home” is and shifts her attachments to another location. Her belief is so strong that, like her fostering into Mansfield Park, she takes Susan away from Portsmouth with the notion of “improving” her, but without regard to the fact that Susan is the most efficient, and as such most vital, member of the Price family. Unlike her brother, William, who seems equally comfortable in Mansfield Park as he is in Portsmouth, Fanny cannot fit in in Portsmouth due to her failure to appreciate the value of its culture of naval activity. For Fanny, her time at Portsmouth is simply a domestic form of imperial experience.

The debate concerning the appropriate lifestyle as a reflection of one's sense of belonging points to the instability of the concept of national identity. If, as Wohlgemut suggests, cosmopolitanism and nationalism overlap in Edgeworth's novels, the varying perception of different economic systems suggests that, through exposure to transnational influences, characters have the privilege of changing their own national identities, making identity a matter of choice rather than coercion. In order for there to be a consensual decision, there must be diverse options from which one can choose and an understanding as to how these options relate to oneself and others. For Edgeworth, education is the essential element, for it "is the key to both individual and national improvement" which "instills transnational understanding in the Irish people while retaining the bonds of local attachment by which the nation is secured" (Wohlgemut, 647). In *Ennui*, Lord Glenthorn, who discovers that he is actually the child of an Irish wetnurse, has to learn a trade and master his profession in both Dublin and London before he is deemed fit to return as the owner of Castle Glenthorn. It is the time spent studying the profession of law which disciplines him and gives him purpose in life. The ending implies that the future will probably be different when he returns to Glenthorn Castle, for he believes that he "shall not relapse into indolence; [his] understanding has been cultivated – [he has] acquired a taste for literature, and the example of Lord Y-- convinces [him], that a man may at once be rich and noble, and active and happy" (323).

However, in the resolution of that same novel, the real Lord Glenthorn, previously known as Christy Donoghoe, leaves the castle to his foster-brother, suggesting that one's socioeconomic background can be a limiting factor on one's national identity. Brought up in poverty to be a blacksmith, the real Lord Glenthorn is unable to adapt to the sudden

change in status when the truth about his birth is revealed and he regains his title and property. With the hospitality that is customary of the Irish, the castle is overrun with relatives who, along with his wife and son, live extravagantly while he finds himself reverting to his old way of living. Because he continues to live as meagrely as when he was impoverished, he is considered “a mean-spirited *cratur*,” and when he tries to mend his own room door, he is ridiculed (309). Just as Thady Quirk in *Castle Rackrent* believes that Sir Patrick is the greatest landlord due to his extravagant nature, there is now a set of expectations which the local community places upon the real Lord Glenthorn due to his rise in social status and wealth. For one like the real Lord Glenthorn, then, national identity and the economic state are intertwined and fixed. He is incapable of changing his perspectives and ways since, having been poor, he lacks exposure to the world beyond his own community. If, as Edgeworth suggests, education would allow for flexibility and choice, only a privileged few will have the luxury of moving beyond their designated identities.

What further limits the mutability of national identity and the possibility of transnational experience is the question of gender. Edgeworth's novels reflect the restrictions faced by female characters when attempting to increase their exposure to the influences of other nations and cultures. In *Belinda*, the protagonist comes closest to a nationalistic alliance and cosmopolitan ideal when she submits to the courtship and almost accepts the proposal of a Creole. In the first edition of the novel, while the marriage between Juba, Mr. Vincent's black servant, and an Irish peasant girl is met with approval, the upper-class union at the end of the novel requires the removal of Mr. Vincent, the Creole whom lady Delacour once refers to as Caliban. While this may seem

like an issue of class distinction, the changes which Edgeworth makes on subsequent editions of her novel suggest that gender plays an equally, if not more, central role. As Kathryn Kirkpatrick suggests, “Edgeworth’s gender and colonial status cannot be separated” and, as such, when *Belinda* received heavy criticism upon its first publication in 1801, Edgeworth was compelled to edit her work so that interracial marriages do not take place nor do they truly have the opportunity to take place (332 n.2). Such significant changes were made that “[readers] of the 1810 edition were assured that the alliance between the English lady and her West Indian suitor had never been very probable” while the revisions “erase Juba and his blackness from the text along with his African gifts to his English wife” (342). The earlier edition of the novel came under fire, not only because of its apparent advocacy of interracial marriages, but because of its seeming approval of freedom of choice in rational love:

But more threatening to [Edgeworth’s] critics perhaps than ungoverned passion was the portrait of a woman controlling herself and making her own choices... Relying for affection on time and familiarity, a heroine might use her own judgment in choosing to marry *anyone*, including the Creole Mr. Vincent or the African Juba...

By advocating marriage with men other than English patriarchs, Edgeworth challenged the endogamy considered essential to the colonial control which produced so much English wealth. At the same time, and perhaps more significantly, her challenge to the dominant cultural values also advocated women’s control of their own bodies and destinies through the marriage choice. It was a clear case of the Anglo-European daughter seeing and allying herself with the oppressed other. (Kirkpatrick, 338, 343)

In consenting to edit her text, Edgeworth succumbed to colonial as well as patriarchal pressures.

In Austen’s *Emma*, Jane Fairfax sums up the oppressiveness of gender, class, and economic background when she associates the governess trade with the slave trade. In

contemplating her own future in the profession, she states that the advertising offices where she can find employment are “[offices] for the sale -- not quite of the human flesh -- but of human intellect” (196). She believes that, in comparison to the slave trade, while “the guilt of those who carry it on” is “widely different”, “as to the greater misery of the victims, [she does] not know where it lies” (196). When Frank Churchill is slow in the process of revealing their secret engagement, Jane’s economic background, social status, and gender allows her little opportunity of being anything else but a governess. As suggested by Emma’s exclamations that Jane had been “actually on the point of going as a governess” and that Frank’s delay had “[suffered] her to think of such a measure,” Jane’s identity is dependent upon a marital union or the lack thereof (261). Although, like Jane, Frank cannot expose their engagement, he has more flexibility in his conduct and the identity which he assumes. While Jane can only suffer the indignity of her fiancé flirting with other women, Frank can actually indulge in that behaviour, taking on the identity of one who is disengaged to the extent that he is capable of “[distinguishing] any one young woman with persevering attention... while he really belonged to another” (260).

In *Persuasion*, Mrs. Smith’s dire economic state and low social status are due to her occlusion from the public, colonialist domain dominated by men. The impoverished widow states that, although her husband has some properties in the West Indies which had been sequestered and which might be recovered through some proper measures, she cannot do anything about the matter except plead for assistance from others: “Mr. Elliot would do nothing, and she could do nothing herself, equally disabled from personal exertion by her state of bodily weakness, and from employing others by her want of

money. She had no natural connexion to assist her even with their counsel, and she could not afford to purchase the assistance of law” (139-140). As a woman, Mrs. Smith is not only unable to act for herself, but she is also ignorant of the affairs in the British colonies, as displayed by her need of advice. In the end, Captain Wentworth is the one who helps regain her husband’s property in the West Indies “by writing for her, acting for her, and seeing her through all the petty difficulties of the case, with the activity and exertion of a fearless man and a determined friend” (167). Mrs. Smith’s recovery of economic stability also leads to improvements in her physical, psychological, and social states, suggesting their interdependence. As such, Mrs. Smith’s identity is embroiled with the nation’s imperialist activities even if she does not and cannot be involved with them directly.

As seen in Edgeworth’s novels, even when gender is not a limiting factor, economic background can also place restrictions upon one’s possible identity. For Austen, the circumscription created by one’s economic state is depicted, for instance, in the Portsmouth society of *Mansfield Park*. The male members of the Price family have to support themselves and the family by entering the only profession that they are familiar with and which revolves around naval activity. Her father and William’s involvement in the naval world consume their entire attention even when Fanny is there for a visit. In fact, her eleven-year-old brother, who first greets her and William’s arrival with the news that the “Thrush” has gone out of harbour, is said to have “a strong right of interest, being to commence his career of seamanship in her at [that] very time” (537). Although William is more exposed to other cultures than most of the other characters in the novel, due to the fact that he had “been in the Mediterranean; in the West Indies; in the Mediterranean again”, and “had been often taken on shore by the favour of his captain”,

essentially, his sense of identity is associated with his being a seaman as can be seen by his discourses at Mansfield Park (471). When Sir Thomas asks him to talk in order “to understand the reciter, to know the young man by his histories”, William relates all his experiences in the course of seven years which had shown him “every variety of danger which sea and war together could offer” (471). As such, the elements which construct William’s identity and which become the basis of his “good principles, professional knowledge, energy, courage and cheerfulness, everything that could deserve or promise well” originate from his occupation. Since the profession is one which involves all male members of the Price family who are of age, William might not have had the choice to build his identity under different circumstances even if he had wanted to. Like his sisters, Fanny and Susan, unless he is given the opportunity to experience other cultures and societies, it is possible that he would have ended up being like his parents who understand little else but that associated with the naval world, a fate from which Fanny tries to rescue Susan.

Although circumscribed by gender conventions, the female characters portrayed in Edgeworth’s novels are not completely devoid of all possibilities of changing their own or affecting the formation of national identities. In *Ormond*, king Corny’s daughter, Dora, associates herself with Parisian society to the extent that her coquettish personality reflects the influences of French culture. Her enjoyment of “the interest and curiosity she excited, by sometimes taking delightful pains to attract and then capriciously repelling” is like the Parisian society whose interest is to present “a display of French sensibility, that eagerness to feel and to excite a *sensation*, that desire to *produce an effect*, to have a scene; that half real, half theatric enthusiasm, by which the French character is peculiarly

distinguished from the English” (259). It is not surprising, then, that Dora eventually marries Black Connal, a man whom most consider to be French notwithstanding his Irish birth. In fact, Black Connal’s national identity is so fluid that his language displays the mixture of various cultural influences: “In English he spoke with a native Irish accent...but though the brogue was strong, yet there were no vulgar expressions: he spoke good English, but generally with somewhat of French idiom... It seemed as if the person who was speaking thought in French and translated it into English as he went on” (114). Hence, it is through marriage that Dora is able to be the Parisian belle which she desires. However, Dora’s reconfiguration of her national identity seems to be criticised as being superficial and lacking rational thought as well as a real sense of belonging. When presented with the idea of “domestic happiness at Paris” and, later on, in thinking of her wedding ring, the married Dora sighs and terms her union an “unfortunate marriage” (256, 270). If national identity depends on one’s bond of local attachments just as it does upon sociocultural experiences, as suggested by Wohlgemut, then, Dora’s lack of domestic happiness suggests that she may not necessarily feel at home in Paris and, as such, may not necessarily identify with the Parisian culture.

Just as Edgeworth supports the notion of rational choice regarding marriage unions in *Belinda*, she seems to do so in relation to national identity as well, as suggested by Ormond’s choice of domestic alliance with Florence Annaly. Florence, who takes after her mother, is interested in local improvements which would allow for cultural diversity and preservation. Both Annaly women are patronesses of a village school which practises religious tolerance and equality. The village school, “open to catholics as well as protestants,” is an attempt to “improve the lower classes of the people,” and the

students have the assurance that “their religion would not be tampered with” (209). Lady Annaly, who acts as a surrogate mother to Ormond, is “a woman of generous indignation, strong principles and warm affections” who, from the time she was widowed, “devoted herself to the education and the interests of her children” despite all “temptations of love, vanity, or ambition, by which she was assailed” (8). Her skilled administration of property during her son’s minority and “her subsequent graceful resignation of power” when he comes of age serve to increase his “affection, gratitude, and deference” and “[continue] to prolong her influence, and exemplify her precepts in every act of his own”. Such deeds of hers “altogether placed this lady high in public consideration – high as any individual could stand in a country where national enthusiastic attachment if ever excited by certain noble qualities congenial to the Irish nature” (8). Based on this description, it seems that the highest esteem which the public has for Lady Annaly is based upon her role in the preservation of patrilineal heritage, which is translated as an act of patriotism. Hence, the function of the female characters appears to be that of perpetuating the ideals of paternalism associated with colonial thought. However, while her gender may be a limiting factor in many respects, she is still able to exert a certain level of influence over the formation of her son’s identity. As such, while female characters in Edgeworth’s novels, like Mrs. Smith in *Persuasion*, are mainly limited to the domestic sphere with its localised social network, the intersection of the domestic realm with more public and transnational domains suggests that these women are capable of expanding their circle of influence.

Still, perhaps because Edgeworth supports the ideals of paternalism or, at least, yields to the pressures of paternalistic power, the influences which the female characters

practise appear to reinforce the existing paternalistic structure rather than oppose it. Just as the author herself is censored from writing about the probability of interracial unions, her female characters cannot transgress the boundaries set by gender conventions. Even though Clarence in *Belinda* realises his error in adopting Rousseau's philosophies when planning his future marriage, Virginia, whom he first chooses to be his bride and who has been living in isolation away from society, is passed from man to man at the close of the novel. The discovery of a father whom she has never met and a new lover with whom she has only fifteen minutes to get acquainted before separating again allows Clarence to transfer guardianship and paternal responsibility from one man to another. Clarence may have learnt that he prefers Belinda because he finds her his equal: she has "cultivated tastes, an active understanding, a knowledge of literature, the power and the habit of conducting herself" and virtues which "[spring]... from reason" (379). However, the transferability of Virginia compromises the possibility of reading the novel as an advocacy of gender equality.

In Edgeworth's novels, the tension between the oppressed individual and the sociocultural structure which forms the basis of national identity seems to be dissolved in light of paternal guidance and authority. As suggested by Susan Glover, although *Castle Rackrent* may depict a tension between the English Editor and the Irish narrator, whereby the "Editor is constantly intruding, writing over Thady's text, mediating our reception of Thady's discourse with his own", there are moments when "the tension is complicated by occasional resonances of sympathy, even unity" (305-6). In discussing Edgeworth's narrative techniques in "Another Tale to Tell", Mary Jean Corbett argues for the interdependence between the subordinate Irish voice and the dominant English voice:

[The] effort to represent an English style as the superior medium for all literate readers and writers breaks down in the face of another style, another idiom, an Irish tongue that Edgeworth may be able perfectly to imitate but also in some sense masters her. The very act of introducing Thady's idiom into her text generates the anxiety which the editorial apparatus attempts to control; thus "English" and "Irish" lock into a relation in which each constitutes the other in a relation of mutual dependence. Without the presence of the one -- another language or culture, as native to some as English is to others -- there would be no call for the continual reassertion of the other's superiority. (383).

After all, as suggested by critical debate about Thady's loyalty to the Rackrent family, whether it is genuine or, in fact, hides a subversive attempt to expose the maltreatment of the Irish peasants, the narrator's ambivalence can be attributed to both his oppression by and his dependency on the existing social, political, and economic structures¹. Robert Tracy speculates that Thady's outrage over Sir Condry losing his estate to Jason, Thady's own son, may not actually be due to his allegiance to the Rackrent family. Instead, the dispute with Jason "seems to be about tactics: Thady would rather live off the estate and its owners; Jason would rather be owner" (4). In an article that presents Edgeworth as neither an apologist nor abolitionist, but a reformist, Kate Cochran likens Thady to a slave narrator who "seems to unite himself with both Sir Condry and Jason... Thady appeals to his readers on a moral plane. In Thady's case, though, morality consists of identifying himself with the Rackrent family" (59-60). As Cochran further argues, the novel becomes a reflection of Edgeworth's own submission to paternalism, as both an Anglo-Irish and a female writer: "While Edgeworth explicitly tells a story of exaggerated

¹ In "'The Plain Round Tale of Faithful Thady': *Castle Rackrent* as Slave Narrative", Kate Cochran sums up the two main critical opinions of Thady:

The first, exemplified by Elizabeth Harden, trusts Thady's naïve pose as genuine, invoking the technique of transparency to account for his simplicity... The second is held by James Newcomer, who doubts Thady's simplicity and loyalty to the Rackrents. Thady's seemingly contradictory assertions -- a respect for the Rackrents coupled with his repeated claiming of Jason as "my son" -- as well as his position as voluntary narrator indicate a need for a more detailed analysis of this character. (58-59)

characters in the Big House, her assumption of Thady's voice and his implicit critique of colonialism stems from her own disempowered position with her father and in the Anglo-Irish gentry (63). Hence, while national identity may develop out of sociocultural relationships and transnational experiences, Edgeworth's works show evidence of support for paternalistic guidance and education in the formation of identities.

Reading Austen's *Mansfield Park*, it would be easy to assume that the author adopts her contemporary's stance in favouring paternalism as an essential element in the construction of national identity. The fact that Mansfield Park is ruled by a patriarch and that Fanny is under the guidance of her cousin Edmund would seem to support that argument. After all, since Fanny's arrival at Mansfield Park, Edmund has been the one who "recommended the books...encouraged her taste, and corrected her judgment" (372). However, although Austen appears to acknowledge the significance of paternal guidance, she allows her characters a greater extent of individual autonomy in defining their identities. Although Fanny's identity seems to be shaped by Mansfield Park's society and by Edmund in particular, once her identity has stabilised, she seems predisposed to assert her own individuality, albeit in a rather subversive manner. Her gender and the fact that she is originally an outsider to the Mansfield Park society would most likely make direct confrontation an unwise option. Although she does not challenge the patriarchal structure directly, Fanny's approach allows her to negotiate between the demands of the existing sociocultural conventions and her own individual desires and beliefs. When the young Bertams, the Crawfords, and Mr. Rushworth intend to perform a play which would meet with the absent Sir Thomas's disapproval, Fanny's refusal to participate in the play paradoxically enables both the avoidance of sanction and the derivation of "innocent

enjoyment from the play” (144). The refusal which raises Sir Thomas’s and Edmund’s esteem for her also grants her guilt-free involvement in the play, allowing her to be “occasionally useful to all” and “perhaps as much at peace as any” (145). She is the consultant who is there “for the complaints and distresses”, the prompter who “can say every word” of the many parts, and the acting instructor who is “at great pains to teach” Mr. Rushworth (143, 145, 150). Essentially, by appearing to be and personally believing that she is upholding Mansfield Park’s value system and code of conduct, she is able to become even more involved in the play than any of the actors and actresses.

Fanny further exhibits her individuality when she defies the general opinion that she should accept Henry Crawford’s proposal. When Edmund tries to persuade Fanny to eventually let Henry be successful in his courtship, Fanny’s heated response that “he will never succeed with [her]... quite astonished Edmund” (522). Seeing her “so very determined and positive” against his advice, Edmund believes that she is acting “not like [herself], her rational self” (523). However, as Fanny astutely discerns, Edmund’s intentions are guided by his personal interests in Henry’s sister. When Sir Thomas tries to bully her into accepting the proposal, her refusal is explained away with tears, without having to express openly and plainly any of her true reasons. In fact, Sir Thomas’s relenting over the issue is due to the mistaken assumption that she is able to be persuaded into changing her mind, thinking her “very timid, and exceedingly nervous... that her mind might be in such a state, as a little time, a little pressing, a little patience, and a little impatience, a little judicious mixture of all on the lover’s side, might work their usual effect on” (509). Instead, Fanny later tries to use her position and utility as Lady Bertram’s companion to manipulate the latter into supporting her decision of not

marrying Henry. Fanny hopes “to assail her on her vulnerable side”, but her aunt’s reply, which is in agreement with her husband and son, leaves Fanny feeling that “nothing could be hoped from attacking her understanding” (515-516). The language of assault which the narrator uses suggests that, though Fanny’s supplication to her aunt seems considerate and affectionate, her statements actually mask her strategised act of defiance against the Mansfield Park society. As such, Fanny’s identity is not purely shaped by her education and the society at Mansfield Park.

Although attached to the locality and the community, she is capable of breaking away from the sociocultural conventions and expectations of the Mansfield Park world. At the end of the novel, it is her decision to bring Susan to Mansfield Park which essentially allows her to leave Lady Bertram to start her married life with Edmund. Like Thady Quirk from Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent*, Fanny has to use subversive methods to her own advantage, be it to hide from Mrs. Norris’s remonstrances or to participate in a play. She has to negotiate between her individual and society’s desires. However, when faced with the decision between obeying paternal guidance or her personal self, Fanny is more like Thady’s son, preferring to climb the socioeconomic ladder or to reconstruct it rather than depend upon it. Her decision to not marry Henry Crawford is the only right one amongst the family members and, as such, her choice elevates her moral status above the rest, allowing her to move up the social hierarchy. Hence, individual beliefs and concerns are as essential as paternalism and transcultural experiences in forming the protagonist’s bonds of local attachments and identity.

The positive portrayal of men of profession and their wives in Austen’s novels also suggests the acceptance of a new class of people whose national identities seem

more mutable and integrated with their individual concerns and desires. While there seems to be a tension between the gentry and the self-made man in Edgeworth's novels, such as *Castle Rackrent* and *Ormond*, such ambivalence is dissolved in the light of the individuals' rationality and apparent cosmopolitanism in Austen's works. Unlike Fanny who is ill at ease in Portsmouth, characters like the Gardiners in *Pride and Prejudice* and the Crofts in *Persuasion* are able to move with ease through various societies and fit in with the locals and their cultures. Mrs. Croft, perhaps the most well-travelled female character in Austen's novels, has "crossed the Atlantic four times" and has "been once to the East Indies, and back again", "besides being in different places about home – Cork, and Lisbon, and Gibraltar" (47). However, the time which she recalls as being most discomfited is when she was at Deal while her husband was in the North Sea (48). For one like Mrs. Croft, her local attachments are not invested in a locality or even a community, but instead, are personal and domestic in nature. Like Mrs. Croft, at the end of the novel, Anne decides to marry a seaman, causing her domestic sphere to converge with the naval world. Anne "[glories] in being a sailor's wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than its national importance" (168). Her personal decision in marrying Captain Wentworth redefines her identity, shifting the focus of her sense of belonging from personal to domestic to national.

According to Wohlgemut, Said's arguments that the movement from "filiation" to "affiliation" in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries show that critical consciousness shifts from "[defining] belonging in terms of biological continuity" to "[defining] belonging in terms of institutions, associations, and communities" (656). As

such, Wohlgemut argues that Edgeworth's attempts to articulate the Anglo-Irish identity within cosmopolitan terms presents an early awareness of national identity's sociocultural foundation which then allows for multiple national allegiances. For Edgeworth, the idea of nation is that it is "neither tightly bordered... nor borderless", allowing for an overlapping of transnational influences and a differentiation between societies and cultures which enables the exchange of influences (Wohlgemut, 644). If Edgeworth's concept of nation is mutable and not confined, by adopting it, Austen is able to further displace issues of national identity to the more intimate social and domestic spheres. Just as both authors believe in the fluidity of national identity due to its dependence upon sociocultural relationships and experiences, they also recognise various socioeconomic factors which place restrictions upon the formation of these identities. Edgeworth's works reflect the opinion that such limitations can be overcome or reconfigured through rational thought under paternal guidance. On the other hand, while Austen acknowledges the significance of social conventions and the existing patriarchal structure, her characters are able to have greater individual autonomy and fluidity of identity.

In an article which traces Austen's increasing rejection of Rousseau's philosophies from *Northanger Abbey* to *Pride and Prejudice*, Paula Marantz Cohen suggests that the author's intertextuality reflects her belief of the natural ideal as being a social construct. Cohen states that "no text is in itself good or bad but all texts are potentially recruitable in the service of self-definition" (215). Seen in this light, individualism itself is paradoxically sociological and one's individuality will always have the potential for change. By allowing greater individual autonomy in her novels, Austen is not displacing the importance of social relationships but, instead, is perhaps suggesting

the focalisation of various social networks upon the notion of individual choice. In his discussion of historical novels in *Atlas of the European Novel*, Moretti suggests that such novels “are not just stories ‘of’ the border, but of its erasure, and the incorporation of the internal periphery into the larger unit of the state: a process that mixes consent and coercion” (40). In investigating the relationship between chronotopes and genre, space, and style, he later on speculates that society is “a system of language spaces – *which are being forced open*. State-building requires streamlining... of physical barriers, and of the many jargon and dialects that are irreversibly reduced to a single national language” (45). Like Wohlgemut’s argument of the nation as being neither “tightly bordered... nor borderless”, Moretti’s hypotheses point to the constantly fluctuating process of integration and differentiation. As Bakhtin suggests, within the novel, there remains the issue of not just polyglossia, but heteroglossia as well: “the problem of internal differentiation, the stratification characteristic of any national language” (67). The form of the novel reflects a tension between “one centralizing (unifying) tendency” and a “decentralizing tendency (that is, one that stratifies language)” (337). In other words, within novels, both centripetal and centrifugal forces are at work, thematically and formally, creating a continuous struggle which requires constant navigation by the characters and readers. Therefore, Austen’s depiction of individual autonomy and choice further adds another layer to her sociological exploration. Just as the idea of a nation and national identity require transnational experiences and sociocultural relationships, one’s individuality, too, is the culmination and reflection of social relationships. As such, Austen’s displacement of national identity and national concerns goes further than simply the social and domestic spheres and, instead, extends to the realm of the individual.

While she may have adopted Edgeworth's cosmopolitan thinking, Austen's exploration of national identity penetrates further into various intersecting domains. For Edgeworth, the differing forces interacting with and against one another in her novels are portrayed through the usage of oppositional characters and narratorial voices, as shown, for instance, in *Castle Rackrent* and *Ormond*. For Austen, such portrayal is not necessary as the fluidity of free indirect discourse allows her to examine various networks of relationships while maintaining cohesion and coherence. Nevertheless, although Austen builds upon Edgeworth's texts, she is also indebted to her precursor. Like the concept of national identity whereby transnational influences assist in the formation process, Austen's intertextuality then helps construct her novels both in theme and in form.

Conclusion

Austen's achievement in the novel genre lies in her incredible talent in creating dimensionality, be it in terms of rounded characters or extending realism beyond the frame of the novel. Although indebted to her contemporaries, it is essentially what she does with the techniques, conventions, and themes learnt from them which makes her novels lifelike. The intertextuality of Austen's novels itself shows that her texts are connected to the works of others, and as such, like her characters, do not exist in isolation. The references she makes to other works and the techniques and themes incorporated from other writers in her novels establish a form of exchange and movement between the texts. Austen's writings and the works she references can thus be placed within a network in which the texts remain related on many intersecting levels, allowing for numerous analyses and varying configurations of dynamics. It would be possible, for instance, to reconfigure this thesis by examining the significance of Gothicism in Edgeworth's novels and the concept of national identity in Burney's and Radcliffe's texts instead. While the domains and/or the results of the investigation might remain the same, the way the texts interact with one another would change.

Like Burney's, Edgeworth's Gothicism exists in everyday social and domestic circles. However, the manifestation of Gothic elements, which appear in the form of misguided knowledge and disorderly female conduct, shows that her concerns lie in gendered propriety and education. A character such as Harriet Freke in *Belinda*, who turns knowledge of science into the materialisation of supernatural beliefs and who consistently goes to extremes to transgress social conventions, is made to seem almost monstrous or, like her name, freakish. The danger of falling under the corrupt influences

of such figures the way Lady Delacour once did is, in many ways, parallel to Austen's depiction of the oppression under dominant patriarchal control. Lady Delacour, who has to hide the bullet wound gotten from having fought a duel encouraged by Harriet years ago, is oppressed by gender conventions which prohibit women's participation in such activities. It is only through the enlightened rationality of Belinda that Lady Delacour can redeem herself in her own domestic sphere while maintaining social appearances. The criticisms which Edgeworth received from contemporary reviewers and critics for the creation of an overly rational and insufficiently sensible protagonist point to the perceived masculinity of the character. Although ideas of cosmopolitanism might not be so prominent if one examines the Gothicism of Edgeworth's novels, the author's advocacy of proper, enlightened, and seemingly masculine guidance would still be discernable.

In terms of national identity, both Radcliffe and Burney are less open to the ideas of cosmopolitanism than Edgeworth, but their works are perhaps no less influential in this domain. Radcliffe's strong support for English identity can be seen in her novels, in the displacement of the settings for crimes committed and in the high praises for her own nation's culture and society. Her choice of foreign settings to illustrate the threats faced by her protagonists contrasts sharply with her characters' opinion of English rationality, civility, and literary genius. The oppositions between nations become the subject of parody by Austen, whose work reflects her perception that all nations present the possibility of such dangers and oppression. Austen's belief in her own nation's fallibility mirrors her depictions of characters with varying degrees of good and bad qualities. Her parody of Radcliffe's treatment of nation is perhaps influenced by Burney's satirical

portrayal of characters who idealise a particular nation and its culture. In *Cecilia*, for example, Captain Aresby constantly misappropriates French words in his speech, making himself unintelligible to others, while the two lower class tradesmen, Mr. Simkins and Mr. Hobson, believe that the circulation of money should remain solely in England. The representation of such characters in a comedic and even ironic manner highlights the absurdity of their beliefs in the superiority of one nation over another. What Austen is able to derive from Radcliffe's novels, however, is the distinction between probability and possibility. Although Catherine in *Northanger Abbey* realises her error in accusing General Tilney of murder and concludes that the laws and customs of her own country would have made it difficult for such acts to go unpunished, she does consider the possibility of such deeds occurring in foreign lands. Seen in this light, the displacement of settings in Radcliffe's novels is rather appropriate for the psychological projections and events narrated, for it is in the realm of the possibility rather than probability that the imagination is allowed to roam freely. As such, the physical world and the psychological world are still interconnected, and *Northanger Abbey* appears to be less a criticism of the fictionality of Radcliffe's narratives than a criticism of those who internalise conventions without question.

The works of Austen and of other novelists intersect and interact with one another on various levels. The oscillation between texts and the constant adoption and rejection of literary styles and techniques generate movements which flow beyond the frame of the novel. For Austen, continuous movement within and without the novel is essential because it produces dimensionality and the semblance of life. By integrating and building upon what she learns from her contemporaries, Austen is able to form multi-layered

narratives and three-dimensional characters imbued with potential for change. The potential of the narratives and characters provides uncertainties that are circumscribed by the knowledge readers have of them. By having access to the characters' psychological state and understanding how they respond to the demands and influences of the external world, readers are able to form conjectures about the characters' subsequent actions and, as such, are able to project their own thoughts and emotions based on the existing narratives. However, if the characters have the capacity for change, the readers' speculations are punctuated by uncertainties, producing a wider range of possibilities and allowing the imagination to expand beyond the scope of the novels. Readers are forced to constantly interact with the novels and themselves, positing what they have learnt from the material texts with their own psychological creativity.

Austen's talents in creating mobility, change, and dimension contribute greatly to the development of the novel. The focalisation of sociological components illustrates the continuous attempt to enact a balance between social structures and individual desires and needs. Like the characters who need to navigate between the psychological realm and the external world, readers, too, are interconnected to the worlds transcribed upon the pages of the novels and, as such, are able to interact with the texts. In an even more extensive manner than most other authors of her time and even today, an active and engaging network exists between author, texts, and readers, as suggested by the rather intimate term "Janeite" used to describe current avid readers of Austen's novels. As such, by creating characters and narratives with which readers can interact, Austen essentially paves the way for more engaging texts through various mediums. The numerous and varied adaptations of Austen's novels in past few decades, including the recent

Bollywood version, *Bride and Prejudice*, points to the appeal of Austen's novels as a source for the proliferation of imaginative projections and as ongoing texts with which current contemporaries can even interact. With such far-reaching connections through the works of Austen, the range of possibilities for further analysis on various levels of the author-text-reader network becomes more expansive. As such, through Austen's novels, it becomes possible not only to trace the mutability of the novel genre in terms of form and even medium, but also to trace the mutability of readership and the reading process.

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