

The Treatment of Emotion in
Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë

Abstract

(Note: this summary does not exactly follow the physical organisation of the thesis. I expect the reader to read the two appendices between Chapters 1 and 2: this is therefore where I include their arguments below.)

Charlotte Brontë wrote some memorable criticism of Jane Austen. What particularly affronted her was Jane Austen's treatment of emotion. This suggests grounds for comparison. If conducted historically the comparison makes more sense. It also helps to consider the novel as 'conjectural history', i.e. to assign (some) novels not to the category of make-believe (creating imaginary worlds which only make sense if certain conventions are accepted), nor that of lying (evoking possible but partial worlds for consolation), but that of guesswork (considering what might have happened in this world).

How are ascriptions of emotion to be identified? The conjunction of 'apprehension' with 'affect' seems to make up our concept of emotion, and 'object-apprehensions' to be the novelist's happiest means of ascription.

But is ascription of emotions by a narrator not itself artifice (convention)? It may be, but it need not. Novels

may be conjectural histories.

This is not what Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë's potential public all expected, however. (Since the reading public was by this time established as the mainstay of literary effort, expectations need to be investigated.)

What did they expect? Their expectations differed. Although the reading public was small by present standards in Charlotte Brontë's lifetime, and even smaller in Jane Austen's, it was already fragmented. Novels were not particularly popular as such: of the public they reached perhaps everyone read to escape the limitations of a life whose singularity (incompleteness) the advancing division of labour brought into consciousness; otherwise their expectations varied. (This public was itself fragmented.)

Groups of readers may be identified on many criteria: that most relevant here proved to be the line taken on the novel as a form. Three groups can thus be identified: 'omnivorous', 'discriminating' and 'hidebound' (my christenings). Omnivorous readers saw in the novel new possibilities as a pastime. They were in a numerical majority throughout the period. Their legacy was 'emotionalism' - the equation of value with a particular affective response. Discriminating readers adventurous novelists called into being: they probably grew in numbers. They were attracted by truth.

Hidebound readers objected to the form as such: literary, political, or moral conservatives, they saw the novel as subversive. Their legacy was 'moralism' - the sacrifice of truth to propriety.

Truthful treatment of emotions presupposes authenticity in the presentation of personal experience. ('Personal experience' is the experience of persons - authentic subjects of experience; it is distinct from 'human experience' or 'experience'.) Attempts on the part of even the most ambitious of the immediate predecessors and contemporaries of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë to appease hidebound readers and (at best) conciliate the omnivorous diverted them from authenticity. A hundred-year tradition is implicit in Clarissa: psychological insight gives way before decorum; a repertoire of conventional tokens of emotion drives out observation and experience.

But authenticity of presentation is what Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë have in common. They wrote for discriminating readers, an audience of equals. And while discriminating readers admired their work, hidebound and omnivorous readers were cool or hostile - until Mrs. Gaskell's superb emotionalist Life betrayed her subject almost irrevocably into the hands of the latter.

Authenticity is a minimum requirement. For further valid presentation of personal experience Jane Austen and

Charlotte Brontë evolved their own techniques. Their techniques differ, however. Each derived a different sort of pleasure from writing; they wrote particular novels to different ends; they saw the world differently; and they found themselves at home in two hardly compatible 'orders of ideas'. Jane Austen may be identified as an empiricist, working (however distantly) in the categorical framework of Locke and Hume; Charlotte Brontë found herself at home in the half-German, half-English transcendentalism which was fashionable among (some) discriminating readers in her lifetime. Moreover, the internal cohesiveness of Jane Austen's techniques points to confidence in a unitary, established 'good taste'; Charlotte Brontë's tendency to incoherence reflects the diversity of literary ideals (divisions among discriminating readers) in her lifetime.

These conditions account for similar differences in the two novelists' styles (the language in which emotions are presented). As they develop from novel to novel, Jane Austen's harmonious style becomes more comprehensive, flexible; Charlotte Brontë's range of styles multiplies.

For explaining and evaluating emotions an idiom had already been established - an idiom sustained by emotionalism and moralism. In order to maintain authenticity against it Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë evolved a personal range of idiom. Jane Austen's is not the purely Johnsonian idiom it

has previously been assumed to be, but a reconciliation of Johnson with the ethos of 'sensibility'. Charlotte Brontë's is more determinedly scientific (for example her phrenological vocabulary - phrenology being a new, controversial, Viennese explanation of the life of feeling) and religious (partly to oppose the materialism implicit in phrenology).

Technique and language thus liberated Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë to dramatise (aspects of) their own predicament, and to explore the issues of morality, happiness, and fulfilment provoked by it. A personal working-out was necessary, since English society was rapidly and visibly changing, and individuals seem to have been thrown back on the self for salvation. Some of the range of emotions common to both novelists stems from this. Differences may be a matter of period (feelings about nature or of children) or of the ends of particular novels. Explorations of the predicament of persons in society persist, but ends vary from novel to novel.

One emotion both novelists emphasise is love. Many novels (to some contemporaries, 'the novel') vindicated love, and the emotional capacities of women. Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë were not content with symbolic vindications: their authenticity is radical. From each other they are divided by technique, by their notions of what love is, and by their consequent notions of what threatens it. ('Gallantry' threatens a love which varies

with individuals in Jane Austen; death a love which is life most itself in Charlotte Brontë.) Their stories of love naturally differ too. The difference can best be seen by comparing Persuasion and Villette.

The Treatment of Emotion

in Jane Austen

and Charlotte Brontë

Michael Scannell

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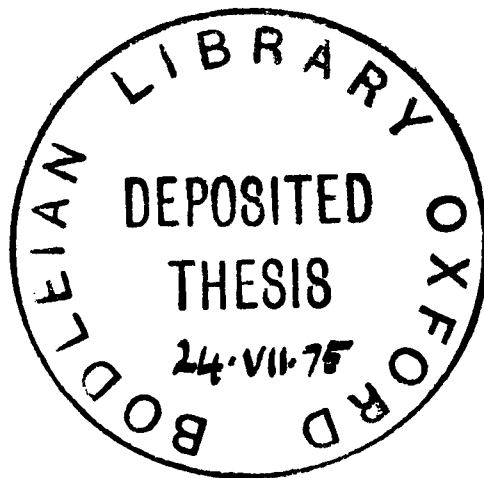


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Note on Texts and References

For Jane Austen there is no problem. I have used Chapman's edition of the novels (3rd ed.: London, 1932 - 4), the letters (2nd ed.: London, 1952), the minor works (London, 1954), and Austen-Leigh's Memoir (Oxford, 1926), together with the separate edition of Volume the Second by B.C.Southam (Oxford, 1963).

For Charlotte Brontë the problems are numerous. The texts most used have been shown to be unusually corrupt. (See T.J. Winnifrith: 'Charlotte Brontë's Letters to Ellen Nussey', Durham University Journal, n.s. xxxii (1970 - 1), pp. 16-18; Joan Stevens: 'Woozles in Brontëland: A Cautionary Tale', Studies in Bibliography, xxiv (1971), pp. 99-108; also Winnifrith's The Brontës and Their Background, (London, 1973), pp. 7-27.)

For the novels I have therefore relied on the Thornton edition, by Temple Scott (Edinburgh, 1924). Scott may not have been a particularly distinguished editor, but he cannot be accused - so far as I know - of positive dishonesty. References to the novels of Emily and Anne Brontë are also to this edition, as are references to Mrs. Gaskell's Life.

For Jane Eyre I have compared the text of transcripts from the Thornton edition with relevant parts of the Clarendon edition, by Jane Jack and Margaret Smith (Oxford, 1969). Almost all differences proved to be a matter of accidentals; I have included in a footnote anything that seemed at all significant.

For the juvenilia I have used Legends of Angria, compiled by Fannie E. Ratchford and William Clyde De Vane, (New Haven, 1963). I have not referred to other juvenile works of Charlotte Brontë.

For her letters I have had to rely on the Shakespeare Head edition, by T.J. Wise and J.A. Symington, (Oxford, 1932). The alternative - to investigate the extant manuscripts in England and abroad - was out of the question. This is naturally the forced option which gave me most concern: dates, punctuation, and even wording, may well be inaccurate. I can only hope that such things as Charlotte Brontë's criticisms of Jane Austen have not been significantly tampered with. (One omission, relying on Winnifrith's book, I have been able to record.)

For other primary works I have normally quoted from first editions, where these were available, and from the earliest possible where they were not. Exceptions are: when relevant material was added in later editions during the author's lifetime, and when a collected edition of the author's works, or an authoritative edition of a single work, seemed preferable. Twentieth-century collected editions have normally been used; nineteenth-century collected editions have only been used where, after consideration, I thought it justifiable. I have tried to maintain consistency, but not at the expense of what seemed sensible. The Yale edition of Dr. Johnson has not yet reached Rasselas, for example; but it would seem foolish to quote from an older collected edition which included both Rasselas

and the Rambler, and not to take advantage of the Yale edition of the Rambler. (The same applies to Dickens; and to make a particular point about De Quincey I have had to refer to a first edition as well as to the collected works - but not for the same work.)

For the contemporary reviews of Jane Austen I have used the Critical Heritage, edited by B.C.Southam (London, 1968). This includes the bulk of commentary to 1855, and all the important reviews. Comments not included in the body of this work, but only in the editor's introduction, I have separately sought out. Three more reviews are included in William S. Ward: 'Three Hitherto Unnoted Contemporary Reviews of Jane Austen', (Nineteenth Century Fiction, xxvi (1971-2), pp. 469 - 77.) I have found several more casual comments, and two longer analyses - both from contemporary journalistic surveys.

The Critical Heritage for the Brontës, edited by Miriam Allott, (London, 1974) came out after I had begun my final draft. I have not used it as a source; for the sake of consistency, also because it only represents a sample of contemporary comment and does not include reviews in their entirety.

References in the text should need little explanation. I have only included sub-titles where these are explanatory or interesting in their own right. Where it seems likely that a reader may wish to refer to another edition (of a novel, for example) I have added a chapter or other sectional reference - but not where quotations are short and uncontroversial. I have not normally repeated in the footnote information given in the text.

I have acknowledged secondary sources where they have led me to make a particular point, and as far as possible noted parallels to, and anticipations of, my own arguments. Secondary works of more general usefulness could not be acknowledged in this way: their presence in my final bibliography will have to stand as testimony.

I have used the following abbreviations. (Generally accepted abbreviations, such as J for Journal, and unmistakeable short forms - such as Econ. Hist. Rev. - are not included here.)

For the works of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë:

<u>NA</u>	<u>Northanger Abbey</u>
<u>S&S</u>	<u>Sense and Sensibility</u>
<u>P&P</u>	<u>Pride and Prejudice</u>
<u>MP</u>	<u>Mansfield Park</u>
<u>E</u>	<u>Emma</u>
<u>Pers</u>	<u>Persuasion</u>
<u>Prof</u>	<u>The Professor</u>
<u>JE</u>	<u>Jane Eyre</u>
<u>Sh</u>	<u>Shirley</u>
<u>V</u>	<u>Villette</u>
<u>Minor Works</u>	Jane Austen's <u>Minor Works</u>
<u>Vol 2nd</u>	Southam's edition of <u>Volume the Second</u>
<u>Angria</u>	<u>Legends of Angria</u>

Other works to which frequent reference is made:

<u>Letters</u>	Jane Austen's letters
<u>Correspondence</u>	Charlotte Brontë's letters

MemoirAusten-Leigh's MemoirLifeMrs. Gaskell's LifeJACHJane Austen: The Critical Heritage

Journals:

BNYPL

Bulletin of the New York Public Library

BST

Brontë Society Transactions

DA

Dissertation Abstracts

EC

Essays in Criticism

ELH

(Sic: sub-title is A Journal of English Literary History)

JEGP

Journal of English and Germanic Philology

JHI

Journal of the History of Ideas

N&Q

Notes and Queries

NCF

Nineteenth-Century Fiction

PBSA

Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America

PMLA

(Sic: sub-title is Publications of the Modern Language Association of America)

RDM

Revue des Deux Mondes

RES

Review of English Studies

SP

Studies in Philology

VS

Victorian Studies

Chapter One

Charlotte Brontë and Jane Austen

It was not until 1848 that Charlotte Brontë first read Jane Austen. G.H. Lewes, reviewing Jane Eyre in Fraser's Magazine, had cited Jane Austen (with Fielding) as a model of excellence for the novel. Simultaneously he cautioned Charlotte Brontë against melodrama.¹

She had personal reasons for taking notice of this review. In the previous November Lewes had written to her privately, to tell her that he admired Jane Eyre greatly, and that he had persuaded Parker, the editor of Fraser's, to let him review it; and in the meantime she had read his novel Ranthorpe and written to tell him of her admiration.² She also hoped that her reviewers would help her improve her writing. As Harriet Martineau (herself a novelist, as well as a friend of Charlotte Brontë's) revealed in her obituary notice:

"She calmly read all adverse reviews of her books, for the sake of instruction; and when she could not recognize the aptness of the criticism, she was more puzzled than hurt or angry."⁽³⁾

So she searched out a Jane Austen novel - it is not clear where - and read it. The result is contained in her third letter to Lewes, on January 12th. What she had to say about Jane Austen was this (the two quotations in her first sentence are not in the review; they are presumably from one of G.H. Lewes' missing letters):

1. 'Recent Novels: French and English', xxxvi (1847), pp. 686-695

2. Correspondence, ii, pp. 151 - 3, 156

3. 'Charlotte Brontë', Biographical Sketches, (London, 1869), p. 361. (The piece was written in 1855.) Cf. Life, p. 365 (Ch.18)

"I think, too, I will endeavour to follow the counsel which shines out of Miss Austen's 'mild eyes,' 'to finish more and be more subdued'; but neither am I sure of that... Why do you like Miss Austen so very much? I am puzzled on that point. What induced you to say that you would have rather written 'Pride and Prejudice' or 'Tom Jones,' than any of the Waverley Novels? I had not seen 'Pride and Prejudice' till I read that sentence of yours, and then I got the book. And what did I find? An accurate daguerrotyped portrait of a commonplace face; a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses. ...(George Sand) is sagacious and profound; Miss Austen is only shrewed and observant." (1)

G.H. Lewes' reply has not survived; but its gist can be gathered from Charlotte Brontë's next letter to him, written six days after the first:

"What a strange lecture comes next in your letter! You say I must familiarise my mind with the fact that 'Miss Austen is not a poetess, has no "sentiment"' (you scornfully enclose the word in inverted commas), 'no eloquence, none of the ravishing enthusiasms of poetry'; and then you add, I must 'learn to acknowledge her as one of the greatest artists, of the greatest painters of human character, and one of the writers with the nicest sense of means to an end that ever lived.' The last point only will I ever acknowledge. Can there be a great artist without poetry? ... Miss Austen being, as you say, without 'sentiment', without poetry, maybe is sensible, real (more real than true), but she cannot be great ... Nevertheless I will, when I can ... diligently peruse all Miss Austen's works, as you recommend." (2)

1. Correspondence, ii, pp. 179 - 80
2. ii, pp. 180 - 1. (I have not reproduced the paragraphing of this letter.)

In the Shakespeare Head transcript of this letter there is no further comment on Jane Austen. But the manuscript (which has survived) continues:

"I have something else to say. You mention the authoress of 'Azeth the Egyptian'; you say you think I should sympathize 'with her daring imagination and pictorial fancy'. Permit me to undeceive you: with infinitely more relish I can sympathize with Miss Austen's clear common sense and subtle shrewdness. If you find no inspiration in Miss Austen's page, neither do you find there windy wordiness; to use your words again, she exquisitely adapts her means to her end: both are very subdued, a little contracted, but never absurd." (1)

In spite of this recognition of Jane Austen's subtlety, and her promise to "diligently peruse" the other novels, she still had not read any of them before February 1850, when she wrote to W.S. Williams (her publisher's reader):

"Whenever you send me a new supply of books may I request that you will have the goodness to include one or two of Miss Austen's - I am often asked whether I have read them, and I excite amazement by replying in the negative - I have read none except 'Pride and Prejudice.' Miss Martineau mentioned 'Persuasion' as the best." (2)

This was on February 22nd. The next parcel of books arrived at Haworth on March 19th, and probably contained more than one of Jane Austen's novels. The evidence for this is that in her letter of thanks Charlotte Brontë mentions some of the books sent as

1. Winniffrith: Brontës, p. 23

2. Correspondence, iii, p.79

especially welcome. One of these is Southey's Life. In a letter of April 12th she spends a paragraph discussing this book. She then begins a new paragraph, "I have likewise read one of Miss Austen's works 'Emma'".¹ The "likewise" strongly suggests that Emma was one of the books sent to her by Williams; this does not seem to have been noticed before, and the force of the phrase "one of Miss Austen's works" has as a result been missed, with consequent speculation on her likely reaction to works other than Emma.² But if she had been sent other novels by Jane Austen (as may now seem likely) she would almost certainly have looked at them. Her subsequent silence suggests that she found nothing in them to change her mind. And this is no more than should have been expected from what she actually says about Emma:

"I have likewise read one of Miss Austen's works 'Emma' - read it with interest and with just the degree of admiration which Miss Austen herself would have thought sensible and suitable - anything like warmth or enthusiasm; anything energetic, poignant, heartfelt, is utterly out of place in commending these works: all such demonstration the authoress would have met with a well-bread sneer, would have calmly scorned as outré and extravagant. She does her business of delineating the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well; there is a Chinese fidelity, a miniature delicacy in the painting: she ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing profound: the Passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy Sisterhood; even to the Feelings she vouchsafes no more than an occasional graceful but distant recognition; too frequent converse with them would ruffle the smooth elegance of her progress. Her business is not half so

1. Correspondence, iii, p.99

2. See, e.g., B.C.Southam: Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts, (London, 1964), p. 101. (Southam here seems not to know that she had read Emma.)

much with the human heart as with the human eyes, mouth, hands and feet; what sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study, but what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of Life and the sentient target of death - this Miss Austen ignores; she no more, with her mind's eye, beholds the heart of her race than each man, with bodily vision sees the heart in his heaving breast. Jane Austen was a complete and most sensible lady, but a very incomplete, and rather insensible (not senseless) woman, if this is heresy - I cannot help it. If I said it to some people (Lewes for instance) they would directly accuse me of advocating exaggerated heroics, but I am not afraid of your falling into any such vulgar error."⁽¹⁾

Her only further reference to Jane Austen is not of much importance: in a letter (again to Williams) of March 1853 she mentions that she has been told "of a lady of some note" who had previously determined to marry someone like Mr. Knightley in Emma, and who "had now changed her mind, and vowed that she would either find the duplicate of Professor Emanuel or remain for ever single!"²

What Charlotte Brontë finds to criticise in Jane Austen - and the criteria she invokes - suggest grounds for a comparison of the two novelists. Since they were both daughters of country clergymen, both members of one social class, and both unmarried at the time of writing their novels, and also since Charlotte Brontë was born a year before Jane Austen died, the comparison seems the more natural.

1. Correspondence, iii, p.99

2. iv, p.54

After Mrs. Gaskell (who prints the letters to Lewes), the Christian Remembrancer was the first to make the comparison.¹ The first article entirely devoted to it was published in 1882;² and since then several writers on both novelists have found the contrast useful.³ There has, however, been only one previous attempt (unpublished) at a full-length comparison;⁴ and - although this is central to Charlotte Brontë's criticism of Jane Austen - no comparison has concentrated on the two novelists' treatment of emotion.⁵

This is the aim of the present work. It is a limited aim, and the investigation attempted here is intended to complement rather than replace existing work on Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë.

1. 'The Life of Charlotte Brontë. By Mrs. Gaskell', xxxiv (1857), pp. 87 - 145; the comparison is on pp. 137-9
2. A. Armit: 'Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë: A Contrast', Modern Rev., iii (1882), pp. 384 - 96
3. See e.g., Henry H. Bonnell: Charlotte Brontë George Eliot Jane Austen, Studies in their Works, (New York, 1902), pp. 456-7; Reginald Farrer: 'Jane Austen', Quarterly Rev., ccxxviii (1917), p. 12; M. Hope Dodds: 'Daughters of the Clergy', BST xiv, No. 5 (1965), pp. 20-4
4. This is an unpublished thesis by Eleanor Joan Rackow Widmer: 'Love and Duty: The Heroines in Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë' - summarised in DA, xix (1959), pp. 3297 - 8
5. A five page article entitled 'The Rational Treatment of Emotion: An Essay on Jane Austen's Style' appeared in Spectrum - a periodical sponsored by Associated Students, University of California, Santa Barbara - in 1961. See Abstracts of Eng. Studies, v (1962), p. 44

This means that no independent investigation has been undertaken where research is already full (if not yet comprehensive). No attempt has been made to deal with manuscript material; and events in the lives of the two novelists, together with their juvenilia and minor work, are only dealt with to the extent that they throw light upon the novels of their maturity.

To compare the two novelists' treatment of emotion adequately, however, it is necessary to do more than simply analyse their practice. If what is commonplace in their works is not to be taken to be exceptional (or what is original to be commonplace), and if the essential differences between them are to be seen for what they are, the comparison needs to be extended to the work of (some of) their contemporaries. If major predecessors are included there is a further advantage: it may be possible to account for some elements in the novelists' practice.

This, then, is a preliminary field of investigation. The novels studied here (an exhaustive study is out of the question in an eighty-year period) fall into two classes: those which are close analogues - novels by contemporaries with similar areas of concern - and those which may have suggested ideas or techniques. (The two classes clearly overlap.) With these need to be studied a certain number of narrative works in verse which fall into one or other of the same two classes.

A single question is asked of any of these works: 'how does it treat personal experience?' (The expression 'personal experience' is, for reasons which will become clear, preferred to equivalent metaphorical expressions such as 'the inner life'.) Three books have been written on the treatment of personal experience in the nineteenth-century novel;¹ none covers ground covered by the present investigation.

The task of understanding and attempting to account for the two novelists' practice cannot end with an examination of other novels, however. Writing a novel is more than a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings (in the most literal sense of Wordsworth's phrase); it is a socially conditioned step. It is socially conditioned because it depends on there existing a form, 'the novel', and a social use for the form. The use or uses the form may have for society at large may conflict with the uses the form has for the novelist, but this is not always the case. Where it is not, a further explanation for a novelist's practice can be found. Even where it is the case, and a novelist can be seen to be ignoring or flouting the expectations of potential readers, the significance of his or her practice can be made clearer.

1. Sijna De Vooy: The Psychological Element in the English Sociological Novel of the Nineteenth Century, (Amsterdam, 1927); Gordon O. Taylor: The Passages of Thought, Psychological Representation in the American Novel 1870-1900, (New York, 1969); John Halperin: The Language of Meditation, Four Studies in Nineteenth Century Fiction, (Ilfracombe, 1973)

This suggests a second field of investigation, and one which needs to be studied exhaustively (as far as the relevant works can be traced). An endeavour has been made to study all the books on the novel published between 1775 and 1855 - with a glance beyond the later date - together with all the articles, essays, or parts of books which could be identified as sufficiently general or wide-ranging in their scope. At the same time all the extant contemporary criticism of Jane Austen has been taken into account. For Charlotte Brontë the examination has necessarily been less than exhaustive. Of the hundred and fifty to two hundred reviews whose existence at least can be inferred, only a proportion has been dealt with. American (but not French) reviews have been systematically excluded, on the grounds that expectations expressed here are less relevant. And reviews in newspapers have been almost entirely neglected, partly on the grounds that less weight is in general to be attached to expectations here, and partly on the grounds that Charlotte Brontë herself thought them less significant. She wrote to W.S. Williams in November 1849 (of Shirley):

"I feel that the fiat for which I wait does not depend on Newspapers - except indeed such newspapers as the 'Examiner' - the monthlies and Quarterlies will pronounce it - I suppose."(1)

Further evidence of expectations has been found in contemporary works on general literary principles, criticisms of other novelists, conduct books, and examinations of the 'state of society': these have necessarily been studied selectively.

There are modern works which deal with the theory of the novel between 1775 and 1855 (two of them unpublished),¹ and the contemporary reception of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë has also been studied (in the case of Charlotte Brontë rather perfunctorily)²; but the two kinds of study have not been related to one another or to the novels or to society at large, and neither kind concerns itself at any length with what was expected of novelists in the matter of treating emotions.

A subsidiary area of enquiry is in the field of contemporary moral and philosophical works. ('Psychology' became a distinct discipline only at the end of this period.) The relevant works here again fall into two classes: those in which certain ideas implicit in the work of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë are expressed explicitly ('glosses'), and those in which certain themes or determinations of thought employed

1. Joseph Bunn Heidler: The History, From 1700 to 1800, of English Criticism of Prose Fiction, (Urbana, 1928); Byron Hall Gibson: 'The History from 1800 to 1832 of English Criticism of Prose Fiction', Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana (1931); Carolyn Washburn: 'The History, from 1832 to 1860, of British Criticism of Narrative Prose Fiction', Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana (1937); Richard Stang: The Theory of the Novel in England 1850 - 1870, (London, 1959)
2. For Jane Austen see JACH, together with its bibliography on p. 271. For Charlotte Brontë there is only Edith M. Weir: 'Contemporary Reviews of the first Brontë Novels', BST xi (1946-50) pp. 89 - 96, together with eight pages of extracts in Judith O'Neill (ed.): Critics on Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Readings in Literary Criticism, (London, 1968) now supplemented by Miriam Allott (ed.): Jane Eyre and Villette, A Casebook, (London, 1973), pp. 13-28, 41-141

by them originate ('sources'). (Again, the classes overlap.)

The works studied here serve as glosses because they articulate ideas which underly the two novelists' practice. This holds even for the most general ideas. As Stuart Hampshire has argued:

"Many of the high abstractions of philosophy, theories of reality and illusion and theories of the self, have their more concrete equivalent, an apt expression, or even a kind of translation, in a personal style of fiction, or of rhetoric, or of poetry." (1)

To speak of these works' second function as 'sources' may create confusion. It is important not to assume a single kind of connection between theoretical and imaginative work: a matter of 'influence', where one writer has read another. Thought is a social, a co-operative, activity: individuals may significantly re-direct thought, or teach it new styles,² but the products of their thinking (determinations and themes) are socially sustained.

Moreover, a writer who professes little interest in general ideas cannot escape their impact. Jane Austen's "vision and outlook" may "primarily spring from her natural disposition".³ A necessary condition, however, is not a sufficient condition, and while a writer's personality

1. Stuart Hampshire: Modern Writers and Other Essays, (London, 1969), p. ix

2. Cf. W.E.H. Lecky: History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, (London, 1865), i, pp. vii-viii

3. B.G. MacCarthy: 'Critical Essays on Jane Austen. Edited by B.C. Southam', RKS n.s. xxi (1970), p. 513

may be conceded to be the most important of the necessary conditions (of his writing in the way he does), it is not, and cannot be, the only one. Other necessary conditions are the existence of a language embodying particular determinations of thought, and the availability of an "order of ideas" in which the individual may find himself.¹ (This is the more important for a writer who has no interest in philosophical argument, since it is he who in particular must rely upon determinations already available.)²

Since language is at the centre of this field of investigation some contemporary dictionaries (and books of synonyms) need to be consulted as well.

A single work - Geoffrey Bullough's Mirror of Minds³ - deals with the connections between psychological theory and literature in England; but it is confined to poetry, and has little to say about theories of emotion.

1. Cf. Matthew Arnold: Lectures and Essays in Criticism, ed. R.H. Super, (Ann Arbor, 1962), pp. 260 - 1

2. For other discussions of the relations between thought and literature, none of them altogether satisfactory, see Joseph W. Cohen: 'Aspects of the Relations Between Philosophy and Literature', Univ. Colorado Studies, Ser. B., i (1939-41), pp. 117-67; Lewis Zerby: 'Philosophy and Literature', JAesthetics, v (1946-7), pp. 281-86; Newton P. Stallknecht: 'Ideas and Literature', in Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz (ed.) Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective, (Carbondale, 1961), pp. 116-52; R.S. Crane: 'Philosophy, Literature, and the History of Ideas', The Idea of the Humanities and Other Essays Critical and Historical, (Chicago, 1967), i, pp. 173-187

3. (London, 1962)

These, then, are the main fields of investigation. Certain other kinds of material have been consulted (very selectively) as controls: conduct books and examinations of the 'state of society', as already mentioned; works by contemporaries on the thought and literature of the period; contemporary letters and memoirs.

'Treatment of emotion' is here taken to refer to the emotions ascribed to characters in the novels.¹ No direct attempt has been made to deal with the 'emotional qualities' of the novels, their emotional effect upon readers (not the same thing), or their expressive qualities. The novel is dealt with, in other words, as a kind of history. James suggests this analogy in an early essay, maintaining that

"as the picture is reality, so the novel is history. That is the only general description (which does it justice) that we may give of the novel. But history also is allowed to represent life; it is not, any more than painting, expected to apologize. The subject-matter of fiction is stored up likewise in documents and records, and if it will not give itself away, as they say in California, it must speak with assurance, with the tone of the historian To represent and illustrate the past, the actions of men, is the task of either writer, and the only difference that I can see is, in proportion as he succeeds, to the honour of the novelist, consisting as it does in his having more difficulty in collecting his evidence, which is so far from being purely literary." (2)

1. For the criteria adopted for the identification of ascriptions and descriptions of emotion, see Appendix A: 'The Concept of Emotion'
2. 'The Art of Fiction', The House of Fiction, ed. Leon Edel, (London, 1957), pp. 25 - 6.

While the novelist of the kind James has in mind creates imaginative works, that is, he does not invent imaginary worlds.¹

The term adopted to refer to the novel under this aspect is 'conjectural history': this avoids the logical awkwardness involved in the notion of imitation or mimesis, and leaves open the question of realism. It also suggests what the logical status of the novel (considered as a set of apparent statements) is here taken to be. One way of putting this might be as follows: if the story of a novel were summarised in a single sentence, that sentence would not assert anything to be the case; it would be a hypothetical counterfactual.²

It is as conjectural histories that the novels of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and their contemporaries are examined here. This means that the 'rhetoric' of the novel (the means used to carry conviction) is, for this study, of secondary interest.

It also means that a distorted or one-sided picture is given of some novels - The Heart of Midlothian, Oliver Twist, Mary Barton - works which are distinguished on their own terms, but not necessarily

1. For a discussion of the main obstacle to dealing with the novel as a form of history see Appendix B below ('Emotions and the Omniscient Narrator').
2. For discussions of the logical status of the novel (which come to different conclusions) see Margaret Macdonald: 'The Language of Fiction', Aristotelian Soc. Supplementary Vol., xxviii (1954), pp. 165-84 and the rejoinder by Michael Scriven, vol. cit., pp. 185-96; also Gilbert Ryle: 'Imaginary Objects', Collected Papers, (London, 1971), ii, pp. 63-81

on these. In all such works authenticity in the presentation of personal experience is a subsidiary (or even neglected) aim.

With Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë, however, it is primary. It is the central argument of this thesis, in fact, that what distinguishes them from their contemporaries is their determination to deal in a thorough-going way with the real possibilities of life: to develop techniques adequate to the presentation of personal experience in all its actual complexity; to explore a range of personal experience which really mattered to them; and to use imagined experience as a means to explore substantial questions of morality, happiness, and fulfilment.

What makes this (shared) determination all the more remarkable is that the temptations to write differently were acute. What makes it difficult to see that the determination is shared is that Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë had radically different ideas of what it entailed.

This is the case to be argued. I begin by considering the demands made on the novelist by different sections of the contemporary reading public - together with the concessions made by novelists from Richardson to Mrs. Gaskell - since it is only against this background that the effort made by Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë to tell the truth about emotions (not to simplify, or exaggerate, or idealise) can be seen for the achievement it is.

Chapter Two: The Novel and the Life of Feeling(i):

Readers' Expectations 1775 - 1855

By 1775, when Jane Austen was born, the reading public had established itself as the mainstay of literary effort. According to Charles Knight, the nineteenth-century publisher, this position had been reached some time earlier. By the 1750's he says, the patron was of marginal importance; "There was an end to paid Dedications and gratulatory Odes."¹ It can be said that the practice of soliciting subscriptions - a stage half-way between patronage and sale on the open market - continued (Fanny Burney agreed to have Camilla published this way in 1796, one of the subscribers being Jane Austen). And even in the 1790's there was a flavour of novelty about a situation in which ordinary readers had effective power - as the bookseller James Lackington's dedications to his Memoirs suggest. Of the three dedications, dated October 1791, the first, and longest, is "To the Public" and opens "Worthy Patrons"; it ends "Worthy Patrons, /Your much obliged,/ Ever grateful,/ And devoted humble servant,/ James Lackington."² But while this parody does suggest continuing familiarity with the language of "paid dedications", it also marks the triumph of the new 'patrons', and this is its real point.

1. The Old Printer and the Modern Press, (London, 1854), p.227

2. Memoirs of the First Forty-Five Years of the Life of James Lackington, new ed., (London, 1792), pp. v - vii

During the period to 1855 the triumph slowly became absolute. The development excited the distaste of displaced men of letters such as Coleridge,¹ but the calm satisfaction of most other commentators - for example, the Congregationalist founder-editor of the British Quarterly Review, Robert Vaughan. He noted in 1843 how the "reluctant" patronage of "the learned and the great" had given place to "the more willing, direct, and wholesome patronage of the public."²

This patronage, as it must, took the form of money and reputation. To supply either sufficiently the reading public clearly had to be of a certain size.

Numbers, however, are difficult to determine. The first efforts to determine national literacy rates were not made until 1839, when marriage registers were made available for the purposes of statistical sampling. (Those who could, wrote their names in the register; the others had to make a mark.)³ And literacy in this sense by no means implies book-reading (let alone book-buying).

1. The Statesman's Manual ... A Lay Sermon, Addressed to the Higher Classes of Society, Lay Sermons, ed. R.J.White, (London, 1972), pp. 36-8 and Biographia Literaria, ed. J.Shawcross, (Oxford, 1907), i, pp. 41-2. Cf. 'Characteristics of the Present State of English Literature', Athenaeum, i (1828), pp.1-2; Richard Hurrell Froude: 'Essay on the Age Favourable to Works of Fiction', Remains, (London, 1838), i, pp.152-4
2. The Age of Great Cities: or Modern Society viewed in its relation to Intelligence, Morals and Religion, (London, 1843) p. 83
3. G. R. Porter: The Progress of the Nation, (London, 1836-43) iii, pp. 276-82

Figures from the book trade - for the numbers of new books produced in any one year, for the size of editions (where these can be established) - may be more helpful. But one has only contemporary guesses to go on for the numbers any one physical volume might reach, bearing in mind especially the multiplication of libraries.

What the figures (and even the guesses) do indicate are certain limits. Estimates of the population of England and Wales in the 1770's vary between 7,052,000 for 1771 and 7,953,000 for 1780.¹ Of this population of more than seven million, I should estimate that 300,000 at the most are likely to have been book readers.² By the 1850's absolute numbers had clearly increased. Before the turn of the century no more than 400 new books were produced each year. (In the 1750's no more than 100). By the 1850's this had climbed to over 2,600.³ (But the population as a whole had also increased, to 17,928,000 in 1851 and 20,066,000 in 1861.⁴)

1. B.R.Mitchell and Phyllis Deane: Abstract of British Historical Statistics, (Cambridge, 1962), p.5
2. I base this estimate partly on the figures given in Richard D.Altick: The English Common Reader, (Chicago, 1957), esp. pp. 30, 49, 381-90 and 'Nineteenth-Century English Best-Sellers: A Further List', Studies in Bibl., xxii (1969), pp. 197-206; Ian Watt: The Rise of the Novel, (London, 1957), pp. 35-49; Marjorie Plant: The English Book Trade, 2nd.ed., (London, 1965), p. 94; Knight: Old Printer, pp. 238, 261. More importantly, I have taken into account the facts about income given below.
3. Plant: Book Trade, pp. 445-6
4. Abstract of Statistics, p.6

The limited size of the book reading public suggests limitations in its social composition. It may safely be said in the first place that book readers among the 'labouring poor' - as they would have been called in the 1770's, the 'working classes' of the 1820's and 30's - were so few as to be negligible. Contemporaries did not always have this clearly in mind. As Charles Knight says of late eighteenth-century commentators:

" 'The inferior orders of society' who had the desire [for reading] did not comprehend many of the mechanics, and none of the husbandry labourers. It may be doubted whether the Magazine Literature that the eighteenth century called forth ever went beyond the gentry and the superior traders.... There appears to have been a sort of tacit agreement amongst all who spoke of public enlightenment in the days of George III. to put out of view the great body of 'the nation' who paid for their bread by their weekly wages." (1)

Whether it was a "tacit agreement" or wilful ignorance, the charge is one that can be brought against commentators right to the 1850's, when Knight was writing.²

Literacy figures alone make it clear that there were few book readers among labourers and artisans. The census for 1851 showed 69.3% of men and boys to be literate, and 54.8% of women and girls.³ And this is after seventy years of Sunday Schools, Anglican and

1. Old Printer, pp. 226-7

2. See, for instance, the comments of Harriet Kiernan, and a writer in the Eclectic Review for 1857, below.

3. Altick: Common Reader, p.171

Dissenting charity schools, and (after 1833) government subsidies for the education of the poor. Literacy, however, is only one of the necessary conditions. A reader also needs time to read in; he needs certain physical conditions (warmth, light, and no distracting noises); and he needs the money to buy books or borrow them. (Free public libraries did not appear until after 1850.)

This last point is crucial, especially for the copyright works with which this investigation is concerned. Sense and Sensibility was published in 1811 at 15s. (Emma, in 1816, cost a guinea.) In 1811 the poorest paid workers - labourers and handloom weavers - earned less than this in a week. The very best paid manual workers, such as compositors in London, may have earned between 36s and 48s a week.¹ It is unlikely that anyone would pay even a third of a week's wages for a book (assuming that he could read it). Even a quarter of a week's wages would be prohibitive: and tax returns for the years 1799 to 1816 reveal that a tiny minority (in 1800, for example, $3\frac{3}{4}\%$) of British families earned - or admitted to earning - more than £200 a year.² Real incomes may have risen by 1847, when Jane Eyre was published at 31s 6d, but nowhere near enough to assume that the proportion of ordinary working people in a position to buy or borrow

1. Porter: Progress of Nation, ii, pp. 251-4. (Porter has come under attack by some recent historians, but not for under-estimating wages.)

2. P.K. O'Brien: 'British Incomes and Property in the Early Nineteenth Century', Econ. Hist. Rev., 2nd ser. xii (1959-60), pp. 255-67

new books had significantly increased. (I deal with the cost of borrowing below.)

Who then did acquire new books as they came out? Of the hierarchical society contemporaries still widely assumed to exist at the end of the eighteenth century - a society of "noblemen, baronets, knights, esquires, gentlemen, yeomen, tradesmen and artificers"¹ - the higher ranks no doubt went on adding to their libraries. (Darcy, in Pride and Prejudice, could not comprehend "the neglect of a family library in such days as these."²) But the increase among book readers that had taken place by 1775, and the even more substantial increase that took place over the years to 1855, were both most marked among what Scott - referring in 1827, to Jane Austen's characters - called "the middle classes of society".³ (The expression could be taken to include lesser county families, the clergy, and even baronets, as here by Scott, but it was more often used of bankers, merchants and manufacturers - as it is by Wilberforce in 1797, who refers to "the success of their commercial speculations",⁴

1. An 'Irish judge', quoted in G.M.Young: Victorian England Portrait of an Age, 2nd ed., (London, 1953), p.6, n.1

2. p38.(Ch. 8)

3. JACH, p.106

4. William Wilberforce: A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians, in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity, 2nd ed., (London, 1797), p.372

and the manufacturers' propagandist John Wade in 1838: he draws a distinction between "the clergy, the educated and learned" and "governors", "capitalists", "employers".¹⁾

It was among the families of the lesser gentry, together with those of the higher professionals (clergymen, barristers, physicians), government officials, and army and navy officers, that most book readers had for some time been found. Some increase took place among these groups, especially among their women members. A greater increase probably took place among 'tradesmen' - "the mercantile and moneyed classes"² - and among the lesser professionals - attornies, surgeons, apothecaries, schoolmasters. (The census of 1831 included 179,983 people in the class of "Capitalists, Bankers, Professional, and other Educated Men." Manufacturers were included in another class, and numbered with their workmen.³⁾ And some increase would have taken place among shopkeepers, clerks, and the more substantial farmers. Smaller farmers would probably not have been regular readers. Even in 1851, according to William Johnston, a barrister-author (with

1. History of the Middle and Working Classes, (London, 1838), pp. iv-v

2. William Johnston: England As It Is, Political, Social, and Industrial, in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century, (London, 1851), i, pp. 18

3. Porter: Progress of Nation, i, p. 53

Whig sympathies, however),

"Farmers of the ordinary class generally divide their time between the labours of their calling, and amusements with which neither mental cultivation nor refinement of taste have much to do."(1)

But this marks the limit of the book-reading public. In other words, while there may have been few small farmers, and virtually no manual workers or labourers among those who bought or borrowed new books, all the other social classes were represented. The effect this had on public taste was pronounced. The reading public was small in the 1850's, and even smaller in 1775, but even by 1775 it was thoroughly fragmented.

The different levels of taste which differences in social class and education imply suggest that particular kinds of book appealed to particular sections of the reading public. If this is true, to which section or sections did the novel appeal?

Unfortunately, there is no adequately documented account of the relationship between the novel and the reading public for the whole of this period. Q.D. Leavis's Fiction and the Reading Public² is of most value for the first decades of the twentieth century. For earlier periods it is unsystematic, and (historically) uncritical. Other modern books and articles I refer to below suffer from the same defects. The exception is R.D. Altick's English Common Reader -

1. England As It Is, i, p.19

2. (London, 1932)

which concentrates however, on working class readership, and gives no particular prominence to the reading of novels. (Kathleen Tillotson's Novels of the Eighteen Forties¹ is authoritative for the one decade.) I have had to look at the evidence with a fresh eye - not with a view to constructing a new general account, however; only to situating Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë.

It seems sensible to begin by looking at the beginning of the period, at the situation in Jane Austen's lifetime. The available evidence is again uncertain and fragmentary. It is unlikely on the one hand, however, that the novel-reading public was quite as extensive at this time as is sometimes supposed. In the General Catalogue of books published in London between 1700 and 1786, novels occupy 15 out of 160 pages of books. (There are 23 pages of "Divinity and Ecclesiastical History".)² In Lackington's catalogues for 1811 and 1819 the proportion of novels is lower still. In the 1811 catalogue, of 886 pages of books some 20 are devoted to novels;³ in the 1819 catalogue it is 27 pages out of 1,038.⁴ These figures may not be

1. (Oxford, 1954)

2. (London, 1786). The sections are separately titled.

3. Lackington, Allen, & Co.: General Catalogue for the Year 1811, (London, 1811)

4. Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor and Jones: General Catalogue of Books . . . for the year 1819, (London, 1819)

entirely representative; but similar proportions are reflected in the figures for the second (better documented) half of the period,¹ and since the size of editions was likely to be fairly constant, novels would seem to represent only a fraction of the reading matter publishers thought would sell.

On the other hand a popular novelist at this time could expect fairly wide fame and a substantial amount of money.

Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, for example, were widely (and usually sympathetically) reviewed; there were numerous editions, translations and stage adaptations (together with false ascriptions) both during her lifetime and after;² and she received, according to the Annual Biography and Obituary for 1824, five hundred pounds for The Mysteries of Udolpho and eighteen hundred pounds for The Italian.³

From whom did this money come? Contemporaries were quite certain. The novel's main - or only - readers were taken to be women. For Edward Mangin, a miscellaneous writer and author of the disapproving Essay on Light Reading, the typical reader was "the daughter of a plain

1. See The Classified Index to the London Catalogue of Books Published in Great Britain 1816 to 1851, (London, 1853) and the calculations in Knight: Old Printer, pp. 262-3

2. As well as the catalogues of the British Museum and the Bodleian Library, see Montague Summers: A Gothic Bibliography, (London, n.d. [=1941?]), pp. 135-42

3. See Clara Frances McIntyre: Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Time, (New Haven, 1920), pp. 14-15

country parson, a substantial farmer, an eminent shopkeeper, or an officer on half-pay."¹ Other favoured groups were "the young, and the indolent, to whom the exercise of imagination is delightful".² Little fashionable patronage was assumed: "The purchasers of novels, the subscribers to circulating libraries, are seldom in more elevated situations than the middle ranks of life."³

Some thought that even lower ranks were involved. Novels, says Harriet Kiernan - probably the same Harriet Kiernan who later edited The Invalid's Hymn Book - "are in the hands of everyone, without distinction of age, sex, or condition".⁴ On the arrival of Rob Roy, according to Peacock in 1818, not only does the scholar lay aside his Plato, but "the weary artisan resigns his sleep for the refreshment of the magic page."⁵ In 1799 Hannah More had argued:

1. An Essay on Light Reading, as it may be supposed to influence Moral Conduct and Literary Taste, (London, 1808), p.14
2. The Lounger, (Edinburgh, 1785-6), p.77 (no.20)
3. 'Evelina ...', Critical Rev., xlvi (1778), pp. 203-4
4. 'Essay on the Influence of Fictitious History on Modern Manners', Trans. Royal Irish Academy, xii (1815), Polite Literature, p.78
5. 'An Essay on Fashionable Literature', Works, ed. H.F.B. Brett-Smith and C.E.Jones, (London, 1934-6), viii, p.266

"the corruption occasioned by these books has spread so wide, and descended so low, that not only among milliners, mantua-makers, and other trades where numbers work together, the labour of one girl is frequently sacrificed that she may be spared to read those mischievous books to the others; but the Author has been assured by clergymen, who have witnessed the fact, that they are procured and greedily read in the wards of our Hospitals!" (1)

Is this just the exaggeration of a reformer? It would seem to be supported by the evidence of Hazlitt, whose political sympathies lay in the opposite direction:

"If put to the vote of all the milliners' girls in London, Old Mortality, or even Heart of Midlothian, would not carry the day (or, at least not very triumphantly) over a common Minerva-press novel".(2)

It is not too clear when Hazlitt wrote this - it comes from an unfinished essay on taste, unpublished in his lifetime - but it was obviously after 1818. In 1820 Minerva press novels varied in price per volume from 5s to 7s.³ (Three or four volumes were standard; two and five occurred.) Other novels, including Scott's, would be sold at 21s. In 1821 Kenilworth was published at 31s 6d, which remained a standard price for new novels to the end of this period

1. Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, (London, 1799), i, p.172
2. 'Outlines of Taste', Works, ed. P.P.Howe, (London, 1930-4), xx, p.386
3. See Dorothy Blakey: The Minerva Press 1790-1820, (London, 1939) pp. 95-6

and beyond.¹ Together with the facts about income and the size of editions mentioned above, this makes it fairly clear that novels no more than other books were likely to fall into the hands of manual workers, male or female.

It may be pointed out that this does not allow for libraries. No one is likely to have wanted to buy a Minerva press novel: they were too expensive, were mostly anonymous, and had no permanent value. But what were the facts of borrowing, during Jane Austen's lifetime?

In the first place, groups of readers could combine to form 'Book clubs' or 'Literary societies'. Not much evidence remains of the buying habits of these groups. But the records of one eighteenth century bookseller, selling to three book-clubs, reveal a definite preference for 'serious' books - and not a single novel is mentioned.²

In any case, these clubs or societies clearly drew their members from the middle classes (not until some way in to the nineteenth century did artisans begin to imitate them). The assumption

1. See Douglas C. Ewing: 'The Three-Volume Novel', PBSA, lxi (1967), pp. 203-5

2. See Paul Kaufman: 'A Bookseller's Record of Eighteen-Century Book Clubs', Library, 5th ser. xv (1960), pp. 278-287

is that it was from circulating libraries that poorer readers obtained novels.

Contemporaries thought that circulating libraries were more or less an invention of this period. Charles Timperley, the chronicler of English printing and publishing, stated in 1838 that in 1770 there were only four circulating libraries "in London and its neighbourhood".¹ By 1808, according to Edward Mangin, there was "scarcely a street of the metropolis, or a village in the country, in which a circulating library may not be found".² Their clientele was of course all women, both ladies and their maids.³

Modern studies have cast some doubt upon this picture. In the first place, there were in London at least nine book-lenders, six of whom called their establishments libraries, as early as the 1740's.⁴ In the second place, they probably only extended to market towns of a certain size at the height of their popularity in the early nineteenth century.⁵ Thirdly, to judge from the only

1. Encyclopaedia of Literary and Typographical Anecdote, 2nd. ed., (London, 1842), p. 721. The material up to 1838 was published first in 1838.

2. Light Reading, pp. 12-13

3. Knight: Old Printer, pp. 230-1

4. See Hilda M. Hanlyn: 'Eighteenth-Century Circulating Libraries in England', Library, 5th ser. i (1947), p. 198

5. This is my own conclusion. Cf. John Tinnon Taylor: Early Opposition to the English Novel, The Popular Reaction from 1760 to 1830, (New York, 1943), pp. 21-34; Knight: Old Printer, p. 229

eighteenth-century list of subscribers to survive, that of Marshall's Library, Bath, for the years 1793 to 1799, twice as many men as women were subscribers.¹

Moreover, the chance of their having been subscribed to by Peacock's artisans or Hannah More's milliners is slim. It will be remembered that in Sanditon, Mr. Parker is eager to get an early look at the Library subscription book after arriving at the town with Charlotte.² This argues for some fashionable - at the worst, middle class - subscribers. If the presence of clerks and small shopkeepers effectively drove artisans out of Mechanics' Institutes in the 1850's,³ the presence of subscribers of higher ranks must have had at least an equal effect in the early nineteenth century (since class segregation was if anything, even more pronounced then).

The facts about subscriptions bear this out. There seem to have been many rates at various libraries, but entitlement to borrow new books as they came out is likely to have cost at least a guinea a year.⁴ Most important of all is the fact mentioned by Southey (and verified by modern investigations) that "strangers may be

1. Hamlyn: 'Circulating Libraries', p.209. This is an estimate based on the first two letters of the alphabet.

2. Minor Works, p. 389

3. Knight: Old Printer, p. 306. Cf. Clifford Whone: 'Where the Brontës Borrowed Books, The Keighley Mechanics' Institute', BST, xi (1946-50), pp. 344-5

4. Ewing: 'Three-Volume Novel', pp. 203-4; Blakey: Minerva Press, pp. 116-18

accommodated on depositing the value of the book they choose".¹ This places book-borrowers back among those who were rich enough to be book-buyers - about whom enough has been said. (Ladies' maids and servants may have read their employers' books, but they constitute a secondary audience, one which no novelist would be likely to bear in mind.)

Recent surveys of working-class readership confirm this picture. The minority of artisans (or milliners) who were literate may have borrowed 'novels' of a kind from the small 'libraries' attached to tobacco and stationery shops, public houses, and (after 1800 and particularly in London) coffee houses. (In the north there were 'penny reading rooms'.)² But before the 1840's such reading as the poorer working people did engage in was mainly among execution broadsides and ballads, unstamped almanacs, chap-books - though the trade dwindled and died after 1820 - unstamped newspapers, 'police gazettes', and (apparently) tracts.³ The 'novels' they read were sixpenny 'blue books' - Gothic tales in blue covers - and (after 1840) serialised stories of crime and elopement in penny parts, in particular Edward Lloyd's 'Salisbury Square Fiction',⁴ Of the

1. Letters from England, ed. Jack Simmons, (London, 1951), p. 28
Cf. Blakey: Minerva Press, p. 118

2. Louis James: Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850, (London, 1963), pp. 5-8

3. See R.K. Webb: The British Working Class Reader 1790-1848, (London, 1955), pp. 25-35 and Margaret Dalziel: Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago, (London, 1957), pp. 4-13

4. Dalziel: Popular Fiction, pp. 13-20

novelists this investigation deals with only those who published in serial form (and even then at a shilling a part), such as Dickens and Thackeray, could hope to reach poorer readers; and it seems clear that, as one survey puts it, "comparatively few lower-class readers read Dickens direct".¹ (What these readers could read were cheaper plagiarisms and imitations.)

Were contemporaries any more accurate in their other assumptions? Certainly the novel was likely to appeal to the newly leisured and newly literate, and in particular to women (who formed a majority of the population to the end of the period). This is a symptom of a more important fact. It is with the successful advent of the novel that the notion of a general public begins to make sense. In place of a courtly or aristocratic audience aware of conventions and kinds, or even an audience of educated men unified by a conviction of their good sense and impartiality (a controversial work of the time would be "addressed to rational, intelligent and dispassionate readers"²), the novel appealed to people who had in common only the accidental features of leisure and money - together with a language and their humanity.

The particular characteristics of the novel that gave it this

1. James: Fiction for the Working Man, p. 71

2. John Ogilvie: An Inquiry into the Causes of the Infidelity and Scepticism of the Times, (London, 1783), p. iii

appeal (and which account for its sudden popularity earlier in the eighteenth century) are obvious enough. Of these one that is particularly important is the prominence given to the life of feeling.

Its entanglement in the world of recognizable human emotions was a source of popularity at the least sophisticated level: novels with titles like The Force of Despair, Groundless Hatred, Jealousy (three novels of this title appeared between 1773 and 1811), Sympathy, and so on, were always sure of a public.¹

But it was not only at this level that readers were interested in the life of feeling. Burke, for instance, had seen the special virtue of literature, as an art, in its ability to present emotions.² The novel was better equipped to sustain this interest than other literary forms, and naturally attracted writers, like Fielding's sister Sarah, who thought that emotions and thoughts were more interesting than actions.³

It was on these grounds that the epistolary novel was defended. The story, it was conceded, was slowed down, and improbability of an

1. For these and other titles see the 'Catalogue' in R.D.Mayo: The English Novel in the Magazines 1740 - 1815, (Evanston, 1962), pp. 431 - 620

2. A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, ed. J.T.Boulton, (London, 1958), pp.173-6

3. The Cry, (London, 1754), p. 17

obvious kind was admitted (as Scott points out¹), but it enabled an author "to assume in a lively manner, the hopes and fears, and passions, and to imitate the peculiar way of thinking of his characters".² On these grounds again Johnson had argued Richardson's superiority to Fielding;³ and at the turn of the century writers who were able "to paint the genuine feelings of the heart in natural language"⁴ were thought to be fulfilling an essential role. Women were sometimes taken to be more successful at this than men. Mrs. Barbauld, the essayist, wondered why they should be:

"Is it that women nurse those feelings in secrecy and silence, and diversify the expression of them with endless shades of sentiment, which are more transiently felt, and with fewer modifications of delicacy, by the other sex?" (5)

The restrictions on women's lives at this time may in fact have

1. Sir Walter Scott on Novelists and Fiction, ed. Ioan Williams, (London, 1968), p. 43
2. Mrs. Barbauld: 'Samuel Richardson', from Miriam Allott (ed.): Novelists on the Novel, (London, 1959), p. 259. Cf. Samuel Richardson: 'Preface', Clarissa, Shakespeare Head ed., (Oxford, 1930), i, p. xiv; 'On the Epistolary Mode of Novel-Writing', Lady's Mag., xviii (1787), p. 538
3. James Boswell: Life of Johnson, ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L.F. Powell, (Oxford, 1934), ii, pp. 48 - 9
4. 'Hints to Novel-Writers', Lady's Monthly Museum, v (1800) pp. 215 - 16
5. Anna Laetitia Barbauld: 'On the Origin and Progress of Novel-writing', The British Novelists, 'new ed.', (London, 1820), i, p. 42. The first edition was in 1810.

had much to do with it: as a perceptive French critic of Shirley, Eugene Forcade, was to remark later, women's novels are written and read "dans le silence des longues soirées solitaires".¹

Other characteristics of the novel may seem more decisive: specifically, its evocation of the particular, the changing, the contingent. Or its exploitation of the peculiarities of 'domestic' (later 'common') life. This is what many contemporaries noticed: to Clara Reeve in 1785, the novel was "a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written".² (And Jane Austen in 1816 could still see her novels as "pictures of domestic life in country villages".³) But the 'reality', and even the 'domesticity' were strategies to engage the imagination. Interest in a story depends upon initial interest in a person or a person's predicament. The sophisticated reader may suspend disbelief. The unsophisticated reader needs to believe.

The novel had further advantages: it was long enough to fill the long day of leisured but not fashionable people; it could be read aloud if there were company, and to oneself if there were not

1. Revue des Deux Mondes, n.p. iv (1849), p. 718

2. The Progress of Romance, (London, 1785), i, p.111

3. Letters, p. 452

(and could be carried around - with ease in the duodecimo form which became standard - if there was a likelihood of odd moments of isolation); and there were no conventions to master. (Or rather, no conventions were necessary: the artifice of Fielding is a strategy to repel unwelcome readers, as well as to assure recruits from the dominant cultural group that the form was capable of sophistication.)

But again, these are only advantages if initial interest is assumed. Interest depends, as has been said, on the effectiveness of the novel as a form of play for the imagination. If the imagination is especially led to dwell on the life of feeling, on the emotions of created characters, this is because characters' emotions, the feelings of other people in other situations, are what a reader needs to experience if he is to escape momentarily from his one life.

The sense that one's life is one of many possible lives is a natural product of the division of labour. It is unlikely to be an accident that the novel emerged in the form it did, and persisted as it did, at a time when the division of labour was increasing rapidly. As the philosopher T.H. Green was to put

it in 1862:

"In the progressive division of labour, while we become more useful as citizens, we seem to lose our completeness as men . . . one who has made the most of his profession is apt to feel that he has not attained his full stature as a man; that he has faculties which he can never use, capacities for admiration and affection which can never meet with an adequate object." (1)

He saw this as a likely explanation of the success of the novel (a success he was not totally in sympathy with), and it rings true.

If the need for momentary escape from the 'one life' drew readers together, however, the reference to Fielding above is a reminder that, just as there was no single 'reading public', there was no single public for the novel as such. Even its readers belonged to different groups.

To an extent these were different social groups. The readers of standard circulating library or magazine novels were possibly (by no means certainly) less well educated than the readers of those novels which had some literary pretensions. The continuing popularity of Fielding and Richardson in the early nineteenth century was not among the mass of subscribers to circulating libraries.² But in determining readers' expectations, social distinctions are not important in themselves. The important criterion is readers' attitude

1. An Estimate of the Value and Influence of Works of Fiction in Modern Times, (Oxford, 1862), pp. 25-6

2. Mangin: Light Reading, p. 115; Knight: Old Printer, p.231

to the novel as a form, and the hint to be taken up is that of G.H.Lewes, reviewing Jane Eyre in 1847. He divides readers into three classes: those who read any novel whatsoever - the pillars of the circulating library - "whose tastes are as indiscriminating as their appetites are insatiable"; those who despise novels as such, "An odious and pretending class"; and those who discriminate between good and bad novels. (To the third class, in which he includes himself, a good novel is in "the first rank of literature".)¹

The expectations of these three groups of readers constitute the single most important feature of the situation in which Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë found themselves. Its influence on the development of the novel was crucial.

The extent of this influence may be questioned. There may be some sympathy with Shelley's reported remark (to Byron): "Contemporary criticism only represents the amount of ignorance genius has to contend with."² But this remark is itself the symptom of a particular relationship between the poet and his readers. Other relationships are possible. This is not to argue for a crude correlation of supply and demand, only to point out that a more reciprocal relationship than

1. 'Recent Novels', p. 686

2. Edward John Trelawney: Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author, (London, 1878), i, p. 30

the one Shelley assumes is at least as typical. It may perhaps be assumed where there is no evidence to the contrary; and it need not be assumed for the novel in the period investigated here, since there is evidence in its favour - not least the characteristics of contemporary novels themselves - as should become clear.

But to begin with, the groups need to be more decisively identified.

The first group I shall refer to as 'omnivorous readers'. Their importance lies in their being a numerical majority, and as a consequence the chief source of a novelist's popularity (and money). The third group I shall refer to as 'discriminating' readers: they formed a latent audience for novelists with literary pretensions.

The importance of the second group of readers, those who disapproved of novels as such, is that all novel writing had to be conducted in their shadow. If the novel was to survive, if its potential readers were to be allowed to buy or borrow the books - or defend them in society - concessions had to be made to the anxieties of this group. I shall call them 'hidebound' readers.

To some extent the existence of these groups is a fiction. Particular individuals may have adopted intermediate attitudes, oscillated from one attitude to another, or even adopted one attitude

publicly and another privately. According to the novelist John Moore in 1797, the low standard of most novels

"made many people at pains to declare, that for their part they never read novels; a declaration sometimes made by persons of both sexes, who never read anything else." (1)

Justice is therefore not done to individuals, who re-appear in different guises. But the guises are historical: it is possible to isolate certain typical features, and to identify developments (including developments in the size and composition of each group). I shall try, therefore, as far as possible to keep the exposition historical, and not to simplify the evidence for the sake of consistency.

The first piece of evidence that needs to be taken into account is the well-known increase in popularity of the novel as the nineteenth century progressed. (Estimates for the earlier period have been given above.) Maria Edgeworth received up to £1,500 or £2,000 a novel. Scott's (for the time) enormous sales are legendary.² Bulwer Lytton, W.H.Ainsworth and Dickens reached a steadily multiplying audience. By the 1850's there may have been some justification for the comment of the young J.F.Stephen (not to become Sir James until 1877) that "The majority of those who read for amusement, read novels . . . In one

1. 'A View of the Commencement and Progress of Romance', Works of Tobias Smollett, i, (London, 1797), p. xcii

2. A.S.Collins: The Profession of Letters, 1780-1832 (London, 1928), pp. 235 - 45

shape or another, they enter into the education of us all",¹
 though certainly not for the assertion of a reviewer in the
 Nonconformist Eclectic Review that novels were read by "nine-tenths
 of all the young people in the country between the ages of fifteen
 and five-and-twenty".²

For these lucrative sales omnivorous readers could be held
 responsible. Their position at the beginning of this period was
 further strengthened by the novel's lack of literary standing.

In 1778 Fanny Burney complained

"In the republic of letters, there is no member of
 such inferior rank, or who is so much disdained by the
 brethren of the guild, as the humble Novelist ... among
 the whole class of writers, perhaps not one can be named,
 of whom the votaries are more numerous, but less
 respectable."(3)

And in 1798 a defender of the form in the newly founded Lady's Monthly
 Museum could still argue that novels were suitable for minds "not
 harmonized enough to relish the sweet graces of poetry, or not serious
 enough to apply with avidity to the more weighty study of history".⁴

It was natural therefore that John Trusler, a voluminous
 miscellaneous writer, should, in a book of synonyms, give as an

1. 'The Relations of Novels to Life', Cambridge Essays,
 (Cambridge, 1855), p. 148

2. 'Charlotte Brontë', n.s. i (1857), p. 635

3. Evelina, ed. Edward A. Bloom, (London, 1968), p. 7

4. i (1798), p. 435

example of the correct use of the word 'novel': "Novels, are of no other use, than to entertain".¹ Even a supporter such as Mrs. Barbauld could in 1810 say of novels that "entertainment is their legitimate end and object".²

This is important. For some time 'entertainment' had implied firstly ease of comprehension, and secondly the effort to "form or accommodate" rather than "to state things as [a man] finds them".³ The assumption that actualities (which would include the actualities of personal experience) could, or even should, be re-formed to gratify readers is a key to omnivorous expectations.

Their central expectation, in any case was clear enough: to be moved, and in certain pre-defined ways. A good novel, says Mrs. Barbauld, will be notable for "the power exercised over the reader's heart by filling it with the successive emotions of love, pity, joy, anguish, transport, or indignation".⁴ This is "sentimentalism", as Hannah More used the word in 1819 (its aim "to exhibit feeling, and to excite it").⁵ But 'sentimentalism'

1. The Distinction between Words Esteemed Synonymous, (Dublin, 1776), i, p. 133

2. 'Novel-writing', p.44

3. Joseph Butler: Fifteen Sermons, ed. W.R. Matthews, (London, 1914), p. 5. ('Preface')

4. 'Novel-writing', pp. 2-3

5. Moral Sketches of Prevailing Opinions and Manners, 2nd ed., (London, 1819), p. 15

involves now a narrower range of emotions (nostalgia or pity, and usually imaginary nostalgia or pity) and I shall use the word 'emotionalism' instead.

It is common enough to want to be moved: "few can reason, but all can feel".¹ But emotionalism calls for a distinctive kind of affective response and takes this for a sufficient condition of value.

In part this is a vulgarisation of the emphasis upon the emotional effect of art which characterised much of the aesthetic theory of the eighteenth century. To Burke, for instance, the Sublime was a matter of such things as "the effects of Tragedy" or "How Words influence the Passions".² Hume talked about tragedy in terms of "tears, sobs, and cries";³ James Beattie, author of The Minstrel, wrote "On Poetry and Music, as they affect the Mind".⁴ And the resemblance goes deeper. The governing stylistic (as social) ideal of the eighteenth century was decorum. Just as there was a particular kind of behaviour appropriate to 'a Minister', 'a father', 'an unmarried woman', so there were particular emotions appropriate

1. Anna [Aetitia] Aikin and John Aikin: Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose, (London, 1773), p. 42. Aikin was Mrs. Barbauld's maiden name.

2. The Sublime, titles of Part I, Section xv and Part V, section vii

3. Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, ed. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, (London, 1875), i, pp. 258-65

4. Essays, (Edinburgh, 1776), title of essay

to particular subjects or genres. This sense is strong in emotionalism: the novel itself came to be thought of as a genre (though sometimes it was the "sentimental novel"), and a reader expected to be moved to those emotions - and only those emotions - which were its speciality. (Mrs. Barbauld lists them.) They expected, in sum, the 'interesting'. ('Interesting' then was closer to the modern 'moving' with perhaps an even stronger sense of involvement.¹) A sense of affront can be detected in such things as the comment in the Lady's Magazine of 1787 on 'modern novels': the writer complains of the "cold" and "insipid" way in which "tender sentimental love" is coming to be treated, and the lack of sympathetic characters.²

Granted emotionalism, certain ways of presenting emotions were inevitably popular. Simplicity was important. The young Hugh Murray (later famous as a geographer) complains of Rousseau's Nouvelle Heloise: "There is too much philosophy, and too little nature; rather a laboured analysis of passion, than the simple expression of it".³ Familiar tokens were preferred, "natural signs, or the inseparable concomitants of emotions" (as Francis Jeffrey put it - writing on

1. See Susie I. Tucker: Protean Shape, a Study in Eighteenth-Century Vocabulary and Usage, (London, 1967), pp. 210-12; cf. Evelina, p. 308, Minor Works, p. 47, Emma, p. 179. (ch.21)

2. 'General Observations on Modern Novels', xviii(1787), p. 456

3. Morality of Fiction, (Edinburgh, 1805), p. 78

Alison's Taste in 1811).¹ With this went a liking for 'small touches': "strokes of humour and tenderness" as Edward Mangin expressed it in 1808,² "strokes of nature" as G.H. Lewes, reviewing Villette in 1853, still assumes a taste for.³

The most thoroughgoing exploitation of this principle can be found in Mrs. Barbauld's essays 'On the Pleasure derived from Objects of Terror' and 'An Inquiry into those Kinds of Distress which Excite Agreeable Sensations'. In the second essay, for instance, she points out that the representation of suffering is not enough by itself to excite the appropriate sensations - the sufferer must be someone whom the reader has been taught to admire; that sufferings should not be made overwhelming; that the ugly detail of misery should be avoided ("Poverty, if truly represented, shocks our nicer feelings; therefore whenever it is made use of to awaken our compassion, the rags and dirt, the squalid appearance and mean employments incident to that state must be kept out of sight"⁴); that sufferers should not be too consistently virtuous; and that descriptions of suffering should be interspersed with passages of lyricism and humour, for variety.⁵ Only this way can a successful

1. Contributions to the Edinburgh Review, (London, 1844), i, p. 77

2. Light Reading, p. 123

3. 'Ruth and Villette', n.s. iii (1853), p. 479

4. Aikin and Aikin: Misc. Pieces in Prose, p. 203

5. pp. 208-10

appeal be made to "that melting sorrow, that thrill of tenderness, to which we give the name of pity".¹

It was expected, finally, that the language should constitute a set of directions, overtly controlling the reader's response. (Hazlitt complained of Scott's novels, in 1819, that "the author himself never appears to take part with his characters, to prompt our affection to the good, or sharpen our antipathy to the bad".²) It could do this most efficiently by relying on the 'sensibility' ethos, with its established vocabulary.

This ethos involved a particular notion of goodness - a matter of generosity - especially generosity prompted by feelings of compassion - rather than of obedience to rules or resistance to evil. It implied that human nature was not naturally corrupt (it had to be corrupted). It liked to assume a close connection between the 'moral sense' and 'taste'. And it placed a high valuation on sensitivity and 'moral tears'. (For use of the word 'humane' Trusler gives: "The distresses of individuals, will, often, draw tears from a person, truly humane".³)

The language of sensibility was a mass of cult-words: for sympathetic characters, 'benevolence', 'delicacy', 'elegance', 'enthusiasm', 'elevation', 'feeling', 'good nature', 'heart',

1. p. 193

2. 'On the English Novelists', [Lecture 6 of Lectures on the Comic Writers], Works, vi, p. 128

3. Words Esteemed Synonymous, p. 28

'humanity', 'nature', 'susceptibility', 'taste', - together with 'sensibility' itself and combinations such as 'elegance of mind'. For unsympathetic characters there were antithetical expressions such as 'unfeeling' or 'lacking delicacy', together with 'base', 'cruel', 'unnatural', and epithets which emphasised corruption, premeditation, affectation, or fashion ('the world' could symbolise everything the 'man of feeling' was repelled by).

Omnivorous taste was no less decided about the range of emotions which a novelist should emphasise (or even restrict himself to). They expected "persons with whose feelings we sympathise".¹ They expected the novelist never to attribute unsympathetic emotions to these persons, and not too often to attribute sympathetic emotions to unsympathetic characters: the emotions they found sympathetic were compassion, benevolence, 'natural affections' and the happiness which rose above circumstances of wealth or possessions. They expected strong emotions: hatred and revenge. They also expected some dealing in transient emotions. Readers of the early emotionalist novel, says Hugh Murray, were attracted by "the delineation of certain minute and delicate sensations, which were before unfelt, or at least unnoticed."² - these would, in the words

1. JACH, p. 107. (A review of the anonymous Peter Wilkins (1823))

2. Morality of Fiction, p.131

of Hannah More, "take captive the soul before it has time to shield itself with the armour of reflection".¹

At various times there may have been some sympathy with Jeffrey's call for an emphasis upon middle class emotions. In a review of Crabbe's Tales of 1812, he argues:

"we are quite positive, not only that persons in middling life would naturally be most touched with the emotions that belong to their own condition, but that those emotions are in themselves the most powerful, and consequently the best fitted for poetical or pathetic representation." (2)

This seems, however, to mark a distinction within the class of omnivorous readers: some seemed to prefer to the emotions of "Russell Square", those of "Grosvenor Square". (The distinction is Thackeray's, from Vanity Fair.³)

Emotionalism persisted among ordinary novel-readers to the end of the period considered here. One can only guess at the reasons for its popularity. But an important part of its appeal throughout the period was the sense it afforded readers of belonging to a select group of (similarly) sensitive individuals. The feeling both of belonging to a unified group and of having grounds for assessing the pretensions of others must have commended emotionalism at a time of unsettling social change and argument about social pretensions.

1. Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies, (London, 1777), p. 12

2. Contributions to Edin. Rev., iii, p. 54

3. ed. Geoffrey and Kathleen Tillotson, (London, 1963), p. 54.(Ch. 6)

Whatever the reasons for its popularity, emotionalism at least gave omnivorous readers a standard to judge novels by. It follows that they were not indiscriminating. But the criterion of value was success in evoking a pre-determined emotional response. It is the mark of the class of readers I have decided to call 'discriminating' that they distinguished between novels on literary grounds.

Here the actual practice of novelists was decisive. It was the achievement of the first novelists which called discriminating readers into being. It was the developing achievement of the innovators, from Richardson to Charlotte Brontë, which raised expectations and focussed them. In the classic formulation, the innovators created the taste by which they were to be appreciated (and by which their contemporaries were to be judged.)

Historically, discriminating readers hardly exist as a distinct class, confident of their own identity, until the 1830's or '40's. Until then they can best be seen as a fringe group of the ordinary novel-reading public, ready to learn from the practice of the more ambitious novelists, but otherwise sharing many of the expectations of omnivorous readers.

This implies some sympathy for emotionalism. And it may safely be said that (to begin with) discriminating readers also expected to be moved in the familiar way - they took this as a

necessary, if not a sufficient, condition. Clara Reeve, author of the first full-length study of the novel, claimed for her own novel, Old English Baron (published as The Champion of Virtue in 1777) "enough of the pathetic, to engage the heart on [the book's] behalf."¹ Mrs. Inchbald, said Hazlitt in 1819, "not only moves the affections, but melts us into 'all the luxury of woe.'" ² The Oxford Prize Essayist George Moberley (later Bishop of Salisbury) combined emotionalist criteria with others in 1826 in his discussion of 'the fiction of character':

"The fiction of character presents to [the reader's] view pictures of mankind which he recognises as faithful; it works upon his pity and sympathy by exciting his fear, and, identifying him with particular characters, causes him to understand his own feelings by analyzing those of others." (3)

Moreover, because the omnivorous reader was taken to be the typical novel reader, in this instance the nearest representation of the 'common reader', early critical discussions of the novel came to assume emotionalism as the natural base of assessment. Novel criticism was in any case embryonic, and so a writer such as J.C. Dunlop, author of the often reprinted History of Fiction, and

1. ed. James Trainer, (London, 1967) p. 4

2. 'English Novelists', p. 127

3. Is a Rude or Refined Age Favourable to the Production of Works of Fiction?, (Oxford, 1826), p. 21

also Scott, in many essays, can be seen invoking a variety of criteria - formal criteria as well as 'truth to nature' - but coming back again and again, as though this were basic, to the power to touch, say, "the finer feelings of the heart".¹

By the 1840's (in some cases perhaps earlier), discriminating readers had begun to lose whatever attachment they had to omnivorous emotionalism. Criticisms of 'sentimentality' became commonplace: a forceful expression of a common dissatisfaction can be found in a North British Review article of 1851 (by Isaac Gregory Smith, a clergyman, then 25):

"it is an indulgence of feeling for feeling's sake; ... it lives in the atmosphere of fancy, and collapses instantaneously, if brought into contact with the actual; in a word, ... it is a caricature of really strong feeling." (2)

What complicated this dismissal is the emergence of a distinctive 'discriminating emotionalism': but I shall postpone discussion of this development to Chapter 4.

The point that needs to be emphasised here is the new confidence (and the growth in numbers) of discriminating readers. This development, which was a steady one throughout the period, can be presented as a 'rise in standing' of the novel. But, even if

1. Scott on Novelists, p. 76

2. 'Recent Works of Fiction', xv(1851) pp. 419-20; Cf. Stephen: 'Relation of Novels to Life', pp. 172-3

there is no attempt to distinguish social and literary standing, it is important not to see the reading public as a single body, who gradually came to think better of the novel. It is not true that the novel had not yet achieved "its present lofty position in the hierarchy of letters", that it was "in some degree, regarded ... as a frivolity, a relaxation, an entertainment".¹ It was a matter of 'some people' rather than 'some degree'. For other people, the novel was already high in the 'hierarchy of letters'. The reading public was divided and those to whom a good novel was in "the first rank of literature" (to return to G.H.Lewes' phrase), formed a particular group, which slowly grew in numbers and confidence.

It is worth examining this development in some detail, since for novelists such as Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë the slow emergence of discriminating readers as a body was an important fact.

At the time of Jane Austen's birth such readers were particularly embattled. This is the sense of Fanny Burney's complaint quoted above, and of Jane Austen's own complaint in Northanger Abbey:

"there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them. 'I am no novel reader - I seldom look into novels - Do not imagine that I often read novels - It is really very well for a novel.' - Such is the common cant." (2)

1. David Cecil: Early Victorian Novelists, (London, 1934), pp. 17-18

2. pp. 37-8

By 1811, however, when she came to publish Sense and Sensibility there were signs that the situation would shortly improve. Novels were of course more popular by this time. But this in itself need only mean that the number of omnivorous readers had grown; if discriminating readers were also more numerous it was because novels had been published which were (relatively) deserving of critical respect. As Richard Whately (later Archbishop of Dublin) wrote, shortly after the first revolution had occurred, "We are inclined to attribute this change, not so much to an alteration in the public taste, as in the character of the productions in question."¹ The novels in question were those invoked by Jane Austen in her defence of the form - Fanny Burney's and Maria Edgeworth's. Burke and Johnson both admired Evelina (if a little patronisingly);² and of Cecilia (1782) Macaulay (writing in 1843) says: "High as public expectation was, it was amply satisfied; and Cecilia was placed, by general acclamation, among the classical novels of England."³ The subscribers to Camilla (1796) included members of the royal family, eminent statesmen, and almost the entire literary world.⁴ Maria Edgeworth,

1. JACH, p. 87

2. See the introduction to Evelina, p. xvii

3. 'Madame D'Arblay', Literary Essays, Universal Library ed., (London, n.d., [=1906?]) p. 323

4. See Any Cruse: The Englishman and his books in the Early Nineteenth Century, (London, 1930), pp. 23-35

whose first full-length novel, Castle Rackrent, appeared in 1800, was soon taken to be Fanny Burney's equal.¹

There was a further important development. Novels had begun to be discussed by academic critics of literature, and to be the subject of books in their own right. Reviews of novels had been common in the Monthly Review (which ran until 1845) and the Tory Critical Review - Fanny Burney had dedicated Evelina to them, jointly - and these sometimes took the form of full-length articles. But it was the ambition of the Reviews to mention all the books published each month, and their reviews were unlikely to have had the same effect upon the confidence of discriminating readers as the academic and book-length discussions.

The first academic discussion was by Hugh Blair, in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (1783) - a book read by both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë. He devotes a lecture to Novels and Romances - together with philosophical writing, dialogues, and epistolary writing. Novels are, he says, "in general, a very insignificant class of writings", but he defends them on the grounds of their potential moral usefulness and close depiction of life and manners.²

1. See e.g., the 'Biographical Notice', NA, p.4, where Jane Austen is said to have claims to join them.

2. (London, 1783), pp. 303-10. (Lecture 37)

In the same year James Beattie - like Blair a Scottish professor - published his Dissertations Moral and Critical. An essay in the second volume, 'On Fable and Romance', takes up many of Blair's points and presents the novel in the same historical context (Fable - Allegory - Romance - Novel: a context invoked previously by the radical novelist Thomas Holcroft,¹ and soon to become every writer on the novel's stock-in-trade) but at greater length.²

Two years later appeared Clara Reeve's The Progress of Romance, devoted entirely to a discussion of novels and romances and asserting that "they are equally entitled to our attention and respect, as any other works of Genius and literature."³ There followed works by John Moore (1797), Hugh Murray (1805), and Edward Mangin (1808). Dunlop's History of Fiction was to appear in 1814.

So when Mrs. Barbauld wrote in 1810:

"A collection of Novels has a better chance of giving pleasure than of commanding respect. Books of this description are condemned by the grave, and despised by the fastidious;" (4)

she was being unnecessarily pessimistic. If the fastidious still

1. In his 'Preface' to Alwyn: or the Gentleman Comedian, (London, 1780), i, pp. i - viii

2. (Dublin, 1783), ii, pp. 231 - 320

3. p. xvi

4. 'Novel-writing', p.1

despised novels it was not because they thought the form inherently trivial: it was because most novels did not aim at a discriminating readership. As Beattie wrote at the end of his long essay, "far the greater part are unskilfully written,"¹ and Jane Austen's first reviewer complained that most novels were so like other novels that three pages were enough to predict the whole course of the work.²

(The condemnation of the grave was another matter, which I shall deal with shortly.)

During the decade in which Jane Austen's novels appeared discriminating readers seem to have become slightly less embattled. The social standing of the novel was certainly no longer in dispute. The fact that Fanny Burney was a lady-in-waiting to the queen may have influenced the royal patronage of Camilla; no such special reason can account for the Prince Regent's patronage of Jane Austen. (Royal interest persisted: Queen Victoria read Northanger Abbey and Jane Eyre one after the other in 1858.³) Jane Austen seems in fact to have had an extremely fashionable readership: those whose comments have survived include the Countess of Bessborough, the future Lady Byron, Lady Davy, Lady Robert Kerr, Lady Vernon, the Earl of Dudley, and the

1. Dissertations, ii, p. 320

2. JACH, p. 35

3. "Queen Victoria and "Jane Eyre" ", BST, xiii (1958), p. 296

Countess of Morley.¹ And Scott evidently clinched the popularity of the novel with the rich and fashionable: after him, as Charles Knight indicated to his indignant Benthamite readers, the novel "asserted its dignity by raising its price to a guinea and a half."²

The fashionable world, however, as Hannah More had pointed out in 1799, asked only to be amused: "we live", she claimed, "in an age which must be amused, though genius, feeling, truth, and principle, be the sacrifice."³ For upper-class readers books were likely to be either 'pleasant', or 'a bore':

"The word pleasant now serves to combine and express all moral and intellectual excellence. Every individual, from the gravest professors of the gravest profession, down to the trifler who is of no profession at all, must earn the epithet of pleasant, or must be contented to be nothing; but must be consigned over to ridicule, under the vulgar and inexpressive cant word of a bore." (4)

Again, allowance must be made for Hannah More's reforming zeal, but that social standing need not necessarily imply literary standing is obvious enough.

Among the readers of periodicals at this time, at any rate, the standing of the novel still needed to be asserted. Hazlitt still needed to say, in reviewing Fanny Burney's Wanderer for the Whig Edinburgh Review in 1814, that there were "few works to which we

1. See Charles Beecher Hogan: 'Jane Austen and Her Early Public', RES., n.s. i (1950) pp. 40-6

2. Old Printer, p. 232

3. Strictures on Female Education, i, p. 16

4. i, pp. 17-18

oftener turn for profit or delight".¹ And Scott, writing on Jane Austen for the Tory Quarterly in 1816, alleged that novels were still "frequently 'bread eaten in secret'".²

By 1821, however, something of a revolution had occurred. From this time on periodical reviewers no longer argue that the novel is entitled to serious consideration: they argue instead that they no longer have to argue in this way. As Whately puts it in 1821: "The times seem to be past when an apology was requisite from reviewers for condescending to notice a novel".³ (The journalist and social critic W.R.Greg makes a similar claim in his review of Villette for the Edinburgh Review in 1853, thirty years later.⁴)

For this small revolution it seems to me (though this is not often said) that Jane Austen herself may have been responsible. Of course she never had the wide reputation of Fanny Burney or Maria Edgeworth, let alone Scott, but the extent to which she actually demonstrated to readers the real capacities of the novel (and as a result focussed their expectations, enabling them to judge predecessors as well as contemporaries in a new way) can be clearly seen in such things as Whately's 1821 review.

1. 'Standard Novels and Romances', Works, xvi, p. 5

2. JACH, p. 58

3. JACH, p. 87

4. xcvi (1853), p. 380

By the 1840's, when Charlotte Brontë's novels began to appear, another small revolution had occurred. Writers now needed to remind readers that the novel had not always been well thought of: Macaulay (writing in 1843) says of Fanny Burney that at her time "nothing could be more disadvantageous to a young lady than to be known as a novel writer."¹ In the same year Jeffrey wrote:

"it may be worth while to inform the present generation that, in my youth [Jeffrey was born in 1773], writings of this sort were rated very low with us - scarcely allowed indeed to pass as part of a nation's permanent literature - and generally deemed altogether unworthy of any grave critical notice." (2)

The Victorians, in fact, gave their novel not only grave but acute critical notice. Where, for instance, most of the contemporary reviews of Jane Austen are perfunctory and condescending, a large number of Charlotte Brontë's reviews raise essential issues, and genuinely attempt to come to grips with their subject.

By the late forties the novel could be seen as a predominant literary form. The reviewer of Jane Eyre in the High Church Christian Remembrancer proclaimed:

"The Novelist is now completely lord of the domain of Fiction. Whatever good or evil is to be done in the present day through that medium, must be done by him ... His work is the mirror of our life." (3)

1. 'Madame D'Arblay', pp. 310 - 11

2. Contributions to Edin. Rev., iii, p. 396

3. xv (1848), p. 402

And in the Revue des Deux Mondes, Eugène Forcade asked rhetorically:

"C'est bien l'heure due roman, n'est-ce pas? l'heure des longues lectures interprétées par les voix intérieures de l'ame."¹ To the poet and critic Sydney Dobell in 1850 the poet and the novelist were both, equally, prophets: the novelist gives us, he says, "the concrete elements of the poet's abstract."² By 1862, T.H.Green could speak of the novel as having "superseded" both the epic poem and drama.³

The decisive cause of this revolution was the spread of recognition of the novel's special qualifications for presenting the life of feeling.

It is one of the marks of discriminating readers in any case that they could see more possibilities in the 'truth to nature' I have spoken of as a contingent aspect of the appeal of the novel than its usefulness as a device to gain interest. ('Realism', the word usually invoked in this context, is in fact dangerous in a historical investigation: it was first used in the relevant sense by Ruskin in 1856, and resolves in a particular way some of the issues left open by the notion of 'truth to nature'). But around the time Jane Austen's novels began to appear it is on the possibility of authenticity in the presentation of personal experience that their hopes for the novel began to centre.

1. 'Jane Eyre Autobiographie', RDM n.s. xxiv (1848), p. 473

2. 'Curren Bell', Palladium, i (1850), p. 172

3. Estimate of Fiction, p. 4

Such a growth of interest (important though its consequences were) is almost impossible to document. But it is clear that a development of this kind did occur, and it becomes visible around this time. Before this, praise of a novelist's "picturesque accuracy" in delineating the "operation of the passions"¹ was subordinate to praise for his use of this skill to play upon the reader's emotions. Hugh Murray's tone is representative. He says of Fanny Burney:

"She excels particularly in describing the feelings of a young lady at her first entrance into the world; the hopes, the fears, the little embarrassments, which agitate her mind at this interesting crisis."²

There is no need to draw attention to the significance of the final phrase.

Novelists themselves had tried to establish that psychological exploration could be an independant aim. Fanny Burney in 1796 claimed for herself the title of "investigator of the human heart in its feelings and changes".³ (Shelley in 1818 was to claim a similar title for his wife in his preface to her Frankenstein⁴.) But this is to claim more for the novelist than need be; it is enough if he adds to an interest in the realities of personal experience the sort of

1. Beattie: Dissertations, ii, p. 313

2. Morality of Fiction, pp. 108-9

3. CaMilla, (London, 1796), i, p.1

4. Works, ed. R. Ingpen and W.E.Peck, (London, 1926-30), vi, p. 259

local psychological insight which comes from "the habit of close observation and practised discrimination."¹

And this is the possibility that discriminating readers ^e sized _k on. It formed their expectations: Hazlitt in 1814 speaks favourably of "pathos" but his central criterion, the criterion which for him elevates, say Fielding above Smollett, is authenticity - the truthful presentation of character, motive, and feeling.² Readers came to appreciate that the novel's possibilities in this respect were unique. George Moberley in 1826 drew attention to the complexity of personal experience as produced by developing civilisation;³ to the Christian Remembrancer reviewer of Jane Eyre the novel, following "The essence of action ... into the recesses of the heart", was the only form which could do justice to experience "in the period of civilization at which we are now arrived."⁴

By the 1850's standards had risen again. According to a reviewer of 1853 in the Westminster Review there was widespread taste for the story "which unfolds character according to those laws which experience teaches us to look for as well in the moral as the material world".⁵ In 1859 David Masson, a professor of English

1. Moberley: Rude or Refined Age, p. 7

2. 'Standard Novels and Romances', passim

3. Rude or Refined Age, p. 17

4. pp. 405, 403

5. 'The Progress of Fiction as an Art', iv, (1853), p. 343

Literature distinguished later as a biographer of Milton, called for a closer attention on the part of the novelist to the theoretical base of these laws. The novelist ought, according to Masson, to be acquainted with the latest developments in psychology.¹ (On the other hand Masson does not make it clear if the novelist should introduce a technical terminology, the "metaphysical jargon" denounced by Scott earlier in the century² - "metaphysical" in this context being a synonym of the modern 'psychological'.)

This is the climax of the second small revolution. As attitudes of the kind which sustained it spread, novelists whose psychology was seen as inadequate came to be sharply criticised - such as Scott, or the early Dickens. F.D.Maurice, the originator of 'Christian Socialism', had commented on Scott's shortcomings as a psychologist in a penetrating essay for the Athenaeum in 1828.³ His points were taken up and developed in a more polemical spirit by Carlyle in 1838, G.H. Lewes in 1847 (reviewing Jane Eyre), and Walter Bagehot in 1858. (Bagehot also criticised Dickens on the same ground in 1858: only in the case of Sykes, he says, is the reader thrown "into the region of the passions, the will, and the conscience".⁴)

1. British Novelists and Their Styles, (Cambridge, 1859), pp. 300-1

2. Scott on Novelists, p. 84

3. i (1828), pp. 217-19

4. 'Charles Dickens', Works, ed. Norman St. John Stevas, (London, 1965-8), ii, p. 95

All these critics draw a distinction between experience and behaviour (the 'inner' and the 'outer' man) and argue that Scott only deals adequately with the second: according to Carlyle, "your Shakespeare fashions his characters from the heart outwards; your Scott fashions them from the skin inwards, never getting near the heart of them!"¹ Lewes echoes him: Scott lacks "that singular faculty of penetrating into the most secret recesses of the heart".² And Bagehot asserts that we see how a heroine of Scott's talked and appeared, "but we never know how she felt - least of all what she was".³ All this is very like one of Charlotte Brontë's criticisms of Jane Austen:

"the Passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy Sisterhood; even to the Feelings she vouchsafes no more than an occasional graceful but distant recognition;... Her business is not half so much with the human heart as with the human eyes, mouth, hands and feet;" (4)

There are two odd things about this criticism. The first is that she would not have seen it as applying (also) to Scott - at 17 she had described him as the only novelist worth reading,⁵ and on another occasion she had spoken of his "wonderful knowledge of human

1. 'Sir Walter Scott', Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, (London, 1899), iv, p. 75

2. 'Recent Novels', p. 687

3. 'The Waverley Novels', Works, ii, p. 70

4. Correspondence, iii, p. 99

5. ii, p. 122

nature",¹ the second is that it does not apply to Jane Austen. Jane Austen's concern with the physical world is slight, and is in any case a function of her interest in personal experience, which is profound. In Emma, for example, the first chapter reveals that Emma is "handsome", but says no more about anyone's eyes, mouth, hands or feet; about the character and feelings of Emma, her father, Miss Taylor, Mr. Weston, and so on, it goes into some detail. The rest of the novel does not seem to disturb these proportions.

It seems likely that Charlotte Brontë did not judge Scott as she judges Jane Austen because his novels stimulated the free play of her imagination; and it may be because Emma denied her this freedom that she saw in it what she did. Other reasons should appear later.

But first it is necessary to note the complications produced by the expectations of hidebound readers. Their presence was felt by novelists and readers throughout the period. Even in the 1850's, when the standing of the novel might otherwise seem assured, a periodical reviewer had to glance over his shoulder at "those - and they are a not very small class in the reading world - who object to works of Fiction altogether, and consider time given to their perusal absolutely wasted."² A discriminating reader such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning needed in 1853 to preface her recommendation of Villette to Thomas Westwood, a minor poet and associate of Lamb, with the proviso, "If you

1. ii, p. 109

2. [Smith:] 'Recent Works of Fiction', p. 419

read novels, and you have too much sense not to be fond of them ... " ¹

Hidebound readers were in different ways, all conservative. Their opposition to the novel was prompted by fear for different sorts of status quo.

For some this was the literary status quo. According to Wordsworth in 1830, "the perpetually supplied stimulus of Novels stands much in the way of the purer interests which used to attach to Poetry."² (It is interesting to note, however, that when, in 1802, he describes the poet as "a man speaking to men",³ it is clear from the context that the men he has in mind are a general public, of the kind identified above. The novel, it seems, had created the audience to which his poems were addressed.) Coleridge in 1817 compared novel reading with gaming or spitting over a bridge as activities which reconcile "indulgence of sloth, and hatred of vacancy."⁴ R.H. Froude, the Tractarian and friend of Newman, saw the novel as "giving five hours of amusement to all that are too stupid to amuse themselves, or too idle to be of any use to others."⁵ The Athenaeum in 1828 complained that "a novel-reading public never

1. Letters, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, (London, 1897), ii, p. 139

2. The Critical Opinions of William Wordsworth, ed. Markham L. Peacock, (Baltimore, 1950), p. 120

3. 'Preface' to Lyrical Ballads, ed. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones, (London, 1963) p. 249

4. Biographia Literaria, i, p. 34, footnote

5. 'Age Favourable to Works of Fiction', p. 163

will be a poetry reading public", and argued that readers turned to novels because they demanded less effort than poetry.¹

This opposition need not have been damaging, however. More serious was the opposition prompted by fears for the political status quo. Here the novel is, in its very form, subversive. As Hazlitt pointed out in 1814, simply because it must deal with the individual and the particular it subverts generalisations and unsettles complacency. Abstract claims are forced to contend with concrete images.² And T.H.Green was to argue in 1862,

"The general novel-literature of any age may be regarded as an assertion by mankind at large, in its then development, of its claims, as against the influence of class and position; whether that influence appear in the form of positive social injustice, of oppressive custom, or simply of deficient sympathy." (3)

This was, moreover, as needs to be said again, a period of continuous social change, a period in which wealth, according to Carlyle,

"has more and more increased, and at the same time gathered itself more and more into masses, strangely altering the old relations, and increasing the distance between the rich and the poor". (4)

The arguments about improving education for the working classes took place against this background: and the point at issue was whether

1. 'Mr. Colburn's List', i (1828), pp. 735-6

2. 'Standard Novels and Romances', p. 6

3. Estimate of Fiction, p. 27

4. 'Signs of the Times', Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, p. 60

ignorance and illiteracy or literacy and education would better keep the poor subservient. This was still an issue at the end of the period, as Charles Knight's 1854 defence of attempts to broaden education indicates.¹

But the period when attacks on the novel were most bitter and most frequent was the period from about 1790 to about 1820 (from just after the French Revolution to just after Peterloo) - the period in which Jane Austen produced all her novels. The fear of revolution was widespread, particularly because during the almost continuous wars with France to 1815 the common lot of the working classes was falling wages and rising prices.² And in the 1790's the novel was turned to specifically radical ends - for example by Thomas Holcroft, William Godwin, Mary Hays, and Mary Wollstonecraft.

The sense of crisis was acute just before the turn of the century. The essayist Nathan Drake thought his collection of 1798 unlikely to attract attention "In the present hour of difficulty and danger".³ In 1799 Hannah More called on women to be especially

1. See Old Printer, p. 307

2. Porter: Progress of Nation, ii, pp. 243-4, 283-5. Even those historians who argue against any general fall in the standard of living of working people in the first half of the nineteenth century concede that real wages may have fallen during the French wars. See R.M.Hartwell: 'The Standard of Living Controversy: A Summary', in R.M.Hartwell (ed.) The Industrial Revolution, (Oxford, 1970), p. 176

3. Literary Hours, (London, 1798), p. i

active - "In this moment of alarm and peril".¹ On the next page in the same book she claims that it is a time of "the most tremendous confederacies against religion and order, and governments, which the world ever saw".² Belief in, or pretence of belief in, conspiracies was widespread.³ Hannah More kept it up. In the preface to her Moral Sketches of 1819 she writes: "While the pen is in the hand of the writer, fresh intelligence is brought of conspiracies forming in different parts of the kingdom for its destruction".⁴

This sharpened her attack on the novel. Where in 1777 she could simply dismiss bad novels as "books of unnatural fiction and improbable adventure",⁵ in 1799 she assumes a conspiracy to corrupt women. "For this purpose ... novels and romances have been made the vehicles of vice and infidelity".⁶ The rash of pamphlets produced at this time take up the same theme: one of the threats to society identified by the propagandist John Bowles (later appointed to a commission to dispose of Dutch contraband and exposed for corruption⁷)

1. Strictures on Female Education, i, p. 4

2. p. 5

3. Cf. Maurice J. Quinlan: Victorian Prelude, A History of English Manners 1700-1830, (New York, 1941), pp. 70-90

4. pp. xvi - xvii

5. Essays, p. 101

6. Strictures on Female Education, i, p. 42

7. Quinlan: Victorian Prelude, p. 99

comprised "novels teeming not only with allurements to vice, but with the horrors of blasphemy".¹ To Adam Sibbit, identified on the title page of his only known work as "Rector of Clarendon, in the island of Jamaica", the novel was one of the "vehicles which are used to convey the sentiments of the enemies of our religion and government, in order to corrupt the manners of the age."² (A clue to Sibbit's aim may be his reference fifty page earlier to "those enlightened and virtuous statesmen, who now guide the helm of state".³)

Opposition of this kind shades into opposition prompted by fears for the moral status quo. The groups who expressed opposition on these grounds were the various Dissenting sects and their Evangelical allies within the established church. The Dissenters were particularly associated with the middle classes by their own historians in 1812,⁴ and Church of England Evangelicals, to judge from their organ, the Christian Observer, were equally unsympathetic to 'the gay and the great' and equally concerned by 'the labouring poor'. The legacy of these groups I shall call 'moralism' (a word coined during this period, but not apparently used

1. Reflections on the Political and Moral State of Society, at the Close of the Eighteenth Century, (London, 1800), p. 163

2. A Dissertation, Moral and Political, on the Influence of Luxury and Refinement on Nations, with Reflections on the Manners of the Age at the Close of the 18th Century, (London, 1800), p. 143

3. p. 93

4. David Bogue and James Bennett: History of Dissenters, from the Revolution in 1688, to the Year 1808, (London, 1812), iv, pp. 151, 322, 512

widely). Its effect on novelists' treatment of emotion was profound.

While moralism, like other forms of hidebound opposition, involved opposition to the novel as such, it could (since opposition needed to have some grounds) be seen as opposition to particular features of novels. It is important to make this distinction since a novelist's only defence against any form of hidebound opposition was to demonstrate that his novels were free of the objectionable characteristics.

An early proponent of the Evangelical viewpoint was Thomas Gisborne, an associate of Wilberforce and Hannah More. In his Enquiry Into the Duties of the Female Sex (1797) - a book Jane Austen read¹ - he argues that even novels which are well-planned well-written, and didactic in intent are dangerous because they corrupt innocence.² Similar criticisms were voiced by 'E.A.' in the Ladies' Monthly Museum in 1798;³ by Vicesimus Knox, headmaster of Tunbridge School, in 1800;⁴ and by Edward Mangin in 1808.⁵ In an essay awarded a prize by the Royal Irish Academy in 1815 Harriet Kiernan argued that "novels hold no trifling rank among the various sources to which the acknowledged corruption of modern manners might

1. Chapman assumes this to be the book referred to in Letters, p. 169

2. (London, 1797), pp. 214-17

3. 'On the Good Effect of Bad Novels', i (1798), pp. 258-63

4. Essays, Moral and Literary, 4th ed., (Basil, 1800) i, 100-105

5. Light Reading, pp. 1-78

be ascribed."¹

Not all Evangelicals were opposed to novels, however. In his enormously influential Practical View of 1797, Wilberforce denounces the stage,² but says nothing against novels. Their object is, he says,

"to give us exact delineations of life and manners: and when these are written by authors of accurate observation and deep knowledge of human nature; (and many such there have been in our times) they furnish a more faithful picture, than can be obtained in any other way, of the prevalent opinions and feelings of mankind." (3)

(He is in this way enabled to use novels as evidence for the lack of 'real Christianity' in the population at large.) And in the Christian Observer, the mouthpiece of the 'Clapham Sect', at least one whole-hearted defender of the novel appeared to argue its case in the controversy about the effects of novel-reading which lasted from 1815 to 1817.⁴

But the last word in the controversy fell to an opponent; and there is little doubt that most middle-class religious opinion was against novels.

Opposition of this kind tended to be associated with advocacy of more sober reading: 'Excubitor', the final controversialist in the

1. 'Influence of Fictitious History', p. 95

2. pp. 306-10, 317-20

3. pp. 383-4

4. 'Candidus': 'Observations on Novel Reading', xv (1816), pp. 784-7

Christian Observer, recommends The Rambler and The Adventurer;¹
 Hannah More in 1799 recommended "some parts" of Locke and Butler.²
The Spectator was an especial favourite: Vicesimus Knox recommends
 it with works of history and travel;³ Edward Mangin speaks of the
 "divine pages" of Addison;⁴ it is one of the works which Hannah More
 recommends in 1819.⁵ This is why Jane Austen, in her defence of
 novels in Northanger Abbey, ends by ridiculing the Spectator and the
 age that admired it.⁶

This is her own reaction. She may have modified her attitude
 to Evangelicalism later (I have more to say about this in later
 chapters) but there is no need to take at face value her brother's
 picture of her as - with a single important modification - the
 epitomé of Evangelical taste. It is against the background I have
 just sketched that his account of her reading in his 'Biographical
 Notice' must be assessed. He emphasises her reading in history and
 "belles lettres"; he draws attention to her admiration of Johnson

1. 'Excubitor': 'On the Influence of the Literature of Fiction',
 xvi (1817), p. 426

2. Strictures on Female Education, i, 164

3. Essays, i, p. 105

4. Light Reading, p. 34

5. Moral Sketches, p. 228

6. p. 38 (Ch.5)

(often quoted and appealed to by Evangelicals) and Cowper (to Evangelicals "a genuine moral classic"¹). Only at the end, and then in conjunction with "essays" does he mention her reading of novels - as he must; and even then he emphasises her preference of Richardson to Fielding, and her preference of Sir Charles Grandison to the more exceptionable novels of Richardson.² It is impossible that he should be lying; but her taste may have been less thoroughly respectable than he suggests.

This 'Biographical Notice' is, in fact, a representative example of the effort to disarm moralism by taking it as disapproval of particular features of novels. Moralism could be taken this way, as I have said above. It could, for example, be taken as an attack upon indecenty in novels, as in Sterne;³ it could be taken as an attack upon the mixture of vice and virtue in individual characters; it could be taken as an attack upon the introduction of topics or experiences which young people should not know about; it could be taken as an attack upon the sensibility ethos.

Moralism was opposed to all the central features of this ethos, as a matter of fact. Where the ethos emphasised feeling, moralism emphasised duty. Where the ethos assumed natural innocence, it was

1. 'Excubitor'; 'Influence of Fiction', p. 426

2. 'Biographical Notice', p. 7

3. Reeve: Progress of Romance, ii, p. 30; Wilberforce: Practical View, p. 284

an important aim of Evangelicalism to argue a "natural corruption of the heart".¹ The connection between taste and morality was ridiculed, and it was argued against 'moral tears' that indulgence in pity for fictional characters blunted one's capacity to feel for real people. The notion that there was an elite of sensitive people was particularly dangerous: it encouraged the sense that one had a 'special destiny'² and a pride in one's own "superior acuteness and sensibility."³ Canning's poem, 'The New Morality', in the Anti-Jacobin, gathered together various strands of the attack:

"I love the bold uncompromising mind,
Whose principles are fix'd, whose views defin'd:
Who scouts and scorns, in canting CANDOUR'S spite,
All taste in morals, innate sense of right,
And Nature's impulse, all uncheck'd by art,
And feelings fine, that float about the heart" (4)

This aspect of moralism was one which not many novelists were willing to make concessions to. But where the other aspects of opposition could be interpreted as particular criticisms, they could be stood on their head and in this form interpreted as recommendations.

One basic recommendation emerges from this process: that novels should be positively edifying. This is an assumption which underlies

1. More: Strictures on Female Education, i, p. xviii

2. John Foster: Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend, (London, 1805), ii, pp. 21-8

3. Wilberforce: Practical View, p. 283

4. Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin, (London, 1799), p. 229

the discussions of Clara Reeve in 1785 and Hugh Murray in 1805. It still underlies the discussions of Henry Angus, a Scottish clergyman, in 1853.¹ And in an extended survey of the English novel from its beginnings published in the Westminster Review in the same year this is the note on which the reviewer feels compelled to end.²

Three particular recommendations follow from this. Firstly, that virtue and vice should be shown in a novel as having certain effects (this is what Bagehot referred to in 1858 as "the penal code ... of fiction".³) Secondly, that there should be explicit moralising throughout, and a clearly defined 'moral' at the end. Thirdly, that virtue and vice should separately be distributed among characters.

These recommendations argue some contempt both for the novel and its readers. In Johnson's discussion of the form (written in 1750 but referred to frequently in this period) this contempt is fairly apparent. Johnson sees faithfulness to ordinary experience as the novel's defining characteristic, and suggests that a good novelist will therefore need experience of life and men; but the main burden of his argument is an attack on characters of mixed vice

1. Works of Fiction; Their Use and Abuse, (Aberdeen, 1853)

2. 'Progress of Fiction', pp. 373-4

3. 'Waverley Novels', p. 60

and virtue, and he ends with a plea for the representation of perfect goodness.¹ Since this is not advice he takes himself, either in other Ramblers, or in Rasselas, it is obvious that he saw the novel as appealing to a section of the reading public in need of less sophisticated edification.

This assumption is explicit in Harriet Kiernan: it is because the novel is read by people who are young, or uneducated, or remote from "the higher classes of society" (or all three) that she argues that "It is not enough, that a novel abounds in moral sentiments; the whole story should be so constituted, as to convey an important lesson".²

Some readers objected to these prescriptions. Objection could even be from a moralistic standpoint, as in the case of the 'Pastor and Parent' who wrote to the Lady's Magazine in 1780, complaining that to assume poetic justice on this earth was foolish.³ A further objection came from John Foster, an idiosyncratic Baptist minister who wrote over 180 articles for the Eclectic Review. In his Letters to a Friend of 1805 (his best known work) he firstly criticizes modern novels on the same grounds as he criticises the bulk of 'elegant literature' - for presenting virtue in a form which is not

1. The Rambler, ed. W.J.Bate and Albrecht B.Strauss, (New Haven, 1969), i, pp. 19-25. (No.4)

2. 'Influence of Fictitious History', pp. 80-1, 83

3. 'On Novel-writing and Reading', xi (1780), pp. 375-6

specifically Christian. But he is equally critical of novels which attempt to compromise with Evangelicalism, producing "a most ludicrous apparatus of amusements and sacraments, churches and theatres, morning prayers and evening balls."¹

More often, however, the objections came from discriminating readers. There was a continuing conflict between hidebound and discriminating readers in this period. Whately in 1821 notes how the "grave guardians of youth" have "generally stigmatized the whole class" of novels, and comments: "That this censure and caution should in many instances be indiscriminate, can surprise no one, who recollects how rare a quality discrimination is".² The novel being the form it was, discriminating readers were likely in any case to be drawn from those with liberal or radical views - like Hazlitt and G.H.Lewes - or Latitudinarian survivors in the Church of England like Whately.

They objected particularly, therefore, to moralism. Mrs.Barbauld had argued in 1773 that "Moral sentiment is the cheapest product of the mind."³ Whately points out the distortions produced by "direct attempt at moral teaching".⁴ The reviewer of Jane Eyre and Shirley

1. ii, p. 295

2. JACH, p. 92

3. Misc. Pieces, p. 24

4. JACH, pp. 93-4

in the Dublin Review insists that questions about the morality of a novel should be limited to two: "does it convey an idea of life, faithful and natural, - not common-place, - and is that idea undistorted by false principles or unworthy purposes?"¹ In 1855 J.F. Stephen argued that if experience is falsified in order that poetic justice may be rendered, the reader will adopt an opposite interpretation to the one the novelist intends.²

David Masson was to put the point even more intelligently. The issue is, he says,

"more complex and difficult than may be usually supposed. The moral effect of a novel or a poem ... lies not so much in any specific proposition that can be extracted out of it as its essence, and appended to it in the shape of an ethical summary, as in the whole power of the work in all its parts to stir and instruct the mind, in the entire worth of the thoughts it suggests, and in the number and intensity of the impressions which it leaves. The addition which it makes to the total mind, ... the collection of impressive pictures which it hangs on the walls of the imagination - these are the measures of its value even morally." (3)

But not all novelists were prepared to take this into account. The expectations of the hidebound were more pressing. And where it could be objected to Fielding that he "painted human nature as it is, rather than as it ought to be,"⁴ where novels could be accused of giving "too faithful transcripts of all the follies and vices of a

1. xxviii (1850), p. 212

2. 'Relation of Novels to Life', pp. 177-81

3. British Novelists, pp. 117-18

4. Reeve: Progress of Romance, i, p. 141 (Italics sic.)

luxurious and corrupted age",¹ or could be dismissed as "mere [sic] delineations of nature",² a novelist was not encouraged to aim at authenticity.

In the treatment of emotion he was encouraged positively to simplify and distort. He was discouraged from ascribing praiseworthy emotions to vicious characters, or less praiseworthy emotions to virtuous characters. He was encouraged to adopt a 'folk psychology' of guilt and remorse. He was encouraged to refer the experience and behaviour of virtuous characters to "principle" and "exertion", of vicious characters to "impropriety" and "dissipation", (and, to disarm Evangelicals, to "natural corruption" or an "unregenerate" state). He was encouraged to present virtue as Christian holiness and vice as sin. And finally, he was encouraged to adopt the simpler techniques of presentation, such as authorial relation and dramatisation, in order to direct responses unambiguously. Consciousness was most suitably presented in terms of easily identifiable states of mind, and presentations 'from the standpoint of the agent' subordinated to the job of marking moral distinctions between characters.

Even upon novelists with literary pretensions, who were not content to be judged alongside 'the trash of the circulating library', the combined effect of these expectations and the expectations of

1. Kiernan: 'Influence of Fictitious History', p. 82 (Italics sic.)

2. 'A.A.': 'Observations on Novel Reading', Christian Observer, xiv (1815), p. 516

omnivorous readers was to inhibit them from presenting personal experience in all its actual complexity.

This can only be established by looking at the actual practice of novelists. I begin with Richardson, since although his work falls outside the period under investigation his importance in it, at least to the time of Jane Austen, is difficult to over-estimate.

Chapter Three: The Novel and the Life of Feeling(ii):

The Effect of Expectations on Novelists

I have mentioned that, according to Jane Austen's brother, Richardson was the novelist she most admired, and the argument that she "owed something of her delicate analysis of emotion to her study of his works"¹ would probably be widely accepted.² But her authenticity is more radical than Richardson's, and in order to learn from him she had to exercise more discrimination than her contemporaries reveal: his strengths are intimately connected with the epistolary form, and the procedures he employs which are most easily transferable into third person narrative are precisely those which there damage its authenticity.

It is because the epistolary novel is able to exploit both past and present tenses, for example, that characters' emotions can be expressed with a particular immediacy: as when Clarissa explains how she was driven to leave another letter for Lovelace in the hiding-place:

"And now, that I am come to this part, my uneasy reflections begin again to pour in upon me. Yet what can I do? - I believe I shall take it back again the first thing I do in the morning - Yet what can I do?" (3)

1. F.S.Boas: 'Richardson's Novels and Their Influence', Essays and Studies, ii (1911), p. 69
2. It is shared, for example, by Dr. Leavis. See The Great Tradition, (London, 1948), pp. 4-5
3. Clarissa, ii, p. 281

Immediately before this she "found rise in my mind a rancour that was new to me; and which I could not understand";¹ letters allow easily for conscious introspection. New emotions become events, and introspection, with its links to the 'examination of conscience', encourages the expression of mixed feelings. Allowing characters to reveal their own feelings has a further advantage: they may fail to identify their feelings correctly, or misunderstand their significance. His exploitation of this possibility shows Richardson at his most acute.

Also acute is his feeling for language. This enables him to individuate characters, down to details of spelling and punctuation. Each of the individuals Clarissa writes to when at "Mr. Smith's" in King Street has a different voice, a different syntax, a different range of vocabulary.² Lovelace's and Clarissa's moral and social worlds are lovingly differentiated. Lovelace's emerges through his wit, his quotations from (and attempts at) Cavalier and Restoration poetry, his conception of Clarissa as a beautiful possession - "the dearest property I had ever purchased",³ "the brightest jewel",⁴ "polished ivory", "velvet"⁵ - and his use of personifications to

1. ii, p. 280

2. vi, pp. 119-53

3. v, p. 17

4. v, p. 317. (This is Belford, to Lovelace.)

5. iv, pp. 397, 398

dramatise his own emotions ("Lie still, teasing villain! lie still! - I was only speaking to my Conscience, Jack."¹) Clarissa's emerges through her employment of terms and phrases from the law and business to dramatise one side of her ingeniously divided character, from sermons and theology to dramatise another, and from what one takes to be the natural homely language of a young girl to dramatise another. Particularly interesting is the range of idioms Richardson has her use in the crumpled "papers" (ten altogether) written in her delirium at Mr. Sinclair's.²

Although this is a local strength it is closely related to the strengths of Clarissa as a whole: the strengths of composition, as James understood it - juxtaposition, proportion, variety, an ingenious consecutive structure. The cumulative effect of the book is overwhelming: initially confined - in the first volume most of the letters (and all the longest) are from Clarissa to Miss Howe - the book slowly opens out until the action has been seen from the point of view of almost everyone concerned. As part of this process feelings can be exposed in their growth and development, and something of the complexity of personal experience allowed for.

But Richardson's talent is only one of the relevant conditions.

1. iv, p. 328

2. v, pp. 327-333

His responsiveness to readers, his efforts simultaneously to satisfy and direct taste, are matters of common knowledge. It was reading Pamela, in instalments, to his wife and a young woman staying with them that encouraged him to continue with his first novel. On his later novels he solicited the comments of a wide variety of readers before committing himself.¹ The changes he made in Clarissa after the first edition, as a result of criticisms received, are said to be so substantial as almost to change the character of the novel.

His natural genius was as a result at the mercy of both moralism and emotionalism, and they seriously damage his work.

This was not something he was aware of himself. In his capacity of official spokesman for Clarissa he claims that it satisfies all demands simultaneously.² Consciously, at least, he was unaware of the tensions between different demands - though these do not escape William Beckford in his parody-novel Modern Novel-Writing, or Interesting Emotions of Arabella Bloomville, the preface to which is clearly glancing at Richardson:

"I have, indeed, endeavoured to unite correct, delicate, and vivid imagery to an animated moral sensibility, and at the same time to enrich it by various incident, lively sallies, fashionable intrigue, picturesque description,... to produce that phoenix of literary zoology - a perfect novel." (3)

1. Samuel Richardson: Selected Letters, ed. John Carroll, (Oxford, 1964), passim, esp. pp. 41-2, 73-4

2. See his 'Preface', Clarissa, i, pp. xii-xvii

3. (London, 1796), i, p. 2

Moralism is what most damages Clarissa. It becomes important to present emotions 'not as they are, but as they ought to be'. Psychology is therefore subservient: Lovelace is moved by going to Church on Sunday, because he ought to be;¹ 'virtue' is attributed special powers to move even vicious men;² Lovelace has a vision of Clarissa just before he dies.³ Occasionally Richardson intervenes in his own voice, in case the reader should make the wrong moral judgement.⁴

Allowances are made to the sensibility ethos: there are unique 'moral feelings' to which even Lovelace is liable.⁵ But when Clarissa compares herself with her sister Bella, who "has not a feeling heart", and asserts that she would rather have her own superior susceptibility - although it costs her many more pains⁶ - there is certainly some dramatic irony intended, and perhaps some moral criticism.

Locally, because of the combined impact of emotionalism and moralism, feelings are simplified or exaggerated. Tears, for instance, are an automatic index of humane feelings - even if momentary: "What's the matter with me! - Whence this dew-drop! -

1. Clarissa, iii, pp. 355-8

2. iv, pp. 204-5; v, pp. 218-22; vi, p. 28

3. viii, p. 276

4. See e.g., i, p. 356. (Richardson's summary of a letter by Lovelace)

5. See e.g., iv, pp. 331-2

6. i, p. 320

A tear! - As I hope to be saved, it is a tear, Jack!"¹

And here the influence of the theatre is pernicious. Subtle exploitation of the epistolary convention solves the problem of ascribing emotions to the central characters (and defining their nature); in ascribing emotions to minor characters, and describing emotions as they occur in action with others (the problems of third-person narrative), Richardson is less resourceful.

His borrowings from the theatre extend further than the letters in which events are set out in script form, with stage directions and the speaker's name at the beginning of each speech.² They inform some very fine scenes, especially those in which a conflict of wills is central; but often emotions are not so much dramatised as staged:

"I recollect, as I passed by one of the pier-glasses, that I saw in it his clenched hand offered in wrath to his forehead: The words, Indifference, by his Soul, next to hatred, I heard him speak: And something of Ice he mentioned: I heard not what." (3)

A sort of shorthand is worked out in order to present the reader with "visible emotion"⁴: tears, sighs, blushes, biting of lips,

1. iv, p. 360

2. For examples, see iv, pp. 172-3, 306-7; v, pp. 209-20; vii, pp. 281-96, 301-5

3. iv, p. 112

4. i, p. 104. The word "emotion" here actually means 'agitation'.

fainting, and so on. For example: "my tears trickled down her bosom, as hers bewdewed my neck."¹ At its worst this is a matter of "uplifted hands, reproaching", glowing cheeks, hollow eyes flashing fire;² and the endlessly repeated device of having characters turn away to hide tears.

Combined with the influence of the theatre is that of painting: Lovelace speaks of Belford's

"strong features glowing with compassion for me; thy lips twisted; thy forehead furrowed; thy whole face drawn out from the stupid round into the ghastly oval; every muscle contributing its power to complete the aspect-grievous". (3)

Emotions visible in the face are the easiest to present, particularly when several emotions struggle.⁴ Their convenience tempts novelists into importing them into first-person narratives. Richardson avoids the absurdity of Crusoe's "I turned pale [sic] and grew sick"⁵ - but only by the awkward device of having a character sit by a mirror: "I sat down fanning myself (as it happened, against the glass) and I could perceive my colour go and come".⁶

1. i, p. 102

2. i, p. 343; ii, p. 186, 235

3. iv, p. 379

4. See e.g., i, pp. 19, 148

5. Daniel Defoe: Robinson Crusoe, ed. J. Donald Crowley, (London, 1972), p. 285

6. Clarissa, ii, p. 213

These habits reach a kind of climax with the death of Clarissa. Language, from the initial "woeful scene" to Clarissa's death in "charming serenity", directs the reader to the proper emotions and invites him to witness the staging at the proper emotional distance. The tears of the gathered mourners are individually characterised; their "violent burst of grief" when she faints just before the end brings them together.¹ The pathos of Clarissa's predicament is underlined - the phrase "broken accents" recurring - together with her heroism, but her last words are robbed of individuality or authenticity by Richardson's relentless moralism. One of the speeches she delivers in "broken accents" goes:

"pray God to give them happiness here for many, many years, for the sake of their friends and lovers and an heavenly crown hereafter; and such assurances of it, as I have, thro' the all-satisfying merits of my blessed Redeemer." (2)

Most damaging of all is Richardson's reliance to the last on the shorthand. The proof that Clarissa is confident in God's mercy is "a sweet smile beaming over her countenance";³ when she dies the smile is what gives her "charming serenity"; and the smile is still on her face when the coffin is opened just before burial.⁴

1. viii, pp. 1 - 5

2. p. 4

3. p. 3

4. p. 80

If later novelists were to learn from Richardson, it follows, they needed to read him critically. There is no evidence that many of them did, and in fact they were hampered by the kind of criticism he received. Everyone agreed that his account of the life of feeling was his great distinction.¹ But his emotionalism was also well thought of: Scott says of Clarissa:

"No work had appeared before, perhaps none has appeared since, containing so many direct appeals to the passions, stated too in a manner so irresistible." (2)

And not only is no serious attempt made to disentangle Richardson's strengths from his weaknesses: the one fault he is charged with is prolixity.³ This was only likely to discourage the appropriately critical reading, since the proportions of Clarissa, at least, can be argued to be finely calculated (sentence and paragraph length; digressions; reflections; the device of 'crowding to a point'). It is not in its parts that the book is prolix: it is rather that the restricted range of sympathy, the insufficiently critical deployment of intelligence, the absence of the necessary amplitude of mind, stand between Clarissa and unquestionable greatness, and this makes its length as a whole prohibitive.

1. See, e.g. Beattie: Dissertations, ii, p. 313; Scott on Novelists, p. 40

2. Scott on Novelists, p. 31

3. See, e.g., Beattie: Dissertations, ii, p. 312

The length of particular letters is connected with Richardson's greatest strength - his ability to chart not only the flow of emotions but the flow of awareness. If contemporaries were to miss this, it is not surprising that they relied even more heavily than him on the staging of emotions. This habit, together with others which, while expected by omnivorous or hidebound readers, similarly simplified or distorted personal experience, persisted among novelists from Richardson to Dickens and Thackeray.

Three novelists writing just before Jane Austen was born need to be mentioned first - Walpole, Sterne, and Mackenzie. Walpole's legacy was the Gothic novel ('Gothic' elements persist in Charlotte Brontë) and the Gothic thrill:

"Terror, the author's principal engine, prevents the story from ever languishing; and it is so often contrasted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions." (1)

Deference to emotionalism could hardly be more explicit. And in The Castle of Otranto (1765), Walpole's reliance upon the shorthand is almost complete. Horror is represented by speechlessness, rage by trembling, apprehension by fainting, and "a transport of passion" by falling at someone's feet.²

1. The Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Story, ed. W.S.Lewis, (London, 1964), p. 4 (Preface.)

2. pp. 17, 46, 53, 87

The most frequently exploited device is tears - "a flood of tears, that spoke the fulness of his soul", a silent tear stealing down the cheek, or the "gushing" of anxious tears from the eyes.¹

Two stratagems found in Walpole which later novelists found useful are ^{the} 'successive emotions in the face' trick - "Surprise, doubt, tenderness, respect, succeeded each other in the countenance of the youth."² - and the 'emotions too powerful to be described' trick. Walpole relies heavily on the second: "Words cannot paint the astonishment of Isabella", "Words cannot paint the horror of the princess's situation.", "The passions that ensued must be conceived; they cannot be painted".³

Where there is some attempt at presenting emotions from the standpoint of the agent, the stress falls on sensations, on the effect of named (and uninterruptedly powerful) emotions upon the mind and body - the curdling of blood by fear, the agony of despair, the "tempest of mind" induced by conflicting emotions, the blazing of rage.⁴ Walpole is especially interested in attributing a number of emotions to his characters - "The tears gushed from Jerome's eyes,

1. pp. 57, 79, 81

2. p. 54. (Ch. 2)

3. pp. 22, 26, 54

4. pp. 25, 26, 35, 51

on whose countenance a thousand anxious passions stood expressed."¹ - and when presented from the standpoint of the agent the absurdity of this cannot be disguised:

"Ashamed... of his inhuman treatment of a princess, who returned every injury with new marks of tenderness and duty, he felt returning love forcing itself into his eyes - but not less ashamed of feeling remorse towards one, against whom he was inwardly meditating a yet more bitter outrage, he curbed the yearnings of his heart, and did not dare to lean even towards pity. The next transition of his soul was to exquisite villainy." (2)

The identification in this passage of love with tears ("forcing itself into his eyes") together with its invocation of a quick succession of named emotions - shame, love, remorse, pity, "villainy" (the first four not differentiated from each other) - betrays Walpole's lack of interest in the actualities of personal experience.

Sterne cannot be accused of the same lack of interest. If the shorthand reappears in A Sentimental Journey (1768) - the usual blushes, sighs, tears and: "a hectic of a moment pass'd across his cheek, but could not tarry - Nature seemed to have had done with her resentments in him"³ - this is only when other people's feelings are to be described: Yorick's feelings are recorded less perfunctorily.

1. p. 81. (Ch. 4)

2. p. 35. (Ch. 1)

3. ed. Ian Jack, (London, 1968), p. 7 (The Monk/Calais)

There is a point at which he speaks of himself as "turning pale with astonishment" like Robinson Crusoe,¹ but this is not representative.

A good part of the book is taken up with descriptions of Yorick's feelings, and while he occasionally stages them in terms of an 'inner drama',² the stress falls upon sensations. He records "the ebbs and flows of... humours"³ as they are felt, in all their "exquisite" detail:

"There is a sort of a pleasing half guilty blush, where the blood is more in fault than the man - 'tis sent impetuous from the heart, and virtue flies after it - not to call it back, but to make the sensation of it more delicious to the nerves - " (4)

And there is some apt characterisation of sensations through metaphor:

"If a man knows the heart, he will know it was impossible to go back instantly to my chamber - it was touching a cold key with a flat third to it, upon the close of a piece of musick, which had call'd forth my affections"(5)

The book, even here, however, never betrays its emotionalist premises. (According to Scott, "In the power of approaching and

1. p. 62

2. See, e.g., pp. 22, 76-7

3. p. 5

4. p. 92 (The Temptation/Paris)

5. p. 94 (The Mystery/Paris)

touching the finer feelings of the heart, he has never been excelled, if indeed, he has ever been equalled".¹⁾ While Sterne's technique is both apt and (within its limits) subtle, it is suitable only to the narrow range of feelings touched on - momentary feelings, and especially those which can be indulged (the key-words "exquisite" and "delicious" recur) - and to the individual sensibility of Sterne himself. To take over his technique as a whole would be to write another novel by Sterne; to borrow it and attempt to turn it to the purposes of conventional narrative is to risk the kind of unreality that characterises Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling.

This appeared in 1771, three years after A Sentimental Journey, and eleven years after the first volumes of Tristram Shandy. The stress falls, as in Sterne, upon small touches: "the soft affections, when they are busy that way, will build their structures, were it but on the paring of a nail."² The shorthand naturally comes into play - tears, quivering of lips, paling of cheeks.³ Speechlessness, or not being able to eat, indicate deep sorrow.⁴ At times the staging of emotions seems overt:

1. Scott on Novelists, p. 76

2. ed. Brian Vickers, (London, 1967), p. 132. (The Conclusion.)

3. See, e.g., pp. 67-8

4. pp. 19, 105

"He turned [his eyes] up to heaven - then on his daughter. - He laid his left hand on his heart - the sword dropped from his right - he burst into tears." (1)

In his exploitation of symptomatic incident Mackenzie once or twice emulates Sterne's habit of playing pathos against wry humour (the aim being mutual intensification) - as when the narrator pinches a lap-dog's ear to relieve his bitterness of soul.² But the narrative is more substantial than Sterne's (it touches on madness, prostitution, British India). As a result the shorthand is stretched beyond the narrow range of feelings for which it is adequate. At the end, in order that the sensibility of the hero, Hartley, should be convincingly demonstrated he has actually to die of joy (combined with fever) when Miss Walton, whom he loves, confesses that she loves him in return.³

Moreover, the skill at describing feelings with which Mackenzie is credited, by Scott for example,⁴ is illusory. The gestures towards analysis prove upon examination to be devices to intensify pathos, as in Atkins' "It was now that I first felt something like calmness of mind; probably from being reduced to a state which could not produce the exertions of anguish or despair."⁵ And the 'impossible

1. p. 67. (Ch. 28)

2. p. 8

3. pp. 130-1

4. Scott on Novelists, pp. 82-3

5. p. 72. (Ch. 29)

to describe' strategem noted in Walpole is turned to almost sinister ends:

"We would attempt to describe the joy which Hartley felt on his occasion, did it not occur to us, that one half of the world could not understand it though we did; and the other half will, by this time, have understood it without any description at all."(1)

This deference to the sensibility ethos is reflected in the language of both Sterne and Mackenzie: the conjunction in particular of on the one hand "wisdom", "judgement", and "the world" - with the hint in both, more explicit in Mackenzie, that the 'sense' of "the world" is close to unfeeling selfishness - and on the other hand "heart", "fancy", "feelings" and "nature". When Yorick is benevolent, it is at the prompting of "all the powers of nature, stirring within me".² Mackenzie uses the code more crudely:

"the pride of a soldier's honour checked for a while the yearnings of his heart; but nature at last prevailed, he fell on her neck, and mingled his tears with hers".(3)

There are one or two signs of deference to this cult of sensibility in Evelina (1778), as when Evelina goes to Vauxhall: "a hautbois concerto was so charmingly played, that I could have thought myself upon enchanted ground, had I spirits more gentle to

1. p. 69. (Ch. 29)

2. Sentimental Journey, p. 37

3. Man of Feeling, p. 68. (Ch. 29)

associate with."¹ But the notion of an elect of the susceptible is not an important element in the book's account of emotions. Nor is pathos in general. In her preface Fanny Burney speaks approvingly of "the pathetic powers of Richardson",² but her debts to him are of another kind. She takes over his image of the seducer, for example, (in Sir Clement Willoughby). More importantly, she has learnt from his use of the epistolary convention, which she develops with a personal skill. If her psychology is less subtle than Richardson's, her touch is lighter.

Her light touch almost redeems the practice of staging emotions: the starting, blushing, biting of lips and so on which again occupy the narrative are compatible with the premises of farce. The bias of Evelina towards farce is unmistakeable. When Sir Clement visits Mme. Duval's, the Branghtons

"all started, and, with looks of guilty confusion, as if they feared his resentment for having listened to Madame Duval, they scrambled for chairs, and, in a moment, were all formally seated." (3)

When Madam Duval's rage and amazement force her to her feet they all stand too; they sit when she sits, and when she has embarrassed Sir Clement with her gross insinuations, "every one, who, before,

1. p. 193. (Vol ii, letter 15)

2. p. 9

3. p. 208 (Vol ii, letter 16)

seemed at a loss how, or if at all, to occupy a chair, now filled it with the most easy composure".¹

Farce, then, partly redeems the shorthand; and there is a single moment when emphasis upon symptomatic behaviour breaks its limits - when Lord Morton speaks to Orville's sister: "'You have been, as you always are', said he, twisting his whip with his fingers, 'all sweetness.'"² Tension between experience and behaviour, however, seems to have been a possibility that Fanny Burney stumbled upon by accident: she does not exploit it anywhere else in the book. And the need to rely upon the shorthand when experience is to be sympathetically presented (farce now out of the question) damages the book's pretensions as conjectural history: "the eyes of Mr. Villars, which glisten with affectionate concern"³ insufficiently substantiate his feelings.

The first person possibilities of the epistolary form - the reporting of recent, and the expression of present, emotions - are exploited more ingeniously. Like Richardson, though rather less subtly, Fanny Burney dramatises local failures of awareness in her heroine, and local confusions of mind: "though I wished to

1. p. 210

2. p. 280. (Vol iii, letter 2)

3. p. 258

leave London, the gratification of my wish afforded me no happiness!"¹

And she is aware of the possibilities of 'object-apprehension' - description not so much of a character's sensations as of the way things seem to him² -

"to me, London now seems a desert; that gay and busy appearance it so lately wore, is now succeeded by a look of gloom, fatigue, and lassitude; the air seems stagnant, the heat is intense, the dust intolerable, and the inhabitants illiterate and under-bred." (3)

If for all this, Evelina remains a slight work, its relative independence - the moderation of its concessions to emotionalism and moralism - comes out sharply in comparison with Mrs. Inchbald's A Simple Story (1791).

The extent to which Mrs. Inchbald was a victim of her time, and the extent to which she deliberately exploited contemporary taste, it is difficult to determine exactly. But that she knew what she was doing is made fairly clear by the article on novel-writing she wrote for the weekly paper, the Artist (edited by Prince Hoare, another member of the London theatrical world), in 1807.

This article takes the form of a series of hints to new novel writers on how to avoid making common mistakes. Some of it is on

1. p. 254

2. Cf. Appendix A below

3. p. 172. (Vol ii, letter 10)

the level of: do not have your heroine saved from disaster by your hero (it kills suspense.) But there is sharper criticism - such as of the battering to death of cult-words ('Sensibility', 'Delicacy', 'Feeling'), and also of emotionalist demands in general.¹ She pours particular scorn on the shorthand:

"Examine ... the various times you have made your heroine blush, and your hero turn pale - the number of times he has pressed her hand to his 'trembling lips,' and she his letters to her 'beating heart' - the several times he has been 'speechless' and she 'all emotion,' the one 'struck to the soul;' and the other 'struck dumb.'

"The lavish use of 'tears,' both in 'showers' and 'floods,' should next be scrupulously avoided; though many a gentle reader will weep on being told that others are weeping, and require no greater cause to excite their compassion." (2)

This was advice she might well have taken in 1791: "lavish", for instance, is exactly what her use of tears is. The range is set out on a single page: "eyes moistened", "a flood of tears", and "convulsive sobs".³ The device of hiding tears recurs, on one occasion reaching a kind of apotheosis: in order to hide a particularly copious flood Miss Woodley orders a coach and rides "several miles out of town".⁴

Paling and blushing are also much in evidence, together with

1. 'Novel-writing', *Artist*, i (1807), no. xiv, pp. 10, 12-13

2. p. 10

3. A Simple Story, ed. J.M.S. Tompkins, (London, 1967), p. 92

4. pp. 131-2

starting, the lifting up of hands, sighing, fainting, downcast eyes, the failing of the voice.¹ At one point Miss Milner opens a convenient window and puts her head out in order to conceal her emotion.² At another she is unable to eat, so deep is her sorrow: returning cheerfulness is indicated a moment later by her being able to manage a mouthful.³

The staging of emotions in A Simple Story is less covert than in earlier novels (no doubt because Mrs. Inchbald was both an actress and a playwright). There are frequent "silences": when Miss Milner first ridicules Sandford,

"Some of the persons present laughed - Mrs. Horton coughed - Miss Woodley blushed - Lord Elmwood sneered - Dorriforth frowned - and Miss Fenton, looked just as she did before." (4)

The words "appeared" and "seemed" occur in ascriptions of feeling; the present tense appears; and there are inner monologues (complete with inverted commas) that are barely disguised soliloquies.⁵

Neither her theatricality nor her absurdities deterred contemporary readers, however. In the 1830's De Quincey was still able to link her with Scott and Maria Edgeworth as an instance

1. pp. 10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 67, 75, 207

2. p. 22

3. p. 132

4. p. 49. (Vol i, Ch 11.)

5. pp. 3-5, 96, 138

of the achievement of the British novel.¹ Maria Edgeworth herself thought highly of Mrs. Inchbald's treatment of emotion: on 14th January 1810, after reading A Simple Story for the fourth time, she wrote to Mrs. Inchbald.

"By the force that is necessary to repress feeling, we judge of the intensity of the feeling, and you always contrive to give us by intelligible but simple signs the measure of this force." (2)

This praise perhaps explains why readers took to Mrs. Inchbald: 'Intelligible but simple' tokens of emotion were preferred to the actualities of experience. Characteristic of Mrs. Inchbald's direct ascription of feelings is the sequence: "Miss Woodley's sensations wanted a name - terror and anguish give but a faint description of what she suffered".³ And a representative example of her use of object-apprehension is the passage in which she reports that the November fields seemed green to Matilda in her happiness.⁴

In directly reporting characters' emotions Mrs. Inchbald occasionally uses the language of painting: "a manly scorn painted on his countenance"; "her guardian's pity and affright began to take

1. Thomas de Quincey: 'Goethe', Works, ed. David Masson, (Edinburgh, 1889-90), iv, p. 417

2. Quoted in the editor's introduction to Simple Story, pp. vii-viii

3. p. 320. The rest of the sentence is more evocative, but the habit is what it is.

4. p. 331

the colour of resentment".¹ It may be only a trick of style, but it has a certain significance, and in the case of Mrs. Radcliffe the significance becomes more obvious.

Mrs. Radcliffe's interest in painting (Claude, Salvator Rosa, Poussin) is obvious in any case. The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) and The Italian (1797) - books both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë read - are studded with painterly descriptions of landscapes and the weather. But her connoisseurship goes deeper. It takes, in fact, the form of a thoroughgoing aesthetic attitude to personal experience.

Her reliance on the shorthand seems at first much like earlier novelists': "'Your wife!' said the Marchese, with a look of ineffable disdain, which was instantly succeeded by one of angry alarm.";² "'This is too- too much,' exclaimed Valancourt, resigning her hand and throwing himself into a chair, where he covered his face with his hands and was overcome, for some moments, by convulsive sighs."³ At the same time, her characters' consciousnesses are interesting to her, and she adopts the standpoint of the agent easily and often. At times she finds exactly the right words to convey a character's

1. pp. 61, 113

2. The Italian, ed. Frederick Garber, (London, 1968), p. 30

3. The Mysteries of Udolpho, ed. Bonamy Dolrée, (London, 1966), p. 520

own sense of his experience, for example when among the bandits, towards the end of Udolpho. the Count feels "mistrust gathering fast upon his mind."¹

The degree of her interest in her characters' consciousnesses is in turn, however, proportionate to her interest in a more subtle exploitation of emotionalism. The effect of what might be called 'the picturesque of experience' on her language and technique can be seen to best advantage in a passage such as that describing Emily's feelings one evening in Venice, when Montoni takes a party in a gondola out on the sea:

"Emily sat, given up to pensive and sweet emotions. The smoothness of the water, over which she glided, its reflected images - a new heaven and trembling stars below the waves, with shadowy outlines of towers and porticos, conspired with the stillness of the hour, interrupted only by the passing wave, or the notes of distant music, to raise those emotions to enthusiasm. As she listened to the measured sound of the oars, and to the remote warblings that came in the breeze, her softened mind returned to the memory of St. Aubert and to Valancourt, and tears stole to her eyes. The rays of the moon, strengthening as the shadows deepened, soon after threw a silvery gleam upon her countenance, which was partly shaded by a thin black veil, and touched it with inimitable softness. Hers was the contour of a Madona, with the sensibility of a Magdalen; and the pensive uplifted eye, with the tear that glittered on her cheek, confirmed the expression of the character." (2)

Here the established resources of the novel ~~for~~ dealing with

1. p. 610

2. p. 184 (Vol ii, Ch. 3; or Ch. 19)

the life of feeling are gathered together in a new (and consistently applied) framework. Emily's consciousness is at first the centre of attention: it is she who feels the beauty of the evening, and it is her mind which stimuli "conspire" (a favourite word of Mrs. Radcliffe's) to bring into harmony with its environment. The transition to seeing her from the outside is managed by the reference to her tears; after this the connoisseur's attitude becomes overt, and the earlier concentration upon Emily's feelings is seen to be one half of a picture (it is caught up in the allusion to her Magdalen-like sensibility). The result is not so much a portrait as a still life with feelings.

Maria Edgeworth's concessions to emotionalism are not so thoroughgoing; her deference to moralism, however, immediately calls attention to itself. Belinda (1801) is subtitled 'A Moral Tale' (the preface explains why the word 'novel' is less happy), and the earlier Letters of Julia and Caroline (1795) is a story even more didactic.

Julia and Caroline is a short work, an epistolary novel in seven letters. In it Maria Edgeworth can be seen trying to master the problems of narration - she made some improvements in later revisions - but to narrate emotions she relies on the shorthand. Only in Letter VII, from Caroline to Lord V-- (Julia's husband) is

the life of feeling dramatised in its own right. All earlier references to emotions have only served to dramatise crude moral distinctions. And even here, while individual scenes (the pale Julia at the inn, looking into the fire) are well conceived, feelings continue to be represented through the shorthand: "a scarlet blush overspread her face - she grew livid again instantly, gave a faint shriek, and sunk senseless into my arms."¹

Belinda is an improvement, but Jane Austen's championship evidently stemmed more from her need to vindicate the novel as a form than from the book's own merits. There is some fine comic treatment of emotion - of the embarrassment of Sir Philip when about to propose to Belinda, for instance: twisting his little black stick, pacing about, trying to bring the subject up, and finally (after the rejection) breaking his stick and leaving.² But emotions are once again staged (sighing, fainting, clasping of hands; tears, blushing³) and if some new devices to indicate emotion are developed - misplacing chess pieces, for example, or tearing a carnation to pieces⁴ - the habit of staging, reliance on the repertoire itself however extended, makes for distortion

1. Letters of Julia and Caroline, (London, 1795), p. 70. The tale is bound in with Letters for Literary Ladies, (London, 1795), but has a separate title page and is separately paginated.

2. Belinda, (London, 1801), i, pp. 344-50

3. i, pp. 47, 52, 106, 365; ii, pp. 184-5, 249-50; iii, p. 205

4. i, p. 257; ii, p. 76

(and unintentional comedy) when emotions supposed to bear some weight of significance are introduced. When Lady Delacour, after her repentance, is struck by a 'religious' feeling: "She paused, and looked up towards Heaven with an expression of fervent devotion, which Belinda had once, and but once before, seen in her countenance." She then becomes unaware that Belinda is present, and falls "into a profound reverie."¹

The debts to painting are less insidious than Mrs. Radcliffe's, but hardly less pronounced: she speaks of a "countenance, which was the picture of despair";² Marriot re-appears after Lady Delacour has complained of her macaw "with a face which might have sat for the picture of ill humour"³; feelings are spoken of as "painted" on the face - "Grief, and horror, and pity, were painted in Lord Delacour's countenance as he passed hastily through the room."⁴

The most serious weakness of the book, however, is that while there are some inner monologues which anticipate Jane Austen,⁵ the standpoint of the agent is, in general, clumsily adopted: it tends to be a matter of identified emotions coursing through the

1. ii, p. 259

2. i, p. 56

3. i, p. 320

4. ii, p. 257

5. See, e.g., i, pp. 311-17

mind:

"Pity succeeded to disgust and displeasure in Belinda's mind, and she could hardly refrain from tears, whilst she saw this unhappy creature, with forced smiles, endeavour to hide the real anguish of her soul - " (1)

The mandatory invocation of tears in this passage, its appeal to appropriate emotions, ("this unhappy creature"), and the feeble "real anguish", are further indications of how little the possibilities of the novel had been extended since Walpole.

The habit of identifying feelings positively is valuable, however, to the extent that it encourages analysis. Maria Edgeworth's analyses lack both the grasp and the subtlety of Jane Austen's, but they may have alerted her to certain possibilities:

"Lady Delacour's history, and the manner in which it was related, excited in Belinda's mind astonishment - pity - admiration - and contempt. - Astonishment at her inconsistency - pity for her misfortunes - admiration of her talents - and contempt for her conduct." (2)

She may have been alerted to other possibilities by the language Maria Edgeworth uses for interpretation and appraisal. In Julia and Caroline an opposition is set up between "thinking" and "feeling", and the ethos of sensibility is presented as a temptation. Opposed to it are such things as "the rational hope

1. i, pp. 274-5

2. i, p. 148

of happiness" and "a sense of duty".¹ This might be interpreted as mere moralism, but even here there is some attempt on Maria Edgeworth's part to avoid unthinking use of a code.

In Belinda the effort to work out a flexible language of appraisal is developed beyond this stage. In particular an accommodation between sense and sensibility is attempted. There is reference to Belinda's "own feelings and principles",² her "dignity of mind",³ to Clarence Hervey's "honour and generosity".⁴ Jane Austen cannot have failed to notice this.

It is unlikely that she learnt even as much as this from Crabbe. Narrative poems face much the same problem as novels, and Crabbe found much the same solutions. The staging of emotions is less heavily relied on, or turned to sardonic ends, as when Justice Bolt finally

"Look'd his full self, and fill'd his ample chair".(5)

But there are soliloquies - with inverted commas - or inner dialogues (for example, with 'conscience'⁶) when emotions have to be presented

1. Julia and Caroline, p. 57

2. Belinda, i, p. 325

3. i, p. 168

4. iii, p. 225

5. Tales, 1812 and Other Selected Poems, ed. Howard Mills, (Cambridge, 1967), p. 136

6. p. 128. (The Dumb Orators.)

from the standpoint of the agent; and a very regular world of easily identifiable feelings is evoked. What this is like even at its best can be seen, say, in the account of Blaney's final ruin:

"He view'd his only guinea, then suppress'd,
For a short time, the tumults in his breast,
And, moved by pride, by habit and despair,
Gave it an opera-bird to hum an air." (1)

Poetry, however, aroused expectations beyond those of (typical) novel-readers' - enabling Crabbe to exploit one resource which the novel was not to accommodate until later: the introduction of 'sympathetic environment'. Obvious examples are the mud flats in 'Peter Grimes' (from The Borough), and the silent moonlit beach in 'The Parting Hour' (from The Tales). Harmonies are expressed with a resonance quite unlike Mrs. Radcliffe's:

"Here dull and hopeless he'd lie down and trace
How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their crooked race;
Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
Of fishing gull or clanging golden eye;....
Where all, presented to the eye or ear,
Oppress'd the soul with misery, grief, and fear." (2)

Scott was a poet before he was a novelist, but in the Heart of Midlothian (1818) he does not attempt to extend the range of devices to present emotion. He does not even seem to have learnt much from

1. p. 98. (Blaney.)

2. p. 111. (Peter Grimes.)

Jane Austen. All six of her novels had appeared by 1818, and Scott had read most of them. But if he had in fact appreciated the achievement which they represent there is no sign in his own fiction. (In his critical comments there are some signs; but even here his surprise that her novels should be so interesting seems stronger than his awareness of what makes them so.)

The concessions to moralism in the Heart of Midlothian are principally negative (the avoidance of the offensive), but there is a 'Moral' at the end:

"Reader, This tale will not be told in vain, if it shall be found to illustrate the great truth, that guilt, though it may attain temporal splendour, can never confer real happiness; that the evil consequences of our crimes long survive their commission, and, like the ghosts of the murdered, for ever haunt the steps of the malefactor; and that the paths of virtue, though seldom those of wordly greatness, are always those of pleasantness and peace." (1)

The concessions to omnivorous readers are more pronounced. So overwhelming are they, in fact, that one suspects that even here, in what is widely supposed to be his best book, Scott is only to a small extent involved in his writing.

Of course his interest in history is profound, and there is a corresponding interest in behaviour. But in the experience of which behaviour is a function he takes a limited (even a distinctively

1. Illustrated ed., (London, 1912), p. 615

limited) interest. In part he relies on the shorthand, "The compressed lip, the bent brow, the stern and flashing eye";¹ or worse: "But Mammon was struggling with Remorse for retaining his place in a bosom he had so long possessed".² On other occasions, where the standpoint of the agent forces itself upon him, he immediately begins to generalise the feelings of which he has to give an account. Often he prefaces the account with the words "it may readily be conceived...", or "it may be guessed with what feelings ...". At times he becomes even more resolutely donnish:

"we return to Jeanie Deans, who had seen him depart, without an opportunity of further explanation, in all that agony of mind with which the female heart bids adieu to the complicated sensations so well described by Coleridge,-

Hopes, and fears that kindle hope, ..." (3)

Between general experience and eccentric behaviour (an obvious focus of interest) the possibility of individual experience is lost sight of.

Oliver Twist (1838) is a more complicated book than The Heart of Midlothian, and Dickens' involvement in his novel is obvious. Furthermore, it is arguable that to discuss its qualities as conjectural history is to catch it at its weakest - it is a triptych

1. p. 38

2. p. 89

3. p. 116. (Ch. 14)

of nightmare, pastoral, and reformist pamphlet. But the effects of moralism and emotionalism on the book need to be analysed since it is so closely comparable with Jane Eyre. (Though not so closely comparable as David Copperfield - but this comes after Jane Eyre.)

When, in Emma, Emma visits a poor family, (with Harriet) Jane Austen notes:

"She understood their ways, could allow for their ignorance and their temptations, had no romantic expectations of extraordinary virtue from those, for whom education had done so little". (1)

It is precisely this kind of 'romantic expectation' that informs Dickens' conception of Oliver. As a result, he almost fails to exist as a character: in every situation what he does is what Goodness would do, and goodness is not a defining characteristic. If the predicaments in which he finds himself engage the reader's emotions - which they clearly do - this is, in some cases at least, because there is no mediating consciousness.

Dickens' failure (or unwillingness) to take into account everything that Jane Austen means by 'education' comes out equally strongly in his descriptions of surroundings. On their first introduction Fagin's den, Sykes' room, and so on, are presented in all their nauseating detail. But the details are infrequently recalled; habitations impinge upon, but do not deeply

1. Emma, p. 86. (Ch. 10). 'Romantic' here means 'fanciful, idealistic' - the sort of expectations one might acquire from 'romances'.

influence, characters' lives: they are setting, or background, rather than environment.

The theatricality of the book's account of passing emotions is in keeping with this. Some of it can, of course, be justified on the same grounds as in Evelina: the comedy of Oliver Twist, too, is largely sustained by its grotesquely staged emotions:

"Here, all eyes were turned upon Brittles; who fixed his upon the speaker, and stared at him, with his mouth wide open, and his face expressive of the most unmitigated horror." (1)

And where the influence of emotionalism is in abeyance, where Dickens' powerful imagination is really engaged, authenticity is achieved. In particular, wherever Dickens genuinely adopts the standpoint of the agent, from the moment when Oliver tries to sleep, in his solitary confinement at the workhouse,

"ever and anon waking with a start and tremble, and drawing himself closer and closer to the wall, as if to feel even its cold hard surface were a protection in the gloom and loneliness which surrounded him" (2)

to the invasion of Fagin's consciousness at his trial and afterwards, the object-apprehensions are vivid and new.

Dickens even almost redeems the 'folk psychology' that informs Richardson's account of Lovelace's death - and is glanced at in Scott's 'Moral'. Bill Sykes' haunting by Nancy is authenticated

1. ed. Kathleen Tillotson, (Oxford, 1966), p. 184. (Ch. 23)

2. p. 13. (Ch. 3)

to the extent that it is presented forcefully from his point of view, and not simply used as a piece of machinery.

At the same time, Dickens is heir to some of the worst excesses of the emotionalist tradition (in the preface to the third edition he cites approvingly Goldsmith, Richardson, Mackenzie): tears play their usual extensive role, and are made to bear the same kind of significance. And while certain emotions - fear, anger, horror - issue in physical symptoms that are more than tokens ("He twined his hands in his hair; and, with a loud scream, rolled grovelling upon the floor: his eyes fixed: and the foam gushing from his lips"¹) this is not the case with emotions such as love, sympathy, or compassion (which play a prominent part in the book). Moreover the reader often has only Dickens' word for the distinction between real and assumed emotions. He may well, when reading, as he would in most modern editions, of the hunchback "beating his feet upon the ground, and tearing his hair, in transports of real or pretended rage"² ask himself how he could decide.

Some short examples should be enough to show that habits prompted by moralism and emotionalism persist among Charlotte Brontë's

1. p. 32 (Ch.5). Dickens later removed the absurd "gushing from".

2. p. 208 (Ch.32). This is the reading of the 1850 cheap edition, and the 1867 Charles Dickens edition. The Clarendon edition in fact gives "frenzied", the reading of the 1846 edition which serves as copy text, instead of "real or pretended" - but the revision is Dickens'.

contemporaries. The first is the staging of emotions in Vanity Fair (1848). Staging is consistent with Thackeray's basic principles. His contrivances to work upon the reader (to mislead him, to shock him, to amuse him in spite of himself) largely make the book what it is. Representative enough is the scene in which Rawdon Crawley finds Becky with Lord Steyne:

"Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon's white face ... Steyne rose up, grinding his teeth, pale, and with fury in his looks." (1)

A moment later Steyne comes forward, holding out his hand: "the nerves of his mouth twitching as he tried to grin at the intruder." He makes an attempt to leave, "with flame in his eyes". Becky meanwhile is "trembling" and "quivering".² The effect of this staging is to elicit the reader's contempt for the characters' emotions. It is because Thackeray wants (for reasons of his own) to enforce a generally low view of his characters that he so infrequently presents in any fullness their own sense of their situation.

Where he wants to enforce another reaction (tenderness or admiration) he falls back on the language of sensibility. Allowances need to be made for his irony - he is unwilling whole-

1. p. 515 (Ch. 53)

2. pp. 515-16

heartedly to admire anyone - but Amelia, for example, is presented throughout in terms which would be familiar to an eighteenth-century reader. 'Sensibility' itself is ascribed to her as a defining characteristic at the outset;¹ she is the very type of the "kind, fresh, smiling, artless, tender little domestic goddess, whom men are inclined to worship".² Her emotions are idealised accordingly.³

A further example of corruption is found in Mary Barton (1848). Mrs. Gaskell does invoke characters' own sense of their situation, but the same direct appeal to the reader's emotions that disfigures the novels of seventy years before reappears. The pathetic aspects of scenes are continually underlined: just as Dickens, in the early part of Oliver Twist, is always reminding the reader of Oliver's "little" hands, "little" legs, "little" body, so Mrs. Gaskell relies on the epithet "poor". As Jem's trial spectators discuss his hair. Mrs. Gaskell comments:

"Poor Jem! His raven hair (his mother's pride, and so often fondly caressed by her fingers), was that, too, to have its influence against him?" (4)

Often, when emotions have been presented straightforwardly and

1. p. 15

2. p. 108

3. I am particularly conscious of how dismissive this is of a great novel. I must plead - as I already have in Chapter 1 - my own limited purposes; and the compelling need to be brief.

4. Knutsford ed., (London, 1906), p. 371. (Ch. 32)

truthfully - "Alice could have bitten her tongue out" -

Mrs. Gaskell blurs the effect with emotionalist devices:

"'I will take care not to come and spoil it,'
thought poor Alice ... To her surprise, a surprise
that brought tears of joy into her eyes, Mary Barton
put her arms round her neck, and kissed the self-
reproaching Alice." (1)

And, while the death of Alice is tactfully managed, John Barton dies saying, "God be merciful to us sinners. - Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."² Moreover, the earlier chapter, in which Wilson dies,³ has so close an affinity to the death of Clarissa that it is hardly possible to believe that (exactly) a hundred years separates the two scenes.

1. pp. 17, 18. (Ch. 2)

2. p. 432. (Ch. 35)

3. pp. 78-9. (Ch. 6)

Chapter 4: The Presentation of Emotion(i):

Techniques

The achievement of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë can now be seen for what it is. It is not simply that they avoid "sighs, dew-drops, pearls, smiles, blushes, roses, sal-volatile, and eau de luxe",¹ or that they can see the limitations involved in too easily satisfying the demand for "persons with whose feelings we sympathise". It is that they are deeply interested in personal experience as it actually is.

Contemporaries noticed their unusual truthfulness. The future Lady Byron wrote of Pride and Prejudice, "I really think it the most probable fiction I have ever read."² Whately describes the emotions of Fanny Price on instanced occasions as

"feelings, all of them, which, under the influence of strong passion, must alloy the purest mind, but which scarcely any authoress but Miss Austin [sic] would have ventured to temper the aetheriel materials of a heroine."⁽³⁾

Of Charlotte Brontë, 'W.P.P.' observed that she broke through the conventions of "Novelism",⁴ or, as Peter Bayne, an essayist and occasional writer put it,

1. Mangin: Light Reading, pp. 84-5

2. Malcolm Elwin: Lord Byron's Wife, (London, 1962), p. 159

3. JACH, p. 101; cf. pp. 35 (Critical Rev on S & S), 106 (Scott: Journal entry for 14 March 1826); and Mrs. Elwood: Memoirs of the Literary Ladies of England, (London, 1843), ii, pp. 179 181

4. W.P.P: Jottings on Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, (London, 1856), p. 20

"she professed to write truly, to show living men and women meeting the exigencies, grappling with the problems, of real existence, to point out how the battle goes, in the circles of English middle life, between pretension and reality, between falsehood and truth. If we were content to listen to her as a historian, she relinquished with a smile the laurel of the romancer." (1)

What made the two novelists so interested in authenticity?

A possible answer can be found by anticipating a point I shall develop more fully in Chapter 6. Behind their novels (as behind much writing which continues to engage readers) lies the impulse to dramatise a predicament and share it with others. This may be a general human predicament, or a social predicament, but it is in the first instance their own predicament - one which concerns them personally.

This is not to say that they 'put themselves' into their novels: the predicament remained theirs, and could be more tellingly dealt with, if attributed to an imagined character in an imagined situation. This is what it means to dramatise it. But the dramatisation is serious; they are fully involved in it.

This implies a need for authenticity - how else is the predicament to be validly explored? It also implies (if the dramatisation is in fact to be shared) a need for reading as

1. Essays, Biographical, Critical and Miscellaneous, (Edinburgh, 1859), p. 343; cf. 'Shirley', Eclectic Rev., 4th ser. xxvi (1849), p. 739; 'Currer Bell's "Professor"', Dublin Univ. Mag., L (1857), p. 95

serious and involved as the writing. Dickens seems to have felt a need of the same kind. But in his case - the need seems to have been further complicated by a need to share the dramatisation with the widest possible audience, an audience he could work upon and tyrannise. As a result, concessions of the kind described in the last chapter are made. Neither Jane Austen nor Charlotte Brontë were prepared to make concessions of this kind.

Of course they needed money, in Jane Austen's case especially after her father died, in Charlotte Brontë's case especially after she lost her money in one of the most famous economic disasters of the Victorian era - the downfall of the railway-millionaire George Hudson.¹ But they were women, of a class which did not positively expect single women to earn their own living; they wrote therefore for discriminating readers - an audience of equals.

The clearest evidence for this is the novels themselves. But comments in their letters confirm it. Jane Austen remarked in a letter to Cassandra, soon after Pride and Prejudice had appeared, that a 'said he' or a 'said she' would sometimes clarify the dialogue, "but

I do not write for such dull elves
As have not a great deal of ingenuity themselves."(2)

1. Life, pp. 370-1 (Ch. 18)

2. Letters, p. 298

Her contempt for hidebound readers, in particular, is clear.

When a circulating library was about to be set up in the neighbourhood of Steventon she wrote:

"As an inducement to subscribe Mrs. Martin tells us that her Collection is not to consist only of Novels, but of every kind of Literature, &c. &c - She might have spared this pretension to our family, who are great Novel-readers & not ashamed of being so".(1)

Taken with her attack on the Spectator, in the defence of novels in Northanger Abbey, these casual remarks indicate that she was aware that a position needed to be taken, and that she took one.

In any case, that Jane Austen expected discriminating reading will surprise no one: the 'implied reader' of her novels is clearly one capable of appreciating ironies of many kinds, and on many levels. But that Charlotte Brontë had similar readers in mind may seem more unlikely.

As it happens, however, the evidence for this is extensive. To her there were "two classes of writers - the author and the book-maker".² Because she saw herself as an "author" - an artist rather than a professional - she took care with (and time over) her work.

In the words of Harriet Martineau:

1. Letters, p. 38

2. Correspondence, ii, p. 189

"She had every inducement that could have availed with one less high-minded to publish two or three novels a year. Fame waited upon all she did; and she might have enriched herself by very slight exertion; but her steady conviction was that the publication of a book is a solemn act of conscience: in the case of a novel as much as any other kind of book." (1)

For the same reason she refused serial publication when her publishers suggested it, and refused to change the end of Villette at the request of her evidently emotionalist father - though she did make it (faintly) ambiguous.

The popular reception of Jane Eyre was something she had not bargained for, and was not very interested in when it happened. It was discriminating praise that excited her. Her letters make this quite clear. She wrote, for example, to W.S. Williams, after reading Eugène Forcade's review of Shirley in the Revue des Deux Mondes,

"If it is discouraging to an author to see his work mouthed over by the entirely ignorant and incompetent, it is equally reviving to hear what you have written discussed and analysed by a critic who is master of his subject - by one whose heart feels, whose power grasps the matter he undertakes to handle. Such refreshment Eugène Forcade has given me." (2)

Writing to Ellen Nussey, on the same day (November 22nd, 1849), she said she would consider it an honour to know Forcade.

1. 'Charlotte Brontë', pp. 360-1

2. Correspondence, iii, p. 40

"I could not say so much to the mass of London critics. Perhaps I could not say so much to 500 men and women in all the millions of Great Britain. That matters little. My own Conscience I satisfy first - and, having done that - if I further content and delight a Forcade, a Fonblanque and a Thackeraye [sic] - my ambition has had its ration". (1)

That she was aware of what had to be sacrificed in writing for omnivorous readers, comes out in a letter to Mrs. Gaskell in 1853 - the subject is Cranford:

"Does no luminous cloud ever come between you and the severe Truth as you know it in your own secret and clear-seeing soul?... are you never tempted to make your characters more amiable than the Life, by the inclination to assimilate your thoughts to the thoughts of those who always feel kindly, but sometimes fail to see justly? Don't answer the question; it is not intended to be answered." (2)

This is tactful, but it makes its point.

Both novelists, moreover, got the reception the novels themselves imply. On the one hand, discriminating readers were enthusiastic. Scott, in his review of Emma, recalled that Jane Austen's first two novels received more attention than most;³ all her novels were fashionable, and thought 'clever'; and Lady Robert Ker, a friend of the family, wrote to Jane Austen of

1. Correspondence, iii, p. 42

2. iv, p. 77

3. JACH, p. 59

Mansfield Park that it was "universally admired in Edinburgh, by all the wise ones."¹ She had an extensive readership among the literary world, including other established novelists, to the time of George Eliot - G.H.Lewes and she read Jane Austen aloud to one another.² George Eliot also admired Charlotte Brontë. She wrote in 1853:

"I am only just returned to a sense of the real world about me for I have been reading Villette, a still more wonderful book than Jane Eyre. There is something almost preternatural in its power." (3)

Before this, she had said, when Charlotte Brontë was suggested as a possible writer for an article on modern novelists planned by the Westminster Review,

"There would be the same objection to Miss Brontë as to Thackeray with regard to the article on Modern Novelists. She would have to leave out Currer Bell, who is perhaps the best of them all." (4)

Linking Charlotte Brontë with Thackeray (and Dickens) as 'great contemporary novelists' was common,⁵ an indication that, as Peter Bayne put in, she had "won for herself a place in our literature

1. JACH, p. 50; cf. Hogan: 'Jane Austen and her Early Public', pp. 40-4

2. George Eliot: Letters, ed. Gordon S.Haight, (New Haven, 1954-6), ii, pp. 319, 326-7; vi, p. 75; cf. Hogan: 'Jane Austen and her Early Public', pp. 40-53

3. Letters, ii, p. 87

4. i, p. 355

5. See, e.g., Justin McCarthy: A History of Our Own Times, (London, 1879-80), ii, p. 396, iv, p. 543

from which she cannot be deposed."¹

Hidebound and omnivorous readers, on the other hand, were either cool or hostile. The British Critic reviewer of Northanger Abbey and Persuasion found the second novel's "moral" so distasteful that he wrote the novel off in less than a paragraph.² Anne Romilly, a friend of Maria Edgeworth's, conceded that there was "real natural everyday life" in Mansfield Park but complained that it lacked "that elevation of virtue, something beyond nature, that gives the greatest charm to a novel";³ similarly, a "Mrs. Guiton" in Jane Austen's own collection of opinions (Chapman does not positively identify her) found Emma "too natural to be interesting".⁴ Even those who themselves enjoyed her novels though "the generality of Readers" would miss more "interesting" characters⁵ - as Mary Russell Mitford did. (She thought that Jane Austen would be a "perfect novel writer" if only one also found in her novels "the beau-idéal of the female character."⁶)

1. Essays, p. 343

2. JACH, p. 84

3. Hogan: 'Jane Austen and her Early Public', p. 43

4. JACH, p. 56

5. JACH, p. 50. ("Mr J. Plumptre")

6. JACH, p. 54

By some readers Jane Austen was thought to be too dispassionate, too analytical. Mansfield Park, according to the actor-manager W.C. Macready in 1836,

"has the prevailing fault of the pleasant authoress's books; it deals too much in descriptions of the various states of mind, into which her characters are thrown, and amplifies into a page a search for motives which a stroke of the pen might give with greater power and interest." (1)

And by the 1850's she had a typical 'highbrow' reputation. Those who wanted to commend her to a wider audience pointed out her standing among "readers of more refined taste and critical acumen";² the unrepentant dismissed her for not being 'improving' enough, or appealing to "the lower class of feelings".³ David Masson in 1858 is lukewarm about her himself, but admits,

"the best judges unanimously prefer Miss Austen to any of her contemporaries of the same order ... I have known the most hard-headed men in ecstasies with them". (4)

And J.C. Jeaffreson - a "book-maker" to the core - voices the typical middlebrow response to a writer whose standards are more exacting:

1. JACH, p. 118

2. JACH, p. 136. (New Monthly Mag, 1852)

3. JACH, p. 147. (Review of Healease, Fraser's Mag., 1854)

4. British Novelists, p. 189

"The novels of Miss Austen are now but little read, and even when read gain few sincere admirers, notwithstanding that it is the fashion indiscriminately to praise them." (1)

Charlotte Brontë's novels were more widely read; Jane Eyre was "the novel of the day".² But her friend Mary Taylor noticed the readership the novel itself implied. She wrote to Charlotte Brontë in 1848:

"You have done wisely in choosing to imagine a high class of readers. You never stop to explain or defend anything, and never seem bothered with the idea - 'If Mrs. Fairfax or any other well-intentioned fool gets hold of this, what will she think?' And yet, you know, the world is made up of such, and worse." (3)

Hidebound readers were naturally shocked. The Tait's reviewer found written in his (library) copy of Shirley "All such authors should be transported for writing such trash - calculated to do young persons a great deal of injury."⁴ Several other reviewers express disquiet about the moral effects of her books, and there are a number of references to "coarseness", "impropriety" or a lack of proper femininity in her handling of feelings.⁵ This

1. J. Cordy Jeaffreson: Novels and Novelists, from Elizabeth to Victoria, (London, 1858), ii, p. 84
2. 'Mrs. Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Brontë', Tait's Edin. Mag., xxiv (1857), p. 293; cf. 'Villett', New Quarterly Rev., ii (1853), p. 237
3. Correspondence, ii, p. 236
4. 'Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell', Tait's Edin. Mag., xxii (1855), p. 422
5. See e.g. Khan Remembrancer: 'Jane Eyre', p. 396; 'The Life of Charlotte Brontë', Christian Observer, (1857), pp. 487-8. (N.s., no. 235: no vol.no.)

shocked even Matthew Arnold. His blindness to the possibilities of the novel as a literary form is well-known, but it was with a personal revulsion that he reacted to Villette:

"Miss Bronte has written a hideous undelightful convulsed constricted novel ... It is one of the most utterly disagreeable books I ever read" (1)

Moreover, like Elizabeth Rigby, later Lady Eastlake, in the Tory Quarterly, he saw that convincingly to attribute powerful feelings of frustration to women was likely to be socially subversive (Elizabeth Rigby associates Jane Eyre with Chartism);² he seems to have wanted to believe that Charlotte Brontë's mind was atypical in containing nothing but "hunger, rebellion, and rage" (though his sister, to whom his second comment on the novel is addressed - the first comes from a letter to Clough - evidently did not think so.)³

What may seem more curious is that omnivorous readers were also "a little shocked" by Charlotte Brontë's not being "cumbered with much serving to the prejudices, primnesses, and proprieties of genteel fiction as by law established".⁴ Why, Mrs. Ellis asks

1. The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough, ed. Howard Foster Lowry, p. 132

2. 'Jane Eyre', Quarterly Review, lxxxiv (1848-9), p. 174

3. Matthew Arnold: Letters, 1848-88, ed. George W.E. Russell, (London, 1895), i, p. 29

4. 'Currer Bell', New Monthly Mag., xcv (1852), p. 295

in her Morning Call - a 'Table Book' for Victorian ladies - should Charlotte Brontë's heroines "all be won before they are wooed?"¹ And why, ask reviewers, (echoing similar criticisms of Jane Austen) should there be so much analysis of feelings, so much "minute anatomy of the mind"?²

But this is not as curious as it seems. It is true that Charlotte Brontë's novels make concessions to emotionalism that are not found in Jane Austen, but these are concessions to the 'discriminating emotionalism' mentioned in passing in the last chapter. The keyword of omnivorous emotionalism is "interesting". The keyword of discriminating emotionalism is "power", as defined by De Quincy in 1823 and re-iterated in his essay on Pope in 1848. "Power" is opposed to pleasure as much as it is to instruction;³ it is defined variously as "a conscious and living possession" by which

"I should be made to feel vividly, and with a vital consciousness, emotions which ordinary life rarely or never supplies occasions for exciting, and which had previously lain unawakened, and hardly within the dawn of consciousness" (4),

1. (London, n.d. [=1852?]), i, p. 35

2. 'Jane Eyre', Spectator, xx (1847), p. 1074

3. 'Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been neglected', Works, x, pp. 47-8

4. p. 48

as "deep sympathy with truth", and as "exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite".¹ And so, while the discriminating readers who speak with respect of Charlotte Brontë's truthfulness also speak with enthusiasm of her "power",² omnivorous readers found their "elegant love of the pretty and pleasing" - Charlotte Brontë's own contemptuous characterisation of omnivorous taste³ - as little pandered to as in Jane Austen.

But their turn came, with the publication of Mrs. Gaskell's Life in 1857. A typical reaction was that of the New Quarterly reviewer: "Such a life as hers, so steeped in tears, so solitary in its grief, so unredeemed by love, we have never read".⁴ Mrs. Gaskell, in other words, had made of Charlotte Brontë's life a superbly successful emotionalist novel. The very "luminous cloud" which Charlotte Brontë-observed in Cranford, together with the interest in evoking appropriate emotions noted already in connection with Mary Barton, re-appears. Of course, the material Mrs. Gaskell had to work on, the life Charlotte Brontë actually lived, is moving enough by any standards. But in emphasising only the more appropriately moving facts about Charlotte Brontë's

1. 'The Poetry of Pope', Works, xi, pp. 55, 56

2. See, e.g., the reviews of Villette in the Eclectic Rev., n.s. v (1853), p. 310; New Q Rev., p. 237; Spectator, xxvi (1853), p. 156

3. Sh, ii, p. 453

4. vi (1857), pp. 222-3

life (the unfavourable Times and Quarterly reviews rather than the more numerous favourable ones), and, in particular, in presenting Charlotte Brontë's writing as the cry of a victim, rather than as masterful play - when both are present and the first caught up in the second - Mrs. Gaskell not only betrayed her subject into the hands of emotionalist readers, she made it almost impossible for any reader to read the novels as novels.

Some misapprehensions about Jane Austen's novels may have been created by Henry Austen in his 'Biographical Notice', perhaps more by James Austen - Leigh in the Memoir; but they are slight by comparison. Intelligent readers could not miss the wit, the irony, of the novels themselves. But the very brilliance of Mrs. Gaskell's Life - its real power to reduce the reader to tears - was Charlotte Brontë's downfall. From the time of its appearance to the present day, only a handful of readers have approached Charlotte Brontë as she wanted to be approached, "as an author only". Readers (and most subsequent writers), because of Mrs. Gaskell, have been led to see Charlotte Brontë's novels as muddled but touching exercises in disguised autobiography, instead of what they are - contrived and complex works of art written for a highbrow (even an avant-garde) audience.

What was it about Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë that

appealed to such an audience? What techniques do they employ in order to present emotions authentically?

What Jane Austen's truthfulness is like at its best can be seen in a passage such as that in which Emma reflects upon the Box Hill incident:

"The wretchedness of a scheme to Box Hill was in Emma's thoughts all the evening. How it might be considered by the rest of the party, she could not tell. They, in their different homes, and their different ways, might be looking back on it with pleasure; but in her view it was a morning more completely misspent, more totally bare of rational satisfaction at the time, and more to be abhorred in recollection, than any she had ever passed. A whole evening of back-gammon with her father, was felicity to it. There, indeed, lay real pleasure, for there she was giving up the sweetest hours of the twenty-four to his comfort; and feeling that, unmerited as might be the degree of his fond affection and confiding esteem, she could not, in her general conduct, be open to any severe reproach. As a daughter, she hoped she was not without a heart. She hoped no one could have said to her, 'How could you be so unfeeling to your father? - I must, I will tell you truths while I can.' Miss Bates should never again - no, never! If attention, in future, could do away the past, she might hope to be forgiven. She had been often remiss, her conscience told her so; remiss, perhaps, more in thought than fact; scornful, ungracious. But it should be so no more. In the warmth of true contrition, she would call upon her the very next morning, and it should be the beginning, on her side, of a regular, equal, kindly intercourse.

She was just as determined when the morrow came, and went early, that nothing might prevent her. It was not unlikely, she thought, that she might see Mr. Knightley in her way; or, perhaps, he might come in while she were paying her visit. She had no objection. She would not be ashamed of the appearance of the penitence, so justly and truly hers. Her eyes were towards Donwell as she walked, but she saw him not." (1)

So lightly, so naturally, does this passage seem to flow that one might miss the rigour with which Emma's consciousness is dramatised. How Jane Austen does it is to rely on object-apprehension and the technique now known as erlebte Rede, or 'free indirect speech'.¹ Emma's feelings - remorse, enthusiasm, anticipation, disappointment - are carefully traced through the aspect things happen to bear for her at the time ("a morning more completely misspent" and so on). She sees herself and her behaviour in a series of different lights. And the terms used are her own terms. It is she who defines her enthusiasm to redeem herself as "the warmth of true contrition". Erlebte Rede offers this kind of scope for irony because of its ambiguity of status in a narrative - neither definitely the author's report nor definitely a character's soliloquy. It enhances the drama of such things as the recalling of Mr. Knightley's words and the subsequent "Miss Bates should never again - no, never!"; it points the irony of Emma's "She had no objection. She would not be ashamed" - should Mr. Knightley happen to see her on her way to Miss Bates.

What this implies is a kind of submergence of the narrator in the narrative (but only 'a kind of submergence', because the narrative is anything but neutral). This is something one can

1. Cf. Stephen Ullmann: Style in the French Novel, 2nd ed., (Oxford, 1964), pp. 94-9, 117; F.N. Lees: 'Identification and Emotion in the Novel: A Feature of Narrative Method', British J Aesthetics, iv (1964), pp. 109-114.

see Jane Austen working towards as she refines her technique from novel to novel. The narrator, of course, never disappears. The first chapter of Pride and Prejudice, otherwise the most 'scenic' of Jane Austen's expositions, begins and ends with authoritative reflection and analysis (the opening paragraph ironic, the final paragraph not). A character's point of view is never adopted immediately; and while the narrator is prepared, for the sake of the story, to allow characters to misunderstand each other and themselves, he - I assume that an undramatised narrator is of no particular sex - is also prepared to step in and say what is true "in fact". On the other hand, the narrator's share in the presentation of emotions is, from Northanger Abbey on, systematically diminished.

In the earlier novels, because direct relation plays so large a part (emotions are identified by name, and authoritatively ascribed) authenticity is largely a matter of scrupulous faithfulness to the facts of experience. It is a matter of accuracy rather than of fullness or depth.

Irony, of course, gives this accuracy edge. In Northanger Abbey itself, ridicule of emotionalist expectations even serves as a further means of characterising feelings: "Their joy on this meeting was very great, as well it might, since they had been contented to know nothing of each other for the last fifteen years."¹ And analysis - the

1. pp. 31-2. (Ch. 4)

presentation of emotions with their reasons or causes - allows for some complexity, even in summaries:

"Mr. and Mrs. Morland's surprise on being applied to by Mr. Tilney for their consent to his marrying their daughter was, for a few minutes, considerable, it having never entered their heads to suspect an attachment on either side; but as nothing, after all, could be more natural than Catherine's being beloved, they soon learnt to consider it with only the happy agitation of gratified pride, and as far as they alone were concerned, had not a single objection to start." (1)

Analysis of a similar kind helps to define the more serious emotions presented in Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice.

The comparison of Elinor's fortitude with her own self-indulgence dissatisfies Marianne:

"She felt all the force of that comparison; but not as her sister had hoped, to urge her to exertion now; she felt it with all the pain of continual self-reproach, regretted most bitterly that she had never exerted herself before; but it brought only the torture of penitence, without the hope of amendment. Her mind was so much weakened that she still fancied present exertion impossible, and therefore it only dispirited her more." (2)

The habits of analysis this passage suggests - its strict antitheses, its logical conjunctions: "but ... but... so much ... that ... and therefore" - are still present beneath the easy flow of the Emma passage: "more totally bare of rational satisfaction at the time, and more to be abhorred in recollection". But there is a difference.

1. p. 249. (Ch. 31)

2. S & S, p. 270. (Ch. 48)

The difference lies, as one can now see, in the submergence of the narrator. Erlebte Rede is used sparingly in the earlier novels (in Northanger Abbey never more than for a sentence or two), but from Mansfield Park onwards it begins to replace unequivocal narrative at certain crucial points. It is a technique which Jane Austen probably invented, and was certainly the first novelist to use at all extensively: the degree to which it was a technique she worked out for herself can be seen, by tracing, as here, its more extensive and more subtle use from novel to novel.

With its more extensive use in Mansfield Park goes a kind of descent of the narrator to the level of his characters. There is, if anything, an increase in poise, in the control of tone, but a decrease in the emotional distance of the narrator. There are even some conjectural ascriptions of emotion: "Poor woman! she probably thought change of air might agree with many of her children";¹ "My Fanny indeed at this very time, I have the satisfaction of knowing, must have been happy in spite of every thing."² This is not all gain. The promiscuously Olympian irony of Northanger Abbey (something in the manner of Voltaire) makes it perhaps the most witty of all Jane Austen's novels. But if a character is to be presented as an authentic subject of experience, if something of the complexity of actual experience is to be allowed for, Olympian

1. p.11. (Ch. 1)

2. p.461. (Ch. 48)

irony is a stumbling block. As a result, from Mansfield Park onwards, it is a tone hardly adopted by the narrator after the opening chapters.

At the same time there is less reference back, when local ascriptions of emotion are undertaken, to common experience. I have said that this is one of the shortcomings of Scott; its use is common in Northanger Abbey: "Every young lady may feel for my heroine in this critical moment, for every young lady has at some time or other known the same agitation."¹ Even in Sense and Sensibility this is less common; and from Mansfield Park the presence of individual experience (experience of a particular character because a particular person's experience) becomes pervasive.

This does not imply confinement to the individual's point of view: the feelings that a character is aware of need not be the only feelings ascribed. And this, of course, is the final strength of the Emma passage. While the concentration upon the course of Emma's thoughts and feelings is close and detailed, the passage is not limited even to a comprehensive account of those emotions of which Emma herself is aware. The reader is subtly exposed to the emotion of which each feeling Emma is aware of is only a symptom: her love for Mr. Knightley.

1. p. 74. (Ch. 10)

In general, what one notices about Jane Austen's development from Northanger Abbey on is not the invention of new techniques. She never even totally abandons the reference back to general, or common, experience. When Mrs. Churchill dies, in Emma:

"It was felt as such things must be felt. Every body had a degree of gravity and sorrow; tenderness towards the departed, solicitude for the surviving friends; and, in a reasonable time, curiosity to know where she would be buried." (1)

And she uses, in all her novels, references to physical or behavioural symptoms of emotion - including the tears and blushes found so frequently in her contemporaries. She mentions Catherine's "glowing cheek and brightened eye", when, in Northanger Abbey, Henry Tilney calls at the Morlands' home;² she mentions Elizabeth's "pale face and impetuous manner", and her later bursting into tears, at the news of Lydia's elopement in Pride and Prejudice;³ and when in Persuasion Captain Wentworth is erroneously supposed by Mary to be pleased at the Elliot's invitation to a party she writes: "Anne caught his eye, saw his cheeks glow, and his mouth form itself into a momentary expression of contempt".⁴

Three features distinguish her use of such symptoms from the 'shorthand': In the first place, ascriptions in this manner are

1. p. 387. (Ch. 45)

2. p. 242

3. pp. 276, 277

4. p. 227

never made to bear the weight of deep or important emotions. Secondly, they are not used as an index of susceptibility, except in the case of Fanny Price, and are never used as an index of a superior susceptibility. Thirdly, and most importantly, they are never 'hieroglyphs', means of evoking appropriate stereotyped reactions;¹ they serve, instead, as a useful means of indicating transient emotions noticed by another character. (In the examples above, by Catherine's mother, by Darcy, by Anne.)

The development, then, is not a matter of new techniques, but of increasing subtlety, flexibility and control - in the use of techniques present or implicit from the first. The ebb and flow of feeling, small fluctuations - increasingly complex experiences - are in this way gradually admitted into the narrative.

What Charlotte Brontë's truthfulness is like at its best can be seen in a passage such as that recounting Jane Eyre's feelings on the morning she runs away from Thornfield:

"I skirted fields, and hedges, and lanes, till after sunrise. I believe it was a lovely summer morning; I know my shoes, which I had put on when I left the house, were soon wet with dew. But I looked neither to rising sun, nor smiling sky, nor wakening Nature. He who is taken out to pass through a fair scene to the scaffold thinks not of the flowers that smile on ~~his~~ road, but of the block and axe-edge; of the disseverment of bone and vein; of the grave gaping at the end; and I thought of drear flight and homeless wandering - and, oh! with agony I thought of

1. Cf. C.S. Lewis: An Experiment in Criticism, (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 32-5

what I left. I could not help it. I thought of him now - in his room - watching the sunrise; hoping I should soon come to say I would stay with him, and be his. I longed to be his; I panted to return; it was not too late; I could yet spare him the bitter pang of bereavement. As yet my flight, I was sure, was undiscovered. I could go back and be his comforter - his pride; his redeemer from misery; perhaps from ruin. Oh, that fear of his self-abandonment - far worse than my abandonment - how it goaded me! It was a barbed arrow - head in my breast; it tore me when I tried to extract it; it sickened me when remembrance thrust it further in. Birds began singing in brake and copse: birds were faithful to their mates; birds were emblems of love. What was I? In the midst of my pain of heart, and frantic effort of principle, I abhorred myself. I had no solace from self-approbation: none even from self-respect. I had injured - wounded - left my master. I was hateful in my own eyes. Still I could not turn, nor retrace one step. God must have led me on. As to my own will or conscience, impassioned grief had trampled one and stifled the other. I was weeping wildly as I walked along my solitary way: fast, fast I went like one delirious. A weakness, beginning inwardly, extending to the limbs, seized me, and I fell: I lay on the ground some minutes, pressing my face to the wet turf. I had some fear - or hope - that here I should die: but I was soon up; crawling forwards on my hands and knees, and then again raised to my feet - as eager and as determined as ever to reach the road." (1)

So obvious are the differences between this and the passage from Emma - and to notice that in both passages self-reproach is an important emotion only serves to intensify one's sense of them - that it seems worthwhile to draw attention to the resemblances.

Here once again a single consciousness is single-mindedly

1. JE, ii, pp. 140-1. (Ch. 27). The Clarendon edition (pp. 409-10) has no initial capital for "Nature"; it capitalises the initial letter of "remembrance".

dramatised. The writing may seem strained, the more so out of context, but it is impossible not to take seriously the emotions presented. Jane's consciousness is, at the beginning of the passage, critically fragmented, and cut off from her body. As pure consciousness she hurries through a world which does not impinge upon her. An emotion experienced as a physical sensation then reminds her of her body; at the same time the external world impinges, - as from a distance - in the form of bird song. But this is sucked into her consciousness, which remains intent on its own workings until a trembling in the limbs, followed by a fall to the wet turf, more forcefully brings her to a sense of her embodiment, and her consequent presence as an object at a particular point in space. This in turn leads to her re-integration as a person.

As in Jane Austen the emotions emerge through the flow of a character's awareness: through the apprehension of Rochester as firstly at this moment waiting for her, then as liable to give way to evil impulses; through the apprehension of birds naturally (in the full sense of the word) singing out of love; through the apprehension of the self as a traitor to Rochester and to its own deepest instincts. Even the identification with the condemned man at the beginning is not wanton melodrama: Jane is running into what

at this point seems to be a kind of death of the spirit (and perhaps actual death).

But only 'what seems at this point to be'. Just as the final strength of the passage from Emma was its double vision of the heroine's emotions, so it is here. The key sentence is the one the modern reader is likely to write off as a period touch: "God must have led me on." God is a living presence in Jane Eyre. At the blackest point of her flight (two days later) Jane is to have a sudden experience, through the softness of the Milky Way in the unclouded night sky, of

"the might and strength of God. Sure was I of His efficiency to save what He had made: convinced I grew that neither earth should perish, nor one of the souls it treasured." (1)

So while to Jane Eyre here her experience is pure tragedy - things are intolerable, and yet have to be so - to the reader it is also a trial. Once again faithfulness in the presentation of immediate experience culminates in presentation of that experience as having other meanings in fact than it has for the protagonist at the time.

Is there any development in the techniques Charlotte Brontë uses to ascribe emotions, as there was with Jane Austen? It does not seem to me that there is. (Which is why I have chosen a passage from Jane Eyre as an example of her authenticity at its best.) There are developments, but not in local technique.

1. JE, ii, p. 147. (Ch. 28)

A word needs to be said, though, about the techniques she does use. Locally, the use of first-person narrative - especially first-person narrative which relives rather than recalls past experience - implies some ease in the use of object-apprehensions. The manner of their use can be seen above. And object-apprehensions recur in Shirley: Caroline "sat up by Shirley's side, counting the slow minutes, and watching the June sun mount the heavens."¹ More interestingly, in ascribing emotions to secondary characters in her three first-person novels (and this is repeated in Shirley), Charlotte Brontë turns when she can to first-person expression. She has a character speak his or her emotions in dialogue, or soliloquy - or actually inserts a piece of secondary first-person narrative (a letter, a journal, even a poem in The Professor) into the narrative proper.

What needs a moment's more attention is her use of physical and behavioural symptoms. To some extent even the shorthand is represented, for example in a number of references to 'tears' and 'smiles'. "A puerile tear dimmed my eye while I looked - a tear of disappointment and impatience";² "smiling, with that same bitter, derisive smile I had seen on her lips once before, she hastily rose and made her exit";³ "Over his face a smile flowed,

1. ii, p. 47

2. JE, ii, p. 64

3. Prof, p. 204

while he looked down on me".¹ These ascriptions have something of the quality of hieroglyphs. But physical symptoms are more often newly imagined.

"Mr. Rochester, on hearing the name, set his teeth; he experienced, too, a sort of strong convulsive quiver; near to him as I was, I felt the spasmodic movement of fury or despair run through his frame."(2)

And the references to characters' observing their symptoms in mirrors are not clumsy ascriptions: they are moments when characters need to take stock of themselves.³

If references to facial expressions, tones of voice, perspiration, trembling, and other physical symptoms of emotion play a larger part in Charlotte Brontë than in Jane Austen, then, they do not play a different kind of part. Authenticity is not (usually) evaded.

But why should they play a larger part? Along with this question one might ponder the differences between the two passages I have been considering. The resemblances have been reviewed: what accounts for these differences? Again, I have argued that both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë were writing for a similar section of the reading public, and were both concerned to develop techniques which would make for authenticity in the presentation of

1. V, ii, p. (30)

2. JE, ii, pp. 87-8. (Ch. 26)

3. See, e.g., Prof, p. 303; JE, i, pp. 14-15, ii, p. 30

personal experience. Why then is their presentation of emotion in other respects so different?

This is less a matter of local technique than of general procedure. It bears less on emotional episodes than on continuous and developing emotions, on moods, on the long-term life of feeling. What I shall do is consider in turn the differences between the two novelists (differences in both their character and their situation). Each of these differences is a likely reason for differences in their procedure, and isolated in this way the procedures themselves may be more easily grasped.

The first difference is the most obvious: the difference in temperament. Together with the way in which they reacted to their early reading, this can best be observed in the writing which they did entirely for themselves and their immediate family - their juvenilia.

Jane Austen was a woman who delighted in literary absurdity, and her reading seems to have been sharp and critical from the beginning. In her juvenilia her eye is always on comic inconsistencies and exaggerations, particularly those which are found in the emotionalist shorthand:

"'I will' (said he) and instantly fetching a Deep sigh, expired -. Sophia immediately sunk again into a swoon-. My Greif was more audible My voice faltered, My Eyes assumed a vacant Stare, My face became as pale as Death, and my Senses were considerably impaired-." (1)

All the devices - tears, blushes, starts, sighs, rushing out of rooms, falling ill, fainting - re-appear, in circumstances carefully chosen to transform them from unintentional to intentional comedy.

In this she was aided by family tradition, as can be seen from her dedications, and from The Loiterer, the periodical her brothers ran at Oxford. The family tradition in turn was helped by a wider conservative tradition, embracing complete parody novels like Beckford's Modern Novel Writing and collections like Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin (both already mentioned). In these works ridicule of emotionalist devices is an essential support of the broader attack on (a socially subversive) sentimentality.¹

The spirit of Charlotte Brontë's novel reading as a child can be seen from the remark in 'Mina Laury': "According to books, men in general soliloquise when they are by themselves, and so did Hartford"², followed as it is by a long soliloquy with inverted commas, pauses, and interspersed descriptions (like stage directions). Books fed both her curiosity and her imagination, and she was too lost in excitement to notice absurdities.

A childish note is occasionally heard, as when Zamorna's valet reminds him: "Ladies of title sometimes pull each other's ears for

1. Cf. Robert C. Whitford: 'Satire's View of Sentimentalism in the Days of George III', JEGP, xviii (1919), pp. 155-204; see also Winfield H. Rogers: 'The Reaction against Melodramatic Sentimentality in the English Novel, 1796-1830', PMLA, xlix (1943), pp. 98-122

2. Angria, p. 168

your Grace's kisses"¹ but in general the excitement is not specifically juvenile, and even invests stereotyped techniques with a kind of energy - the result partly of Charlotte Brontë's easily conceiving her characters in physical action, but more importantly of her working on her own emotions rather than other people's. It is not a professional's reliance on a reach-me-down repertoire, but a personal fascination which leads her to dwell on her characters' faces, their glittering eyes, their quivering lips, their sneers and their smiles, "the lightning change in face and eye, the rush of hot blood to the cheek".² She even puts life into the 'my face paled' trick (one of the habits made fun of by Jane Austen in the paragraph quoted above): when Zamorna hears of Mary Percy's death

" ... the faint,
Cold sense of death brought by that deadly blow
Whitened my cheek and glazed my eyes, awhile
Darkness o'erswept the noonday's sunny smile."⁽³⁾

There is also a kind of technical advance in this respect in the later Angrian tales. In 'Caroline Vernon' references to visible emotion are grounded in characters' own experience: the Duchess

1. p. 162

2. p. 301

3. p. 136

"caught also an expression in his face which indicated that he had changed his mood since he came in and that he was not so anxious to get away from her as he had been". (1)

Charlotte Brontë's obvious desire to take part in the experiences she records has its absurd side - "The wild bounding throb of Miss Laury's heart was visible through her satin bodice - it was even audible"² - but it leads to a new realisation of sensations: jealousy in Zamorna "smoked in every fibre of his frame and boiled in every vein",³ and a vivid (if over-excited) dramatisation of consciousness at moments of crisis: Zamorna

"saw his lamp expire; he saw the brilliant flame of the hearth settle into ruddy embers, then fade, decay, and at last perish; he felt silent and total darkness close around him; but still the unslumbering eye wandered over images which the fiery imagination portrayed upon vacancy." (4)

How early she became interested in presenting personal experience in an authentic manner, one can see from 'Caroline Vernon' (written when she was twenty-three) - especially in the climactic scene in which, in the darkening library, Zamorna surrenders at last to Caroline's desire. The conflict in Caroline between love and desire on the one hand, and fear and shame on the other, in Zamorna between desire on the one hand and conscience on the other, is managed

1. p. 279

2. p. 182

3. p. 189

4. p. 167

carefully through their different apprehensions of self and other. When Zamorna relents, his voice "expressed a kind of pity. There was something protecting and sheltering about it, as if he were calling her home."¹ Caroline's sudden awareness of his desire for her comes out in her apprehension: "Her guardian was gone, something terrible sat in his place."² Similarly her deepening excitement at his evil potentialities: "He, Satan's eldest son, smiled at the mute prayer."³

Jane Austen's response to the aesthetic approach to personal experience glimpsed in Mrs. Inchbald and found fully fledged in Mrs. Radcliffe is to make fun of its simpler manifestations:

"Pity & Surprise were strongly depicted in your Mother's Countenance, during the whole of my narration, but I am sorry to say, that to the eternal reproach of her Sensibility, the latter infinitely predominated."(4)

But Charlotte Brontë felt only its attractions, and in fact seems to have been more alert than Mrs. Radcliffe to its implicit sadism:

"It is not often that he has occasion to be jealous, and as it is rare so also it is a remarkably curious and pretty sight to see him under the influence of that passion." (5)

1. p. 303

2. p. 304

3. p. 304

4. Vol 2nd, p. 56

5. Angria, p. 189

To Jane Austen, of course, Mrs. Radcliffe herself was a figure of fun: there are odd burlesques of 'gothic' emotions in the juvenilia:

"The gloomy appearance of the old Castle frowning on him as he followed it's winding approach, struck him with terror." - "He felt indeed almost distracted with his fears, and shutting his Eyes till he arrived at the Village to prevent his seeing either Gipsies or Ghosts, he rode on a full gallop all the way." (1)

And in Northanger Abbey reading The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Italian is what chiefly impedes Catherine's grasp of reality.

The parallel conversation to Catherine's and Isabella's in Shirley, however, - one between Caroline Helstone and Rose Yorke³ - leaves one with a quite different picture of Mrs. Radcliffe. Evidence that this was Charlotte Brontë's own picture is pervasive in the juvenilia.

Perhaps the most obviously influenced story is 'The Green Dwarf', which takes over Mrs. Radcliffe's language; her 'picturesque' and 'sublime' natural descriptions; her 'gothic' props (a ruined castle looked after by an old crone, the warning voice in the ear from a dark figure who "glides" away before it can be identified); her emphasis upon the gorgeous, the imposing, the tasteful, the aristocratic; her painterly accounts of characters' appearance (using, both of them,

1. Minor Works, pp. 187, 189

2. Sh., pp. 118-20. (Ch. 23). It is a sign of the low standard of much writing on the Brontës that in Wilfred Rowland Childe: 'The Literary Background of the Brontës', BST, x (1940-45), one should read that there is "no evidence that they knew the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe" (p. 207) - in spite of this discussion in one of the novels of Charlotte Brontë's maturity.

such things as the light that flares up from a fire). The treatment of emotions is equally Mrs. Radcliffe-like, as when Emily (names, too, are pure Mrs. Radcliffe) arrives on her own at the castle:

"The clandestine and secret nature of the past, the dreariness of the present, the uncertainty of the future, all contributed to impress her mind with the deepest gloom. Ere long, however, the image of St. Clair, rising like the sun above a threatening horizon, dispelled the sadness which hung over her mind." (1)

The 'x... y... z... contributed to' trick, the imagery, and the connoisseurship of emotions mark this passage as almost a piece of sustained ventriloquism. And how deeply the connoisseur's taste in predicaments enters her own excitement in writing can be seen in the account of Emily left alone in her prison:

"The twilight glimmer of dawn was now stealing through the narrow casement of Lady Emily's prison and, falling on her face and person as she lay stretched on the tattered velvet couch, where overcome with fatigue she had now thrown herself, revealed a touching picture of beauty in distress. Her hair hung in loose and neglected curls on her snowy neck and shoulders;... her long dark lashes, wet with tears, rested motionless on her cheek, except when a fresh drop trembled on their silken fringes. Her face, usually blooming, was now pale as alabaster".(2)

By the time both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë came to embark on the novels of their maturity, it may be assumed that each had become conscious of the different kinds of satisfaction they found in writing.

1. Angria, pp. 60-1

2. pp. 63-4

As a result, they settled on certain basic procedures.

Jane Austen found third person narrative essential. She may have been attracted to the epistolary form at one time[—] writing, according to a family tradition, the original versions of both Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice in this form — but those of her narratives in letters which have survived all show a certain detachment from the form, from the early burlesques to the later (probably 1793/4) and more serious Lady Susan, in which the sequence of letters is broken off "to the great detriment of the Post Office Revenue".¹ It seems, in fact, that she found not only the shifts which the form forced on novelists but its basic premises too open to ridicule to be trusted.

The eighteenth-century writer on aesthetics, Lord Kames, had held that narration was at its best when it most approached drama: "a skilful writer conceals himself, and presents his personages: in a word, every thing becomes dramatic as much as possible."² This is because of the greater plausibility of the drama, as Mrs. Barbauld noted:

1. Minor Works, p. 311. Chapman dates Lady Susan later; for a discussion of the issue see Southam: Jane Austen's Mss., pp. 45-7
2. Elements of Criticism, 7th ed., (Edinburgh, 1788), ii, p. 351

"The circumstance of leaving every character to display itself in its own proper language, with all the variations of tone and gesture which distinguish it from others, and which mark every emotion of the mind; ... contribute to stamp such an appearance of reality upon dramatic representations as no other of the imitative arts can attain." (1)

This is why Jane Austen chose the third-person form. Narrative which approached drama in its procedure was less open to ridicule. A cool, rational survey of characters' feelings was possible. The surveys become less cool as Jane Austen grows in confidence (and matures as a person) but there is always a distance - the distance of otherness, bridged sometimes by sympathy or affection - between narrator and characters.

This was one of the characteristics of Jane Austen's novels which most exasperated Charlotte Brontë. She herself is distant only from unsympathetic characters, and loses herself in her protagonists.

Her choice of the first-person mode - in fact of "autobiography" - is, it seems likely, as considered as Jane Austen's of the third person. It is third person narrative, for instance, which is used in most of her juvenilia (at least so much of it as has been published). This in itself should be enough to discourage the notion that she simply fell under the spell of the potent 'I'. It is not that she needed mouthpieces for herself: the 'I' was attractive because through it she could become someone else.

There are two manuscripts, foreshadowing Villette, which show how interested she was in the different possibilities of different narrative modes.¹ In the first manuscript (neither is more than a few pages long) a child, who may be the later Polly, tells the story of her earliest memories in the first person; in the second the narrator, 'Bessie Shepherd', whose role as observer foreshadows Lucy Snowe's, reports the feeling and behaviour of 'Rose', a little girl who is Polly. The second seems to be closer to Villette, but the theme of exile (the lost Eden) which is developed in the first manuscript is incorporated in Villette itself in the story of Lucy Snowe. The 'identified observer' of the second manuscript, and of the first part of Villette, is familiar from the juvenilia²; it is Charlotte Brontë's favourite stance, and her abandonment of it in Villette can therefore be seen as deliberate. Certainly, the manuscripts suggest that she knew what she wanted to do, and wanted to find the best way of doing it.

Further evidence that she wanted to feel her characters' feelings (and not the other way round) can be found in the fact already mentioned, that her narrators relive rather than recall experience - even to the extent of moving into the present tense.³

1. 'Two Unpublished Mss., Foreshadowing "Villette"', BST, vii (1926-31), pp. 277-283

2. In most of the Angrian tales, for example, the narrator is identified as Zamorna's younger brother.

3. See, e.g. JE, ii, pp. 143-4. (Ch. 28); V, ii, pp. 332-4. (Ch. 38)

This would seem to support the idea that the satisfaction she found in writing was in living through the experience of another - an other she had created for the purpose.

As in her childhood writings, she presents this other's experience through sensations. Jane Austen rarely refers to a character's sensations (she uses the word of course to refer to something broader, something much closer to "feeling" itself) - unless it is to mention "pain" or "pleasure", or such things as a "flutter of spirits". In this she is writing in the spirit of Johnson's well-known characterisation of the poet in Rasselas,¹ recalling "the original" of particular experiences to mind, rather than informing readers of their 'feel'. Their 'feel' she assumes readers will remember, since it is a matter of common experience, and as Kames puts it when discussing the art of character presentation:

"Reasons that are common and known to every one, ought to be taken for granted: to express them is childish, and interrupts the narration." (2)

It is this which lies behind such oddly oratorical effects as "The horror of that moment to all who stood around!" when Louisa, in Persuasion, appears to be dead.³ A later writer might have made specific reference to the feelings of each of the people present; to

1. ed. R.W.Chapman, (Oxford, 1927), p. 50

2. Elements of Criticism, ii, p. 342

3. p. 109

Jane Austen common experience is the ground of, rather than an occasion for, local analysis. (Compare Crabbe's account of Judge Bolt's feelings at a dinner of Socinians and Deists:

"... hark! - he heard amazed, on every side,¹
His church insulted and her priests belied".¹)

By Charlotte Brontë's time "minute and vivid ... descriptions" of places, people, feelings, were what (many) readers wanted.² The sensational aspect of emotion received a new stress. So much so that a poem like Tennyson's 'Tears, Idle Tears' (published with The Princess in 1847, the same year as Jane Eyre) attempts to define a particular feeling simply in terms of its 'feel' - while in the evocation of the feelings to which the central feeling is compared (in a wine-taster's way), circumstances and objects are given.³ (These are necessary to any real definition.) This makes the poem an odd affair; but emphasis upon sensations cannot be so exclusive in a novel (circumstances and objects of feelings are there in the story), and the emphasis found in Jane Eyre, say, represents an extension of the novel's possibilities as a form.

It is not the kind of emphasis found in A Sentimental Journey, for instance; or in A Simple Story (Mrs. Inchbald ascribes to her characters uneasiness, tortures, "an inward nothingness", chill,

1. Tales, p. 127. (The Dumb Orators')

2. Eclectic Rev.: 'Charlotte Brontë', p. 633

3. Poems, ed. Christopher Ricks, (London, 1969), pp. 784-6

lightness of heart.¹⁾ It is not, that is, restricted to "delicious" or "affecting" sensations. Rather it is an extension of authenticity, as Charlotte Brontë conceived it. (In her criticism of Jane Austen she mentions her neglect of "what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through".)

The use sensations were to her in extending authentic presentation can be seen from the first chapter of Jane Eyre, in Jane's reaction to John Reed: "Every nerve I had feared him, and every morsel of flesh on my bones shrank when he came near."² It is one of the ways in which Charlotte Brontë most successfully establishes strong feelings, from William Crimsworth's anger with his brother - "A warm excited thrill ran through my veins, my blood seemed to give a bound, and then raced fast and hot along its channels."³ - to Lucy Snowe's jealousy when she sees Paul Emanuel with Justine Marie in the park at midnight - "something tore me so cruelly under my shawl, something so dug into my side, a vulture so strong in beak and talon, I must be alone to grapple with it."⁴

Its usefulness as a procedure for presenting developing emotions can be seen in a scene such as that in Jane Eyre in which, after the revelations at Thornfield, Rochester pleads with Jane to stay with

1. pp. 19, 26, 40, 102, 132

2. i, p. 6

3. Prof, p. 55

4. V, ii, p. 361

him. (Emotions are presented in many ways in this scene, but sensation-ascription does most of the work.) It opens with Jane being supported by Rochester when about to faint: "my head was still dizzy, my sight was dim, and my limbs were feeble."¹ When he takes her downstairs, "all was cloudy to my glazed sight; presently I felt the reviving warmth of a fire". Wine and food revive her further. Later, when Rochester is on the verge of frenzy (as it appears) Jane "felt an inward power: a sense of influence, which supported me." It is at this point that the carrying of the story through Jane's sensations becomes particularly effective: they mark the depth and power of the conflict in her, as Rochester pleads. He begins by reproaching her "in such an accent of bitter sadness it thrilled along every nerve I had". She has to relent:

"These words cut me: yet what could I do or say?
I ought probably to have done or said nothing, but
I was so tortured by a sense of remorse at thus
hurting his feelings, I could not control the wish
to drop balm where I had wounded."

She breaks off his long confession at the point he begins to dwell on his feelings for her - "his language was torture to me." He begins a direct appeal: as the moment of crisis opens she reports, "I was experiencing an ordeal: a hand of fiery iron grasped my vitals. Terrible moment: full of struggle, blackness,

1. This and the following quotations are all from JE, ii, pp. 100-135 (Ch. 27)

burning!" A moment later Rochester speaks "with a gentleness that broke me down with grief, and turned me stone-cold with ominous terror"; she still resists, while everything in her urges her not to ("my very conscience and reason turned traitors against me") and Rochester moves to attack her physically: "physically, I felt, at the moment, powerless as stubble exposed to the draught and glow of a furnace"; but in her soul she is now firm, and her firmness holds to the end of the scene.

I have said that this is a matter of choice based on temperament. This probably accounts also for the differences between the internal relationships of worlds the two novelists posit. Much of the usefulness of third person narrative to Jane Austen lies in the opportunities it offered her to 'place' emotions. Not only can she report who felt the more on a particular occasion, or whether a particular character felt a particular emotion at all; she can assign to all feelings a particular place in an established world. To her, the world is plural, composed of separate things each with its own identity; her people act in it and upon it.

This determines the use she makes of a device such as that of 'sympathetic weather'. There is, says John Gregory (a Scottish writer of the late eighteenth century), "a correspondence between certain external forms of Nature, and certain affections of the Mind,

that may be felt, but cannot be explained."¹ In the novels from Mansfield Park Jane Austen makes use of this fact, in a fairly direct way: the cold anger Emma and Elton feel towards each other after his proposal is reflected in the snow through which their carriage rolls; Emma's conversion from misery to joy on the day Mr. Knightley proposes is again mirrored in the weather. And seasonal change becomes an important element in the account given of feelings in Persuasion.²

In Charlotte Brontë, on the other hand, 'sympathetic weather' is not merely a device: it is an integral part of her conception of human experience. In his preface to The Excursion Wordsworth quotes a long passage which was to have been the conclusion to the first book of the Recluse, "a kind of Prospectus" to the whole poem.³ In the middle of this passage come the lines:

"my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted: - how exquisitely, too -
Theme this but little heard of among men -
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish: - this is our high argument." (4)

1. A Comparative View of the States and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World, (London, 1765), pp. 143-4. (Quoted in Walter Jackson Bate: From Classic to Romantic, (Harrad, 1946), p.130.)
2. This observation has already been made by A.Walton Litz. See his Jane Austen, (London, 1965), pp. 151-3
3. Prose Works, ed. W.J.B.Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser , (Oxford, 1974), iii, p. 6

It is also an argument which underlies Charlotte Brontë's account of emotion. To her, the world has a total character, in which every element may turn out to have some hidden significance - and of which human feelings are a part.

The sense of a deep connection between characters and their world is found early, in the Angrian tales. In 'Zamorna's Exile', for instance, between Zamorna's inner turmoil and the troubled sea he is crossing; between "that lone, dreary island where you go"¹ and his loneliness; between storm and death (of Mary Percy: "Wild was the evening that closed her decline".²) The connections continue to hold in the novels; the melting of late snow which swells the river by which Crimsworth stands on the day he loses his job with his brother; the heath over which Jane Eyre wanders in her desolation (and the church bell which summons her from it); "the breath of Asiatic deserts" which keeps Caroline Helstone ill (and the period after the storm, when "the livid cholera-tint had vanished from the face of nature: the hills rose clear round the horizon, absolved from that pale malaria-haze.")³; the gale in which Lucy Snowe collapses at the end of the long vacation.

To Jane Austen the world is a world of contingent feelings. Fanny Price, deprived of her parents at the beginning of Mansfield Park, is just an unhappy little girl. In Charlotte Brontë there are deep and necessary connections between self and the world. Jane Eyre's

1. Angria, p. 120

2. p. 147

3. Sh, ii, p. 176

deprivation is intimately bound up not only with the "dreary November day" on which the novel opens, but with

"the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space - that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the pole, and concentrate the multiplied rigours of extreme cold" (1)

which Jane reads about in Bewick's History of British Birds.

It is because she found only a contingent connection between self and world in Jane Austen that Charlotte Brontë could dismiss her as a writer "without poetry" and her works as "more real than true". This is in fact the core of her criticism of Jane Austen. It rests less, in fact, upon temperamental antipathy (although that is obviously present) and more upon differences in the 'orders of ideas' in which the two novelists found themselves.

The 'real'/'true' distinction (to begin there) does not depend on the words "real" and "true"; it can be expressed, for example, as a distinction between the real on the one hand and the deeply or really real on the other, as when G.H.Lewes writes of Jane Eyre: "Reality - deep, significant reality - is the great characteristic of the book."² It could also be expressed in words Lewes couples two pages later in the same review, when he commends not only Charlotte Brontë's "faculty for objective representation" but also her

1. JE, 1, p. 3. (Ch. 1)

2. 'Recent Novels', p. 691

"strange power of subjective representation. We do not simply mean the power over the passions - the psychological intuition of the artist, but the power also of connecting external appearances with internal effects - of representing the psychological interpretation of material phenomena." (1)

The objective/subjective distinction, in this form, was borrowed by Coleridge from Schelling (by Schelling apparently from Kant), and was introduced in Biographica Literaria in 1817.² It still had a German ring in the 1850's: Mrs. Gaskell says of gift^{ad} children (thinking of Maria Brontë)

"their unusual powers stir within them, and, instead of the natural life of perception - the objective, as the Germans call it - they begin the deeper life of reflection - the subjective." (3)

In each of these ways of expressing the distinction, superficial truth is associated with observation, and profound truth with reflection or intuition. Sydney Dobell's terms were "experience" and "vision". In his Palladium article of 1850 on Charlotte Brontë he distinguishes "two classes of descriptive talent - the perceptive and the ideal" (he instances Thackeray and Dickens) and claims that the second is "the higher gift".⁴ Thackeray, however, may soon prove to be poet as well as satirist: "If he will take his stand no longer on the platform of experience but on the mount of vision", he will be

1. p. 693

2. i, pp. 174-188

3. Life, p. 35

4. 'Currer Bell', p. 161

able to create heroic figures, and works "full of the central truths of humanity". He and Charlotte Brontë are the only novelists who seem likely to achieve this.¹

That this was something that Charlotte Brontë both understood and was pleased to hear can be seen from her reaction to the article. She wrote to James Taylor, the publishing assistant who was one of her suitors, on September 5th:

"The article in the 'Palladium' is one of those notices over which an author rejoices with trembling. He rejoices to find his work finely, fully, fervently appreciated, and trembles under the responsibility such appreciation seems to devolve upon him." (2)

And to her friend Ellen Nussey nine days later she wrote: "It is an eloquent production and one of such warm sympathy and high appreciation as I had never expected to see".³

She was also grateful for his (qualified) praise of Wuthering Heights (Emily had died in December 1848); and in her introduction to the reprint of Emily's novel brought out at the end of 1850 she noted

"one exception to the general rule of criticism. One writer, endowed with the keen vision and fine sympathies of genius, has discerned the real nature of Wuthering Heights",

referring to Dobell's Palladium article in a footnote.⁴ She also had

1. p. 162

2. Correspondence, iii, p. 154

3. iii, p. 157-8

4. Agnes Grey, p. 7 ('Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell'. This is normally published with Wuthering Heights: in the Thornton ed., too, Temple Scott has expanded Charlotte Brontë's footnote.)

a copy of the reprint sent to Dobell (Harriet Martineau had informed her that he was the author of the anonymous article) and a rhapsodic correspondence, full of mutual praise, followed.¹

The immediate source of the vision/experience distinction seems to be Shelley's 'Defence of Poetry' (1821), where it is associated with the distinction between a poem and a story:

"a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other bond of connection than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the creator, which is itself the image of all other minds." (2)

Blake had defended vision on the same grounds: "Vision or Imagination is a Representation of what Eternally Exists, Really & Unchangeably".³ Why vision is superior to experience as a basis for literature is explained by a writer on 'Ideal Beauty' (R. H. Patterson, a journalist) in Blackwood's in 1853:

"if the products of Mind be more in accordance with the Economy of Creation than those of the external world, then the ideal forms are actually and unquestionably more natural than the real." (4)

It is a sign of the determination of novelists and their discriminating supporters to claim for the novel a standing equal to poetry - to

1. Correspondence, iii, pp. 153, 154, 156, 157-8, 170, 171, 186, 217-20, 226-7, 229-30, 235-6, 236-7, 253; cf. Sydney Dobell: Life and Letters, ed. E.J. (London, 1878), i, pp. 209-222

2. 'Defence of Poetry', Works, vii, p. 115

3. Works, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, (London, 1966), p. 604

4. 'Real and Ideal Beauty', lxxxiv (1853), p. 749

challenge supporters of the literary status quo on their own ground - that these distinctions could be held to apply to the novel, too (as they are by Dobell). And it is because ideas such as these were current, and taken seriously by intelligent men, that Charlotte Brontë was able seriously to claim that the presentation of human experience in Jane Austen - conceived, as it clearly is, in terms of "time, place, circumstance, cause and effect" - was unnecessarily circumscribed.

The main reason why intelligent men were able to take these ideas seriously was the supposed discrediting of empiricism as a philosophy: R.H. Patterson, for example, explicitly attacks Bacon, Locke and Hume.

Locke's position is clear:

"I must appeal to experience and observation whether I am in the right: the best way to come to truth being to examine things as really they are, and not to conclude they are, as we fancy of ourselves, or have been taught by others to imagine." (1)

Hume's empiricism was even more radical:

"let us ask [of any book], Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion." (2)

1. Essay concerning Human Understanding, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser, (Oxford, 1894), i, p. 211
2. Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principals of Morals, ed. L.A. Selby-Biggs, (Oxford, 1894), p. 165

Blake's reaction to this empiricism was one of instinctive horror. He says of Locke and other writers that he read them when very young: "I felt the Same Contempt & Abhorrence then that I do now. They mock Inspiration & Vision."¹ As a philosophy, however, empiricism was (in England) supposed to have been discredited by Kant.

Kant had in fact argued for certain "transcendental Ideas" (the "categories") which are not only not learnt from experience, but which the mind needs in order to acquire experience;² but it was not what he in fact argued, but what he was supposed to have proved that was influential. According to modern surveys, misunderstanding was common. The article on Kant in the mid-century edition of Encyclopædia Britannica, for example, apparently attributes to him the basic position that knowledge could be shown to be underived from experience, and to exist as a whole in the mind. (Almost the opposite of his real position.)³ And Coleridge, his first considerable interpreter in England, tends to use Kantian terms to justify certain (neo-Platonic) positions which Kant had specifically attacked.⁴

1. Works, p. 477

2. Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp-Smith, (London, 1929), passim, esp. pp. 43-5, 65-7

3. See Meyrick H. Carré: Phases of Thought in England, (Oxford, 1949), pp. 357-60

4. See René Wellek: Immanuel Kant in England 1793-1838, (Princeton, 1931), pp. 65-106

It was in any case literary men rather than philosophers who in England read Kant (or kept meaning to). Poets and essayists such as Southey, Shelley, De Quincey, Crabb Robinson, Hazlitt and Carlyle sympathised with what they took Kant to be arguing, while both English Utilitarians and Scottish "Common Sense" philosophers ignored him.¹

Why literary men should have been attracted by the idea that empiricism was discredited, and that a writer's best way into reality was through his own mind, it is difficult to determine. (Wellek, in his book on Kant in England - the source of many of the facts of diffusion given here - does not address himself to the question.) One reason may be the fact mentioned much earlier - the displacement of men of letters as the reading public grew in power. Forced to address themselves, through publishers and booksellers, to an impersonal general public; condemned to having their books released as commodities upon a blind market; deprived of the sense of community that informs the work of a writer addressing an audience known to him personally, or whose values he feels confident are the same as his - writers were more and more thrown back upon themselves.²

1. Wellek: Kant in England, pp. 139-202

2. Cf. Marvin S. Rosen: 'Authors and Publishers: 1780-1830', Science & Society, xxxii (1968), pp. 218-32

The idea that a writer was privileged through his "Genius" (a common enough word at the time, and a favourite with Coleridge),¹ that his mind by itself was not only a sufficient but the best source of material (with its corollary that he must write to satisfy himself first of all) would be a useful means of support.

Whatever the reasons for the popularity of these ideas, however, it is in the light of the necessarily different notion of what, in a novel, 'truth to life' implied, that Charlotte Brontë's criticism of Jane Austen makes best sense. There is no need to explain it away, as an idiosyncratic response to a particular situation.² Her response was to Jane Austen; she saw what was there and it exasperated her with its incompleteness. Others reacted in the same way. Wordsworth "admitted that [Jane Austen's] novels were an admirable copy of life," but

"unless the truth of nature were presented to him clarified, as it were, by the pervading light of imagination, it had scarce any attractions in his eyes". (3)

1. See Biographia Literaria, passim, esp. ^{i,} pp. 152-4; see also I.D'Israeli: An Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character, (London, 1795), passim, esp. p. 154; [Richard Henry Horne:] Exposition of the False Medium and Barriers Excluding Men of Genius from the Public, (London, 1833), passim, esp. p. 104
2. For such an attempt see, e.g., Mary Lascelles: Jane Austen and Her Art, (London, 1939) p. 118; R.W. Chapman: Jane Austen, Facts and Problems, (Oxford, 1949), p. 148
3. JACH, p. 117

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote to Ruskin, about Miss Mitford,

"She never taught me anything but a very limited admiration of Miss Austen, whose people struck me as wanting souls, even more than is necessary for men and women of the world. The novels are perfect as far as they go - that's certain. Only they don't go far, I think." (1)

(in 1843 she had written to Miss Mitford that John Kenyon - a close friend of both Brownings - had the same opinion as her of Jane Austen: "I am much struck with the narrowness - the want of all ^{the} aspiration towards, or instinct of the possibility of, enlargement of any kind...the want of elevation."²) And even Richard Simpson, a scholar as well as a journalist, a conscious and discriminating admirer, was to note: "Perhaps there is no author in existence in whom so marvellous a power of exhibiting characters in formation and action is combined with so total a want of the poetical imagination."³

That these are the responses of readers at home in one 'order of ideas' to a writer at home in another can be seen by comparing in more detail Charlotte Brontë's criticisms of Jane Austen with Carlyle's 1838 article on Scott. (I have glanced at this above.)

The same sense of constriction underlies their criticisms. Carlyle says of Scott, "There is nothing spiritual in him; all is economical, material, of the earth earthy."⁴ Where Charlotte Brontë

1. Letters, ii, p. 217

2. Elizabeth Barrett to Miss Mitford, ed. Betty Miller, (London, 1954), pp. 186-7

3. JACH, p. 243

4. 'Walter Scott', p. 35

dismisses Jane Austen's "commonplace" subject-matter, so does

Carlyle dismiss Scott's:

"in quality he for the most part transcended but a little way the region of commonplace... the great Mystery of Existence was not great to him; did not drive him into rocky solitude to wrestle with it for an answer, to be answered or to perish." (1)

Charlotte Brontë's scornful allusion to "ladies and gentlemen" is also echoed:

"these famed books are altogether addresses to the every-day mind;.. Opinions, emotions, principles, doubts, beliefs, beyond what the intelligent country gentleman can carry along with him, are not to be found. It is orderly, customary, it is prudent, decent; nothing more." (2)

Above all, Carlyle is affronted by the lack of attention on Scott's part to what Charlotte Brontë calls "the unseen seat of Life and the sentient target of death" - the human heart:

"The sick heart will find no healing here, the darkly-struggling heart no guidance: the Heroic that is in all men no divine awakening voice." (3)

In Jane Austen's time discriminating readers did not make demands of this kind on novelists: to them a novel was still a story, in Shelley's sense, and connections of "time, place, circumstance, cause and effect" sufficient.

The way in which the assumptions of Jane Austen's time implied one

1. pp. 35-6

2. p. 75

3. p. 76

kind of treatment of emotion, while those of the Victorian age implied another, is something suggested by Lady Ritchie (Thackeray's daughter):

"Jane Austen's hour must have been a midday hour: bright, unsuggestive, with objects standing clear, without relief or shadow ... This age is essentially an age of men and women of natural impressive emotion; ... what we have lost in calm, in happiness, in tranquillity, we have gained in intensity. Our danger is now, not of expressing and feeling too little, but of expressing more than we feel." (1)

Her relative detachment from her own age allows her to identify the sources of Jane Austen's achievement - "calm and concentration, and freedom of mind" - and to appreciate that this achievement depends upon her success in maintaining the appropriate distance from her characters' feelings:

"It is difficult, for instance, for a too impulsive student not to attribute something of his own moods to his specimens instead of dispassionately contemplating them from a critical distance, or for a cold-hearted observer to throw himself sufficiently into the spirit of those whose actions he would like to interpret." (2)

The phrase "dispassionately contemplating" is not particularly happy; the phrase "freedom of mind" is. Jane Austen, that is, is not only an unusually intelligent writer, she is a writer of unusually critical intelligence.

It was this, together with (to begin with) an instinctive

1. [Anne] Thackeray: Toilers and Spinsters, (London, 1874), p. 51
2. p. 38

conservatism, which enabled her to find her own coherent 'order of ideas'.

In this she was undoubtedly helped by the nature of discriminating readership at her time. This, then, is the final relevant difference between the two novelists: a difference of situation which is in turn the difference in the situation of discriminating readers within the reading public.

Jane Austen's readers, one would guess from the novels themselves and from such discoverable facts as have already been reviewed, were a conscious élite - not only "wise ones", but individuals sure of their social standing. References to the 'stability' of Jane Austen's society are common. In fact it does not seem to have been particularly stable: there was considerable social mobility, and, as I have already mentioned, it was haunted by the fear of revolution. But the experience of instability, it seems, needs to be assimilated: it takes a new generation, who grow up in the new conditions, for a sense of instability and change to be expressed in literature.

Before this, especially for a writer such as the young Jane Austen, conservative in her own literary taste, and living in what contemporaries could see as a cultural backwater - a "sober, orderly, small-town parsonage, sort of society"¹ - it seems to be possible for the sense of community to be recreated in prose. Such a sense is implicit in the

1. JACH, p. 112. (Review of Susan Ferrier's The Inheritance, Blackwood's 1824)

tone and tempo of all Jane Austen's mature writings (except perhaps in Sanditon? - but the impatience of this sketch may be a result simply of its being a sketch). It is implicit even in the terms of her formulated 'ideal novel' in Northanger Abbey:

"some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language." (1)

There is behind this formulation, it seems to me, a sense that there is such a thing as 'good taste' - the conscious property of an élite - together with a confidence in the possibility of the novel's being incorporated, without violence, on the terms already established. 'Good taste' need not be uniform - Jane Austen was well aware that personal tastes differed. But arguments about this writer or that (Pope, or Burns) could be seen - to begin with, at any rate - as family quarrels.

Of the procedures this situation made possible, Jane Austen's comic presentation of emotion may serve as an example: the reference to "wit and humour" in her formulation suggests it. Wit itself was not much in favour with the moralistic. Hannah More thought that it might well be a disadvantage in a woman who wanted to be a good wife.² John Gregory, in a conduct book, warned girls that "Wit is the most

1. p. 38

2. See Moral Sketches, pp. 35-6

dangerous talent you can possess."¹ But to discriminating readers, in a literary work, it was evidently a recommendation.

Jane Austen's comedy is not emotionalist comedy, linking the ridiculous with the pathetic to produce the touchingly absurd.² The only 'lovable eccentric' a contemporary could have found in her work is Mr. Woodhouse; and even here there is nothing admirable about his silliness, although this was an important element in the 'lovable eccentric' syndrome. On the other hand, as Bradley points out, she is not a satirist, in the sense that she wants radically to change behaviour.³ She writes, rather, to amuse: to purge, both for herself and for others, a common irritation with the obtuse and the egotistical.

This means that she has no need to exaggerate oddness, as a satirist often must. As a result, she can reconcile authenticity of presentation with comedy in a straightforward way. Emotions are not caricatured: where they are funny, they are funny in a way they

1. A Father's Legacy to His Daughters, (Dublin, 1774), p. 18. (Quoted in Frank W. Bradbrook: Jane Austen and Her Predecessors, (Cambridge, 1966), p. 45)
2. Cf. Stuart M. Tave: The Amiable Humorist, A Study in the Comic Theory and Criticism of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries, (Chicago, 1960), p. 147
3. 'Jane Austen', Essays and Studies, ii (1911), p. 18

might be in life. The self-important rage of Lady Catherine de Burgh when she comes to dissuade Elizabeth from marrying Darcy, or Mr. Knightley's jealousy of Frank Churchill (pervasive in Emma), are feelings which need no heightening to be amusing. Moreover, it is the feelings in Jane Austen which are funny; she does not, like Dickens, rely on exaggerated expressions or symptoms of emotion. (Except, of course, where these are affected by the person concerned.)

To Charlotte Brontë her readers were almost of no help at all. She wrote, I have said, for a highbrow, even an avant-garde, audience. These seem to me to be the appropriate terms because with the growth in numbers of discriminating readers the group became itself fragmented. It seems to me impossible, in speaking of even the most exacting members of the reading public in the 1840's and 1850's, to posit a single ideal of 'good taste'. There was rather a multiplicity of competing ideals.

For a writer like Charlotte Brontë, a susceptible rather than a critical thinker, this was a considerable disadvantage. Exposed to a range of literary theories incompatible with one another, she found something which struck her as true in each of them. Critics have spoken of her 'literary theories' in general, or those which underlie her criticisms of Jane Austen, as "deeply consistent" with her practice in the novels.¹ This may be true, but in a further sense than the

1. See Jack Charles Wills: 'Charlotte Brontë's Literary Theories', DA xxviii (1967), p. 1413A; see also Lascelles: Jane Austen, p. 118

critics intend - it may explain why her novels exhibit such striking incongruities and unevennesses.

On several occasions, for example, she expresses her belief in the absolute sovereignty of truth: in a letter to W.S. Williams in August 1848, for instance:

"The first duty of an author is, I conceive, a faithful allegiance to Truth and Nature; his second, such a conscientious study of Art as shall enable him to interpret eloquently and effectively the oracles delivered by those two great deities." (1)

And Chapter 19 of The Professor begins: "Novelists should never allow themselves to weary of the study of real life. If they observed this duty conscientiously ... ".²

The references to "duty" and conscientiousness in both passages, however, are worth setting beside Crimsworth's allusion in the same novel to his setting up "the image of Duty, the fetish of Perseverance" in his bedroom,

"and they two should have been my household gods, from which my darling, my cherished-in-secret, Imagination, the tender and the mighty, should never, either by softness or strength, have severed me." (3)

This seems to represent Charlotte Brontë's state of mind in writing the novel, as she seems partly to have recognised herself when re-reading the novel with a view to publishing it in 1850. She wrote in what was

1. Correspondence, ii, p. 243

2. p. 223

3. p. 37 (Ch. 4)

to have been the preface,

"I had not indeed published anything before I commenced 'The Professor,' but in many a crude effort, destroyed almost as soon as composed, I had got over any such taste as I might once have had for ornamented and redundant composition, and come to prefer what was plain and homely. At the same time I had adopted a set of principles on the subject of incident, etc., such as would be generally approved in theory, but the result of which, when carried out into practice, often procures for an author more surprise than pleasure." (1)

The reference to destroying "crude efforts" is ambiguous; it is not clear if it is the first attempts at the plain and homely which were destroyed, or the last attempts at the ornamented and redundant. If it is the second, it would seem to be untrue. It may, however, have been something she needed to believe in order to convince herself that her "taste" for plain writing and workaday incident was complete. It would help to see her juvenilia as grown out of rather than as abandoned on conscientious grounds.

In other words, while she was never tempted to surrender authenticity of presentation to conventionality (her 1848 remark, "The standard heroes and heroines of novels are personages in whom I could never from childhood upwards take an interest, believe to be natural, or wish to imitate"² seems true enough) she was unable

1. p. ix

2. Correspondence, ii, p. 255

once and for all to make up her mind whether this authenticity also implied building only upon the literal truth of what she had herself experienced or whether she could draw upon her (passionate and prolonged) day-dreams.

In her 'Farewell to Angria', written in 1839 (she was 23) she can be seen moving towards the position outlined in her preface to

The Professor:

"I long to quit for awhile that burning clime where we have sojourned too long - its skies flame - the glow of sunset is always upon it - the mind would cease from excitement and turn now to a cooler region where the dawn breaks grey and sober, and the coming day for a time at least is subdued by clouds." (1)

The decisive influence on this change of heart seems to have been Southey. Charlotte Brontë wrote to him in December 1836 (he was Poet Laureate) asking him for advice; he replied in March 1837, with a long, considerate letter which particularly cautioned her against day-dreaming. When the letter was sold at Sotheby's early this century it was noticed that Charlotte Brontë had written on the cover, "Southey's advice to be kept for ever. My twenty-first birthday. Roe Head April 21, 1837." She wrote back the same month, thanking him, and promising to take his advice; he replied a few days later, praising her reception of his advice, and cautioning her once again against excitement. (He also invited her to come and

1. Angria, p. 316

visit him if she were ever in the Lake District.)¹

Southey, of course, was an admirer of Jane Austen. He thought her novels were both "true to nature" and contained "passages of finer feeling than any others of this age." (He was writing in 1830.)² And it is possible that in the state of mind in which Charlotte Brontë set out to write The Professor she might have tried harder to admire Jane Austen. But she discovered in trying to interest publishers in the novel, that what "would be generally approved in theory" was not what the market demanded. What publishers wanted (she seems to think their own taste is involved, rather than appreciation of what would sell) was "the wild, wonderful, and thrilling".³ The confusion of mind into which this threw her she found difficult to resolve.

The problem was made no easier for her by the new demands being made on the novel. If, as Sydney Dobell suggested, the novelist was as much a "prophet" as the poet, and ought like the poet to rely on his "vision" rather than experience, then an activity difficult to distinguish from at least the sort of day-dreams Charlotte Brontë was prone to was called for.

1. Correspondence, i, pp. 154-9

2. JACH, p. 116

3. Prof, p. x ('Author's Preface'). In fact the most likely explanation of the novel's lack of success with publishers is simply its shortness. The three-volume form was now firmly established. Cf. Charles E. Lauterbach & Edward S. Lauterbach: 'The Nineteenth Century Three-Volume Novel', PSBA, li (1957), pp. 263-302

It was, therefore, with a renewed belief in the propriety of relying on her imagination that she wrote Jane Eyre; and for this book she used less of her own experience than for any other. The emotional world of the book, moreover, is more fervid, more heated, than that of her others - a further indication of her (partial, but only partial because adult) return to the "burning clime" of her juvenilia.

This, however, led to the dialogue with Lewes (in which Jane Austen was one of Lewes' weapons). And Lewes in effect repeats the advice given earlier by Southey: to beware of the imagination as a danger. She might have reacted to this as she did originally to Southey's advice, had two things not happened: had Jane Eyre not been a success, both critical and popular, and had she not been reminded in writing it how much she needed to surrender to the power of her imagination. As it was, these things had happened; and so she wrote to Lewes that she had once been impressed "with the truth of the principle you advocate... determined to take Nature and Truth as my sole guides ... to produce something which should be soft, grave, and true."¹ But publishers had demanded exciting incident. And she had personal reasons for not relying exclusively on events from her own life:

1. Correspondence, ii, pp. 152

"is not the real experience of each individual very limited? And, if a writer dwells upon that solely or principally, is he not in danger of repeating himself, and also of becoming an egotist? Then, too, imagination is a strong, restless faculty, which claims to be heard and exercised: are we to be quite deaf to her cry, and insensate to her struggles? When she shows us bright pictures, are we never to look at them, and try to reproduce them?" (1)

These questions are not entirely rhetorical. She seems to have found herself again confronted with a dilemma.

One way out of the dilemma would have been to have ignored the claims of truth altogether. There were readers who were prepared to grant the novelist "the liberty of purely ideal incident in a purely ideal world."² ('Ideal' meaning simply 'imaginary', 'unreal', at this time.³) But this would have meant writing a 'romance'. Discriminating readers in Charlotte Brontë's time saw romance as a form both inferior and to some extent outmoded; and so did she. (She refers contemptuously to "romantic rubbish" when first telling the legend of the nun in Villette.⁴) And she can be seen consciously rejecting this possibility on the first page of Shirley:

1. p. 153

2. Masson: British Novelists, p. 25

3. See, e.g. Correspondence, iv, p. 17; 'Charlotte Brontë', New Monthly Mag., cx(1857), p. 323

4. i, p. 173

"If you think, from this prelude, that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken. Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie? Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, cool, and solid, lies before you; something unromantic as Monday morning". (1)

Even this reaction, however, is not entirely wholehearted. She could criticise the use of history in Thackeray's Henry Esmond (1852) on the grounds that

"a work of fiction ought to be a work of creation: that the real should be sparingly introduced in pages dedicated to the ideal." (2)

Another way out of the dilemma would have been to rely entirely on her imagination, as a source of material. There was a danger here of verging upon romance from another direction, a danger hinted at in the New Monthly Magazine's 1852 comment on Robert and Louis Moore:

"We do not believe in them; but we do believe in Currer Bell's faith in them, and in the reality of their features, as discerned by womanly vision." (3)

In this comment, though, "vision" has an ambiguous epistemological status; and there was a tradition that 'intuition' was not only the source of deep, unchangeable truths, but a writer's privileged shortcut to ordinary reality.

Edward Young, the author of Night Thoughts, had argued for this, in his Conjectures on Original Composition (1759);⁴ and the Scottish

1. i, pp. 1 - 2

2. Correspondence, iv, p. 17

3. 'Currer Bell', p. 302

4. Works, ed. John Doran, (London, 1854), pp. 547-86

professor, William Richardson, in 1774, took as a premise of his investigation of Shakespeare's characters the idea that great poets know the mind "not by a long train of metaphysical deductions, but, as it were, by immediate intuition".¹ ('Metaphysical', at this time, as I have mentioned, was more or less equivalent to the modern 'psychological'.) By Charlotte Brontë's time the qualifying "as it were" was no longer necessary. The New Quarterly reviewer of Mrs. Gaskell's Life, remarks of Charlotte Brontë's novels, "What anticipations of reality she had never known!" and thinks "she may have been capable of a species of mesmeric clairvoyance."² Even Jane Austen was attributed this kind of intuitive power: by a reviewer of Marriet Martineau's Deerbrook in 1839,³ and by her own nephew in the Memoir of 1870. He says of her account of love: "the picture was drawn from the intuitive perceptions of genius, not from personal experience."⁴ it is not surprising, therefore, that Charlotte Brontë can think of intuition and experience as alternative ways of knowing the world - she says of Dickens and Thackeray, "they possess a knowledge of the world, whether intuitive or acquired, such as I can lay no claim to -".⁵

Moreover, the intuition theory in this form was a valuable

1. A Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of Some of Shakespeare's Remarkable Characters, (London, 1774), p. 1

2. p. 226

3. JACH, p. 121

4. p. 28

5. Correspondence, ii, p. 146

support to her trust in 'inspiration.' She writes in her introduction to the 1850 edition of Wuthering Heights:

"this I know: the writer who possesses the creative gift owns something of which he is not always master - something that, at times, strangely wills and works for itself ... As for you, the nominal artist - your share in it has been to work passively under dictates you neither delivered nor could question". (1)

She had said the same thing in a more tentative way to G.H.Lewes, in the letter in which she first mentions Jane Austen:

"When authors write best, or at least, when they write most fluently, an influence seems to waken in them, which becomes their master - which will have its own way - ". (2)

She took this seriously enough in her own writing to wait for inspiration. Johnson's remarks on Gray are well known:

"he had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastick foppery" (3)

But Shelley had argued: "A man cannot say, 'I will compose poetry.'"⁴, and this had been Charlotte Brontë's feeling. She wrote to George Smith in 1851 (she had been working on Villette),

1. pp. xiii - xiv

2. Correspondence, ii, p. 179

3. Lives of the English Poets, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, (Oxford, 1905), iii, p. 433

4. 'Defence of Poetry', p. 135

"When the mood leaves me (it has left me now, without vouchsafing so much as a word of a message when it will return) I put by the MS. and wait till it comes back again; and God knows I sometimes have to wait long - very long it seems to me." (1)

It was in fact this second way out of the dilemma that she found most attractive when writing about her work. She uses the 'intuitive' theory of composition when criticising other novelists - for example, Jane Austen, or Alexander Harris:

"he scarcely possesses the creative faculty in sufficient vigour to excel as a writer of fiction. He creates nothing - he only copies. His characters are portraits - ~~servilely~~ accurate; whatever is at all ideal is not original." (2)

And she was angry when Ellen Nussey asked her if she drew pictures from life:

"You are not to suppose any of the characters in 'Shirley' intended as literal portraits. It would not suit the rules of art, nor my own feelings, - to write in that style. We only suffer reality to suggest, never to dictate. The heroines are abstractions, and the heroes also." (3)

Moreover, two years earlier - in December 1847 - she had written to W.S. Williams of G.H. Lewes:

"I am afraid if he knew how much I write from intuition, how little from actual knowledge, he would think me presumptuous ever to have ~~written~~ at all." (4)

1. Correspondence, iii, p. 295

2. ii, p. 322

3. iii, p. 37

4. ii, pp. 159-60

This may have been a fair comment on Jane Eyre, which had been published earlier in the year, but it was not particularly true of the works she was to write, and the comment on the later Shirley to Ellen Nussey is at best a half-truth. (Many of the characters in Shirley are literal portraits, it seems, even if the heroes and heroines really are "abstractions".)

She seems in fact to have been more influenced by G.H. Lewes' letters, and his review in Fraser's, than she admits to him (or to anyone else).¹

This would be consistent with the conscientiousness mentioned by Harriet Martineau, (and referred to at the very beginning of this investigation). And it would explain the compromise represented by Shirley and Villette - a compromise suggested earlier in (as well as by) The Professor:

"not exactly the writer's own experience, but a composition by portions of that experience suggested. Thus while egotism was avoided, the fancy was exercised, and the heart satisfied." (2)

This comment on Frances Henri's poem seems a more accurate characterisation of Charlotte Brontë's practice in the novels other than Jane Eyre than she gives in her letters. It was a third way out of the dilemma, and the one she most often took.

1. Cf. Franklin Gary: 'Charlotte Brontë and George Henry Lewes', PMLA, li(1936), pp. 518-542. Gary, however, ignores both the influence earlier of Southey, and the anticipations in The Professor.

2. p. 309 (Ch. 23)

As a way out, however, it had its disadvantages: for the treatment of emotion in particular. The emotions presented in Shirley, especially, are drawn from so many different kinds of fantasy, memory, remembered fantasy and present experience, and so conscientiously does Charlotte Brontë seem to have tried to treat remembered feelings and imagined feelings as equals that the book, for all its planned unity, hardly hangs together.

(Villette is better because remembered feelings are carefully caught up, amplified, and given a new significance by imagined feelings, which are dominant: pace the biographers.)

This can be seen more clearly in a comparison with Wuthering Heights. Where Charlotte Brontë conscientiously draws from experience as well as imagination, Emily Brontë relies on the second. As a result, emotion is presented as free from the ordinary effects of time: power is a guarantee of duration, as it rarely is in life. (This, perhaps, is the secret of the book's impact: one is made aware again of the intensity of feeling that, at certain moments in life, ~~has~~ prompted one to say 'I'll always love you as much' or 'I'll never speak to him again', and mean it; one is freed from having to recall that, in life, these emotions have proved to be - for all their force - transient.)

Liberated from time, emotion is also pared down and schematised.

The feelings presented are of two basic kinds - those of self-confident people who are neither ashamed nor afraid to reveal them to others, and those of nervous, self-conscious people who need coddling (Linton, Lockwood) - and who therefore mark the limits of the central emotional world. For the first kind the problem of authentic presentation in the third person can be solved simply. The pride and lack of social restraint established at the outset (and established through Lockwood, the outsider and anti-type) justify the technique of 'visible emotion', especially since symptoms are newly imagined - "crushing his nails into his palms, and grinding his teeth to subdue the maxillary convulsions"¹ or "she clung fast, gasping: there was mad resolution in her face."² For the second kind visible tokens also suffice, but now because their feelings are taken either to be impulses which in their weakness they cannot completely control - "the restless glance wandering to the window, and the hand irresolutely extended towards his cap" when Linton wants to join Catherine and Hareton outside³ - or agitations affected or exaggerated for the benefit of others: when he has been hurt by the younger Catherine, for instance:

1. p. 37

2. p. 242

3. p. 326

"He sighed and moaned like one under great suffering, and kept it up for a quarter of an hour; on purpose to distress his cousin apparently, for whenever he caught a stifled sob from her, he put renewed pain and pathos into the inflexions of his voice." (1)

The method has local disadvantages - absurdities and unintentionally comic (if often macabre) slips into bathos, as in Charlotte's juvenilia - but the consistency of its application, and the established interpersonal context in which it is applied (the first person narrators) ensure the book an integrity, a coherence, that Charlotte never completely achieves. Neither Emily nor Anne, she says, in her introduction to the book, "was learned; they had no thought of filling their pitchers at the well-spring of other minds"² (unlike herself in this respect). Wuthering Heights shows what can be achieved by a rejection of all influence, a total reliance upon "vision".

1. p. 356 (Ch. 23)

2. Agnes Grey, p. 12 ('Biographical Notice')

Chapter Five: The Presentation of Emotion (ii):

The Language of Interpretation and Appraisal

What effect had the situation of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë as writers on the language of presentation in their novels? And, given the effort to achieve authenticity, what range of idiom could they call upon to do justice to the complexities of personal experience?

My concern here is only with the way they write about emotions, but even so, considerations of space make it impossible for me to answer these questions as fully as they might be (or as I should like.) Fortunately some detailed work has been done recently on the language of both novelists.

The most considered of these recent investigations, by Norman Page,¹ draws attention to both the conservative and innovatory elements in Jane Austen's style, and points out how much more resourcefully Jane Austen uses what can be seen as a common idiom than even the best of her recent predecessors and contemporaries. But no account is taken of the wider literary (let alone social) context. As a result, the full meaning of some words and phrases is missed, and the significance of Jane Austen's use of them quite lost.

1. The Language of Jane Austen, (Oxford, 1972); see also K.C. Phillips: Jane Austen's English, (London, 1970); Margot Peters: Charlotte Brontë, Style in the Novel, (Madison, 1973); David Lodge: Language of Fiction, (London, 1966), pp 94 - 143; Karl Kroeber: Styles in Fictional Structure, The Art of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, (Princeton, 1971)

This criticism applies even more forcibly to the other investigations, valuable though they are on their own terms. It is this aspect, therefore, that I shall concentrate on here.

I argued in the last chapter that both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë felt a need to share their dramatisation (of a pressing predicament) with readers who could take the measure of its seriousness. It is this, together with a natural interest in shaping language, in exploring its possibilities, which accounts for both the similarities and the (more obvious) differences in the two novelists' prose styles.

It accounts for the similarities because what the two styles have in common are certain 'literary' qualities (qualities which could be appreciated by discriminating readers, readers who noticed style); it accounts for the difference because what divides the styles is a change in the nature of literary language.

Jane Austen uses language with a personal liveliness and incisiveness, but her usage did not strike contemporaries as being in any way idiosyncratic. It was, rather, "genteel",¹ "elegant",² "so evidently written by a Gentlewoman",³ "chaste and correct",⁴ or simply "well written".⁵

1. JACH, p. 35. (Critical review of S &S)

2. pp. 50, (Lady Robert Kerr of MP) and 102. (Whately of Pers.)

3. p. 51. (Mrs. Pole of MP)

4. p. 72. (Gentleman's Mag. of E)

5. p. 35

There is praise for spirit or vividness, but this still implies personal skill in a common mode. A unitary "good taste", as defined in the last chapter, can still be appealed to. Reactions to Charlotte Brontë, however, were divided. Where one reader sees "a wild gush of genuine poetry",¹ another sees "coarseness of language and laxity of tone";² where one sees "execution ... as perfect as the conception",³ another sees "pre-Raphaelitish contempt for grace";⁴ where one sees presentations of emotions so lengthy "as to become tedious and induce skipping",⁵ another sees a style which is "terse and compact".⁶ As again identified in the last chapter, there is a great diversity in standards of literary excellence, and Charlotte Brontë is caught between several of them.

In writing about emotions, therefore, what characterises Jane Austen's style is its unity: its integration of a range of tone into a single expressive idiom. What characterises Charlotte Brontë's style is its disunity. A wider range of effects is aimed at, but at the

1. 'Jane Eyre' People's J, iii (1847), p. 269
2. (Eastlake:) 'Jane Eyre', p. 163
3. (John Eagles:) 'A Few Words about Novels', Blackwood's Edin. Mag., lxiv (1848), p. 474
4. 'The Professor', Athenaeum, (1857), p. 755
5. Spectator: 'Villette', p. 156
6. [John Skelton:] 'Charlotte Brontë', Fraser's Mag., lv(1857), p. 582

cost of harmony.

Jane Austen (to begin with her) achieved this unity through a watchful critical sense: alertness to the mishandling of language of the same sort as her alertness to absurdities in technique. In this she was again helped by family tradition. She grew up in a family that was critical about prose style, particularly about the style found in the emotionalist novel. Loiterer, No. 59, by Henry Austen and Benjamin Portal (a family friend), is entitled 'The Art of Composition'. It consists of a series of ironic rules. Among them is one for emotionalist composition.

"When an author describes a scene which he wishes to be affecting, let him boldly pronounce it so himself. Nothing is so convenient to the reader as thus to be taught how he is to feel... [Give the reader] his cue, by phrases similar to these: 'It is melancholy to reflect;' 'It is a painful and humiliating consideration.' ... 'We gaze with sensible delight on this bright and amiable picture;' 'From this gloomy catalogue we turn with eagerness to a more pleasing retrospect.'" (1)

A natural result of this family interest is the self-consciousness about style Jane Austen expresses playfully in a comment on her youngest brother's wife:

"I wish the knowledge of my being exposed to her discerning Criticism, may not hurt my stile, by inducing too great a solicitude. I begin already to weigh my words and sentences more than I did, and am looking about for a sentiment, an illustration or a metaphor in every corner of the room."²

1. (Oxford, 1790), ii, no. lix, pp. 9-10. (The pages are not numbered through the volume.)
2. Letters, p. 256

and ridicule of emotionalist idiom can be found in one of the earliest of her extant letters:

"I shall be able to send this to the post to-day, which exalts me to the utmost pinnacle of human felicity, and makes me bask in the sunshine of prosperity, or gives me any other sensation of pleasure in studied language which you may prefer."¹

It was use of this emotionalist idiom (the phrase 'vortex of dissipation') that she cautioned her niece Anna against in a well-known passage " - it is such thorough novel slang".²

"Novel slang" tended particularly to involve the use of metaphor (such as 'vortex of dissipation'); Edward Mangin quotes an example from a contemporary novel:

"Hours, weeks, flew on the wings of gaiety and bliss; enchained in a delirium of happiness, he forgot to scrutinise the nature of those exquisite sensations."³

Attack on its language is part of his (1808) attack on the novel; and in general, attacks on sentimentality naturally focussed on its

"... motley heap of metaphoric⁴ sighs -/Laborious griefs, and studied extasies".

The style invited parody. Beckford writes of his heroine Arabella:

"The clouds of woe that inundated her afflicted heart, would never more, she feared, blossom into hope -".⁵

1. p. 53

2. p. 404

3. Light Reading, p. 94

4. [Richard Tickell:] The Wreath of Fashion, or the Art of Sentimental Poetry, (London, 1778), p. 9. (Quoted in Whitford: 'Satire of Sentimentalism', p. 190)

5. Modern Novel-Writing, p. 175

Similar parodies fill the pages of the Anti-Jacobin.¹

It was natural, in fact, for political conservatives to satirise metaphorical writing about emotions: not only was it an innovation, but it was in itself an affront to established reason and common sense. The plain style therefore seemed as proper to conservatives as a style which embodied aspirations in metaphor evidently did to radicals.

Jane Austen was not, as I shall argue in the next chapter, entirely at home in her society, but her way of implying such dissatisfaction as she felt was to use established means of expression in a personal, critical way. Irony does not disturb the unifying effect of the plain style, and it allows movement beyond the social world which sanctions the style (or any given general style) without the need to call that world into question.

(It is worth recalling, in passing, that irony as pervasive as Jane Austen's is not found in her contemporaries or immediate predecessors. Such irony as can be detected in Fanny Burney, Maria Edgeworth or Scott - such as that at the expense of Mrs. Lathridge and her niece in Belinda² - is local and short-lived.)

The plain style, then, is the major unifying factor which results from Jane Austen's vigilance. But even where the style

1. Poetry of Anti-Jacobin, e.g., p. 176. (A prose passage in, spite of the volume's name.)

2. iii, pp. 237-8

is not tempered by irony, it has an incisiveness which is distinctive. This is why G.H.Lewes' characterisation of her prose (from an early Victorian standpoint) as "daring from its humble truthfulness"¹ fails to do it justice. If "humble truthfulness" refers to qualities of style it must be to clarity and simplicity. Jane Austen's simplicity, however, is not at all like, say, Scott's, where the notion of humility is appropriate and even definitive. (An apologetic note is often heard in Scott, a further result of his making allowances for everyone, his readers now included.) Jane Austen's style is matter of fact, but it always has an edge. When Mr. Knightley is told of Frank Churchill's going to London for a hair-cut (as everyone supposes), she writes:

"The circumstance was told him at Hartfield; for the moment, he was silent; but Emma heard him almost immediately afterwards say to himself, over a newspaper he held in his hand, 'Hum! just the trifling, silly fellow I took him for.' She had half a mind to resent; but an instant's observation convinced her that it was really said only to relieve his own feelings, and not meant to provoke; and therefore she let it pass."²

The economy of the writing here is the economy of grasp and discernment. Mr. Knightley's jealousy of Frank Churchill (the one emotion that makes him a comic character in a comic book), Emma's - intelligent - reading of it as simple disgruntlement, and her own reaction to the disgruntlement, are all sharply established and placed.

1. JACH, p. 130

2. E, p. 206. (Ch.25)

This is, as it were, Jane Austen's critical sense turned creative. A more basic source of creativity is the playfulness which her critical sense, having fixed the limits within which it could function, sets free. This is not a source of unity: it is rather what challenges the unity and makes it an achievement. And what one sees in Jane Austen's development is an expansion, an increase in ease and flexibility within the limits set. This complements the increasing technical flexibility described in the last chapter, and means that an increasing depth of feeling is accommodated; and that shades and aspects of feeling are more generously allowed for.

In the earlier novels the formality of the style even at its most lively inhibits a very close approach to feelings - for example, the feelings of Elizabeth and Darcy when they meet unexpectedly at Pemberley:

"They were within twenty yards of each other, and so abrupt was his appearance, that it was impossible to avoid his sight. Their eyes instantly met, and the cheeks of each were overspread with the deepest blush. He absolutely started, and for a moment seemed immovable from surprise; but shortly recovering himself, advanced towards the party, and spoke to Elizabeth, if not in terms of perfect composure, at least of perfect civility.

She had instinctively turned away; but, stopping on his approach, received his compliments with an embarrassment impossible to be overcome. Had his first appearance, or his resemblance to the picture they had just been examining, been insufficient to assure the other two that they now saw Mr. Darcy, the gardener's expression of surprise, on beholding his master, must immediately have told it. They stood a

little aloof while he was talking to their niece, who, astonished and confused, scarcely dared lift her eyes to his face, and knew not what answer she returned to his civil enquiries after her family. Amazed at the alteration in his manner since they last parted, every sentence that he uttered was increasing her embarrassment; and every idea of the impropriety of her being found there, recurring to her mind, the few minutes in which they continued together, were some of the most uncomfortable of her life. Nor did he seem much more at ease; when he spoke, his accent had none of its usual sedateness; and he repeated his enquiries as to the time of her having left Longbourn, and of her stay in Derbyshire, so often, and in so hurried a way, as plainly spoke the distraction of his thoughts." (1)

In the presentation of Elizabeth's silent reflections that follows this account of their meeting, the style relaxes a little. And even here the reality of both characters' feelings is never in question. But what the style here - with its measured subordinations, its careful climaxes - keeps out of the narrative can be seen if the account is compared with that of the first encounter (after their long separation) of Anne and Captain Wentworth in Persuasion.

When Charles Musgrove announces his imminent arrival,

"Mary, very much gratified by this attention, was delighted to receive him; while a thousand feelings rushed on Anne, of which this was the most consoling, that it would soon be over. And it was soon over. In two minutes after Charles's preparation, the others appeared; they were in the drawing-room. Her eye half met Captain Wentworth's; a bow, a curtsy passed; she heard his voice - he talked to Mary, said all that was right; said something to the Miss Musgroves, enough to

1. P & P , pp. 251-2. (Ch.43)

mark an easy footing; the room seemed full - full of persons and voices - but a few minutes ended it. Charles showed himself at the window, all was ready, their visitor had bowed was gone; the Miss Musgroves were gone too, suddenly resolving to walk to the end of the village with the sportsmen: the room was cleared, and Anne might finish her breakfast as she could.

'It is over! it is over! 'she repeated to herself again, and again, in nervous gratitude. 'The worst is over! ' " (1)

There is even some submerged metaphor in this account - the "thousand feelings" which "rush" on Anne - but it is the rhythm of the sentences here, the more flexible disposition of elements, which marks the real advance. The feelings of Mary, the two Miss Musgroves, and even of Captain Wentworth, are allowed for, while the varying pressure of Anne's emotion is exactly caught. There is no breakdown of the general style - Jane Austen can still call on the most formal tone when she wants to - but deeper feelings and subtler developments can now be accommodated.

Charlotte Brontë's disunity is, I have said, a matter of her aiming, from the first, at a wider range of effects. The different styles she calls upon normally occur in different emotional episodes; but sometimes they are used of a single feeling, or a single sequence of feelings, and then their disparity becomes more obvious. A good case in point is the account of Jane Eyre's state of mind in the red room, from the moment when she discovers the door is locked to the

1. pp. 59-60. (Ch. 7)

moment when her screams bring Bessie and Abbot to her.

The account begins in a graphic, evocative style, as Jane catches sight of herself in the mirror:

"All looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality: and the strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit: I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp, Bessie's evening stories represented as coming out of lone, ferny dells in moors, and appearing before the eyes of belated travellers."⁽¹⁾

There is now a sudden shift into a more abstract style: the next paragraph begins "Superstition was with me at that moment", and ends "I had to stem a rapid rush of retrospective thought before I quailed to the dismal present."

A powerful but mannered sentence opens the following section:

"All John Reed's violent tyrannies, all his sisters' proud indifference, all his mother's aversion, all the servants' partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well."

The section proceeds in the same powerfully rhetorical manner: through a series of dramatic questions to a series of balanced contrasts, each building in length and passion on the one before, as Eliza, Georgiana, and John are introduced. The climatic contrast

1. This and the following quotations are from JE i, pp. 14-19. (Ch.2)

is her own case:

"I dared commit no fault: I strove to fulfil every duty; and I was termed naughty and tiresome, sullen and sneaking, from morning to noon, and from noon to night."

After a further short paragraph in this oratorical style, abstractions and personifications recur:

"Unjust - unjust!" said my reason, forced by the agonizing stimulus into precocious though transitory power; and Resolve, equally wrought up, instigated some strange expedient to achieve escape from insupportable oppression".

A more sententious note is now introduced, with exclamations something in the manner of Carlyle:

"What a consternation of soul was mine that dreary afternoon! How all my brain was in tumult, and all my heart in insurrection! Yet in what darkness, what dense ignorance, was the mental battle fought! "

Now all emotion goes out of the narrative, and a detached, impersonal style succeeds, in which the child Jane is characterised in non-human terms, as "a discord", and (four times) as "a thing". This is followed by a return to the graphic style of the opening, fortified now by metaphorical characterisations of emotion:

"My habitual mood of humiliation, self-doubt, forlorn depression, fell damp on the embers of my decaying fire."

And it is this graphic style, vividly evoking both Jane's feelings and her physical surroundings, which carries the account through to the arrival of the servants.

There is good reason for some of these shifts in style:

Charlotte Brontë needs to move from the feelings of Jane as a child to the reflections of Jane as an adult, her passion spent. And - though the use of personification probably grates now - each of the styles is effective in its own way. But the impression of disharmony, of a patchwork of conflicting idioms, which the passage must make on the most sympathetic reader, cannot be argued away.

A kind of harmony could have been achieved through subordination. But just as Charlotte Brontë's syntax itself, and the movement from sentence to sentence, is marked by apposition or even a struggle of elements for priority rather than by logical subordination, so each of her styles is absolute while it lasts.

This does not seem to me a personal shortcoming, in the sense that it can be attributed either to carelessness or to some quirk in Charlotte Brontë's personality. She was in fact an extremely conscientious stylist, as Mrs. Gaskell reveals (I omit Mrs. Gaskell's own judgments):

"One set of words was the truthful mirror of her thoughts; no others, however apparently identical in meaning, would do... She would wait patiently, searching for the right term, until it presented itself to her. It might be provincial, it might be derived from the Latin; so that it accurately represented her idea, she did not mind whence it came... She never wrote down a sentence until she clearly understood what she wanted to say, had deliberately chosen the words, and arranged them in their right order. Hence it comes that, in

the scraps of paper covered with her pencil writing which I have seen, there will occasionally be a sentence scored out, but seldom, if ever, a word or an expression." (1)

The conscious stylist can be seen at work in the novels themselves.

Shirley's "right taste in poetry" is an ability to distinguish between the real and the false. The second, Charlotte Brontë writes, may be clever or learned or even "tinged with the fascinating hues of fancy" but is

"as different from real poetry as the gorgeous and massy vase of mosaic is from the little cup of pure metal; or, to give the reader a choice of similes, as the milliner's artificial wreath is from the fresh-gathered lily of the field."(2)

That "to give the reader a choice of similes" is evidence enough of self-consciousness.

The responsibility for this disunity, then, lies in the confusion of literary standards during her lifetime. It is only a personal shortcoming to the extent that Charlotte Brontë was susceptible to more than one literary ideal, and needed as a matter of personal urgency to engage a "high class of readers" (in Mary Taylor's phrase). A similar attempt to exploit a wide range of effects can be seen not only in Thackeray among her contemporaries, but in De Quincey, in Carlyle, in Ruskin.

1. Life, pp.284-5 (Ch.15)

2. Sh, i, pp. 319-20 (Ch.12)

Contemporary taste is also responsible, it seems to me, for the less satisfactory features within her various styles. The one exception is her occasional tendency to over write. This is a fault which M. Heger noted in the French 'devoirs' Charlotte Brontë wrote for him. In one of these (one of many, one suspects, in which the fault recurs and is noted) she writes "une illusion a laquelle il ne pourrait jamais atteindre". M. Heger has underlined all the words after "illusion" and added in the margin, "Inutile, quand vous avez dit illusion."¹ This suggests a personal bad habit.

But even here one form of contemporary taste, with its interest in "powerful and picturesque writing",² "the charm of a style that never grows tame",³ or "prose poetry", (G.H.Lewes, while objecting to the personifications and other figures in Villette, speaks of "prose poetry of the very highest order,")⁴ did not help.

Contemporary taste of this form appealed to Charlotte Brontë - it is worth recalling Grimsworth's comment on Frances Henri's 'devoir' on Alfred: "the style stood in great need of polish and sustained dignity",⁵ with its implication that fine writing is

1. Life, p. 209

2. 'Shirley', Church of Eng. Q., xxvii (1850), p. 224

3. 'Villette ...', Critic, xii (1853), p.95

4. 'Ruth and Villette', p. 489

5. Prof, p. 187

something that needs to be worked up until it is sufficiently impressive. And it is this that lies behind what I have referred to as the less satisfactory elements in her writing. Her sense of the confinement of her own life, and her consequent craving for colour and variety, may have assisted (the figurative style could appeal as a kind of escape or transcendence) but would not have been decisive had the state of literary taste been different.

The worst elements involve such things as her hyperbole:

"sitting by him, roused from the nightmare of parting, called to the paradise of union, I thought only of the bliss given me to drink in so abundant a flow." (1)

At its very worst her writing recalls that of some of the least considerable writers of her time, "the industrials of fictitious literature", as W.R.Greg in the Edinburgh Review called them - giving as an example "Mr. James, who writes novels as a hen lays eggs."²

This is G.P.R.James, who began as an imitator of Scott, and was supposed to have written over a hundred books. (For eighteen successive years he turned out a novel every nine months - writing historical works at the same time.) Charlotte Brontë refers to him in one of her letters - as "a miracle of productiveness" - but she is unlikely to have read anything by him.

1. JE, ii, p. 27. (Ch.23)

2. 'Villette', p. 382

And yet the first paragraphs of the story 'Remorse' in his Book of the Passions (1839) are astonishingly like one of Charlotte Brontë's styles:

"Winter is upon my brow, and in my heart - the dark, the sombre, the hopeless winter of age; with no bright spring to gladden the straining eye of expectation, no warmer season, no flowery hours, beyond!

Winter is upon my brow, and in my heart - the stern, cold, sorrowful winter of age: but not the winter as it comes to some, after a long and sunshiny life of joy treading upon joy, and of one pleasant cup drained after another till the sated and the weary spirit sees the hour of rest approaching with the calm glad hope of peaceful slumber, destined to end in another day as bright, as full of glory and enjoyment!" (1)

This is like a style of hers in its multiplied adjectives, its reiterated phrases, its emotive cadences. The words it uses are words that she falls upon easily: "dark", "sombre", "hopeless", "bright"; and the imagery is her imagery - winter and spring, night and day, the "cup" of joy, warmth and cold. Above all its abandonment to imagery, its loss in imagery of the emotion it is supposed to be presenting, are as characteristic of Charlotte Brontë at her worst as they are of James. In Villette, for instance, - to take one example of many - she writes:

"This hag, this Reason, would not let me look up, or smile, or hope: she could not rest unless I were altogether crushed, cowed, broken-in, and

1. (London, 1839), p.3

broken-down. According to her, I was born only to work for a piece of bread, to await the pains of death, and steadily through all life to despond ... Long ago I should have died of ill-usage; her stint, her chill, her barren board, her icy bed, her savage, ceaseless blows; but for that kinder Power who holds my secret and sworn allegiance. Often has Reason turned me out by night, in mid-winter, on cold snow, flinging for sustenance the gnawed bone dogs had forsaken: sternly has she vowed her stores held nothing more for me - harshly denied my right to ask ~~any~~ better things.... Then, looking up, Have I seen in the sky a head amidst circling stars, of which the midmost and the brightest lent a ray sympathetic and attent. A spirit, softer and better than Human Reason, has descended with quiet flight to the waste - bringing all round her a sphere of air borrowed of eternal summer; bringing perfume of flowers which cannot fade - fragrance of trees whose fruit is life; bringing breezes pure from a world whose day needs no sun to lighten it." (1)

This is more energetic - and more functional in its context - than the James passage (and there are no exclamation marks), but the feeling presented - despair yielding to hope - is equally swamped in words.

And yet Charlotte Brontë has something personal to communicate: her books were not conceived as diversions for emotionalist readers (as James' presumably were). But where an intelligent fellow practitioner like Thackeray could praise this aspect of her style - he wrote in 1853 to Lucy Baxter, daughter of an American family he had met in New York the year before:

1. i, pp. 383-4. (Ch.21)

"The good of Villette in my opinion Miss is a very fine style; and a remarkable happy way (which few female authors possess) of carrying a metaphor logically through to its conclusion";(1)

where it could be held inappropriate to dramatise strong emotion in "the language of the market-place and the morning call";² and where verse (and therefore "prose poetry") could be seen as especially suitable for.

"that which is in its nature general, permanent, fundamental, ever interesting, least variable by time or place. The primary human emotions and relations, and the acts that spring from them and illustrate them; the everlasting generalities of human thought and human aspiration and difficulty", (3)

the repetitions, elaborations and consciously poetic imagery of this style - together with the blurring of focus it induces as individual feelings, prompted by particular circumstances, are assimilated into the general and elemental - are sanctioned.

Also sanctioned are the "quaintly solemn tones" in Charlotte Brontë which a Tait's reviewer of 1855 ascribed to the influence of the Authorised Version of the Bible.⁴ Charlotte Brontë was not only aware of the "advantage" (in Vicesimus Knox's words) "which may be derived to the tender and pathetic style, from using the words and phrases of scripture"⁵ - as in the chapter title "The Valley of the

1. Letters and Private Papers, ed. Gordon N. Ray, (London, 1945-6), iii, pp. 232-3

2. Green: Estimates of Fiction, p. 10

3. Masson: British Novelists, p. 10

4. 'Curren, Ellis and Acton Bell', p. 423

5. Essays, iii. (Title of essay.)

"Shadow of Death" in Shirley. She was also aware of the 'impressiveness' biblical cadences could effect. That she found this kind of impressiveness personally satisfying can be concluded from its presence in the juvenilia:

"Then did Miss Caroline begin to perceive that she was despised and cast off, even as she herself hid away a dress that she was tired of or a scarf that had become frayed and faded." (1)

But the stress should not be allowed to fall on the less satisfactory elements in Charlotte Brontë's writing. In general her various ways of writing about emotions, though they do not go very happily together, are effective.

I think this is true even of her use of personification. - though some contemporaries objected, including G.H.Lewes. He complained in 1853 that Charlotte Brontë was

"oppressively fond of the allegorical expression of emotions; thus making passages look mechanical and forced, which if more directly put before us would be very powerful." (2)

Personification is an eighteenth-century survival, objected to by Wordsworth,³ though it is common enough in Byron. It is hardly found at all in Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia, so presumably she had no natural taste for it; but it is pervasive in her first novel (and apparently more pervasive in the manuscript than in the

1. Angria, p. 284

2. 'Ruth and Villette', p. 487

3. See 'Preface', pp. 244-7

printed editions).¹

Feelings are personified in Charlotte Brontë where a character particularly needs to see them for what they are, or to bring them under control:

" '... Could I seek Frances to-night, could I sit with her alone in a quiet room, and address her only in the language of Reason and Affection?'

'No,' was the brief, fervent reply of that Love which had conquered and now controlled me." (2)

"Must I, ere I close, render some account of that Freedom and Renovation which I won on the fête night? Must I tell how I and the two stalwart companions I brought home from the illuminated park bore the test of intimate acquaintance?

I tried them the very next day. They had boasted their strength loudly when they reclaimed me from love and its bondage, but upon my demanding deeds, not words, some evidence of better comfort, some experience of a relieved life - Freedom excused himself, as for the present, impoverished and disabled to assist; and Renovation never spoke; he had died in the night suddenly." (3)

This was the philosopher Shaftesbury's reason for praising personification (in life), where

"by a certain powerful figure of inward rhetoric the mind apostrophises its own fancies, raises them in their proper shapes and personages, and addresses them familiarly, without the least ceremony or respect." (4)

Linked to personification, and more obviously effective, is Charlotte Brontë's habit of ascribing to emotion an independent force,

1. See M.M. Brammer: 'The Manuscript of The Professor', RES, n.s. xi (1960), pp. 157-70

2. Prof, p. 282. (Ch. 22)

3. V, ii, p. 378. (Ch. 41)

4. Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, ed. John M. Robertson, (London, 1900), i, p. 123

a. force somehow of the self but beyond its control, so that the self can be seen as passive and the emotion as active (and therefore govern an active verb): "embarrassment might have impelled her to contend, but self-respect checked resistance where resistance was useless";¹ "An impulse held me fast - a force turned me round. I said - or something in me said for me, and in spite of me - 'Thank you, Mr. Rochester...'";² "as I sat down by the bed and rested my head and arms on the pillow, a terrible oppression overcame me. All at once my position rose on me like a ghost."³

Sentences of this kind sometimes have a metaphorical force which can be made more explicit, with the result that the emotion is more vividly characterised:

"Till morning dawned I was tossed on a buoyant but unquiet sea, where billows of trouble rolled under surges of joy. I thought sometimes I saw beyond its wild waters a shore, sweet as the hills of Beulah; and now and then a ~~refreshing~~ gale, wakened by hope, bore my spirit triumphantly towards the bourne: but I could not reach it, even in fancy - a counteracting breeze blew off land, and continually drove me back." (4)

1. Prof, p. 313

2. JE, ii, p.10

3. V, i, p. 70

4. JE, i, p. 253 (Ch.15)

Sea imagery, imagery of flood and storm, is pervasive in Charlotte Brontë, and the ~~source~~ spurce of some of her most compelling characterisations of emotion. (The language may seem at times obtrusively emotive but this is a period touch which need not stand in the way of appreciation, and is in any case not central.)

Other imagery linked with emotions includes fire imagery:

"the sense of insult and treachery lived in me like a kindling, though as yet smothered coal.";¹ "The fury of which she was incapable had been burning in my soul all day";² and desert imagery: the hours of one summer's day were to Caroline Helstone "as desolate as if they had gone over her head in the shadowless and trackless wastes of Zahara";³ to Lucy Snowe in the long vacation, life was "a hopeless desert; tawny sands, with no green fields, no palm trees, no well in view."⁴

In the juvenilia metaphorical characterisations of emotion are obtrusively Byronic in influence: such usages as the "worm of jealousy", "the poison-flower of passion", and "The Duke's conscience, a vessel of a thousand tons burthen, brought up a cargo of blood to his face"⁵, recall Childe Harold, where Byron

1. Prof, pp. 155-6

2. JE, i, p. 118

3. Sh, ii, p. 111

4. V, i, p. 259

5. Angria, pp. 75, 303, 307

writes

"Full from the fount of Joy's delicious springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings."(1)

or speaks of a "secret woe/... corroding Joy and Youth".²

In the novels themselves this note is less common; and images frequently (as above) match perfectly the feelings they characterise.

The style Charlotte Brontë adopts for local psychological commentary is also effective. And this is something which, as one would expect, she gets better at. In The Professor generalising commentary has an air of the set piece about it:

"Our likings are regulated by our circumstances. The artist prefers a hilly country because it is picturesque; the engineer a flat one because it is convenient; the man of pleasure likes what he calls 'a fine woman' - she suits him; the fashionable young gentleman admires the fashionable young lady - she is of his kind; the toil-worn, fagged, probably irritable tutor, blind almost to beauty, insensible to airs and graces, glories chiefly in certain mental qualities; application, love of knowledge..." (3)

The touch is lighter in Jane Eyre, while the reference remains as general, and the tone as dispassionate. When Bessie admits that Jane is not particularly attractive:

"I smiled at Bessie's frank answer; I felt that it was correct, but I confess I was not

1. Poetical Works, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, (London, 1905), p. 158. (Childe Harold, Canto I.)

2. p. 159. ('To Inez')

3. pp. 167-8. (Ch. 14)

quite indifferent to its import. At eighteen most people wish to please, and the conviction that they have not an exterior likely to second that desire brings anything but gratification."(1)

By Shirley this sort of commentary is more assured (and more acute):

"Sisters do not like young ladies to fall in love with their brothers; it seems, if not presumptuous, silly, weak, a delusion, an absurd mistake. They do not love these gentlemen - whatever sisterly affection they may cherish towards them - and that others should, repels them with a sense of crude romance. The first movement, in short, excited by such discovery (as with many parents on finding their children to be in love), is one of mixed impatience and contempt. Reason - if they be rational people - corrects the false feeling in time; but if they be irrational, it is never corrected, and the daughter or sister-in-law is disliked to the end." (2)

This is a development which is successful. But a general development in range and flexibility of ~~the~~ kind analysed in relation to Jane Austen does not occur. If anything, the range of styles becomes more disharmonious from Jane Eyre to Shirley, and perhaps from Shirley to Villette. Shirley's narrator was clearly intended to be a detached sardonic witness of human absurdity like Thackeray's in Vanity Fair, but the style of the opening cannot be kept up, and recurs infrequently - thus only adding to the number of hardly compatible voices in which emotions are ascribed. And Villette introduces, every now and then, a

1. i, p. 150. (Ch.10)

2. ii, p. 114. (Ch.23)

new style - of pregnant economy - which is again extremely effective in itself, but again adds to the confusion of voices. In both cases this seems to me largely a matter of self-conscious 'artistry' becoming more obtrusive.

Again, however, this should not be allowed to take the stress. There are accounts of emotion in Villette superior to anything Charlotte Brontë had managed before, and in general, while the language of presentation in her novels tries to succeed in too many different ways, and needs pruning - especially of adjectives but also of some repetitive phrases and clauses - it is not radically flawed.

One further point needs to be made. In the passages of local psychological commentary just quoted a clear difference in voice will have been observed. And it must be pointed out that Charlotte Brontë goes some way towards finding a distinctive personal style for each of her three first-person narrators, as well as for the third-person narrator in Shirley. Only some way, because each of them calls upon the range of styles already identified, and then sounds like the others; but each has a further style of his or her own. In The Professor there is the abrupt 'masculine' style of William Crimsworth; in Jane Eyre it is the calm style of the mature Jane, passing comment on or explaining the emotions of her younger self; in Villette it is the cryptic style of the morbidly secretive Lucy Snowe.

Characters are given a similar personal style in dialogue. But I do not want closely to analyse the dialogue - the way characters reveal or express emotions in speech - since it seems to me that the characteristics identified in each novelist's narrative style are repeated in their dialogue. Both are capable of giving their characters lifelike and idiosyncratic speech; both depart from this norm when they need to (Charlotte Brontë more often than Jane Austen). George Eliot wrote of Jane Eyre that she wished "the characters would talk a little less like the heroes and heroines of police reports",¹ but this is only one of their styles; as in narrative, dialogue styles diverge sharply in Charlotte Brontë, and cohere in Jane Austen.

This may be traced to the conditions already identified. But before leaving the question of style, and considering the range of idiom Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë call upon for interpretation and appraisal, there are certain implications of each novelist's manner of proceeding which need to be glanced at.

In the first place, general references in both reveal a confidence in an unchanging 'human nature'. As Mandeville, author of the Fable of the Bees, argues early in the eighteenth century:

1. Letters, i, p. 268

"if we consult History both Ancient and Modern and take a view of what has past in the World, we shall find that Human Nature since the Fall of Adam has always been the same". (1)

The discoveries of anthropology have now unsettled this view, but it persisted into the nineteenth century, allowing novelists to assume that whatever they could discover about the life of feeling by introspection, or observation within a limited social or geographical range, was sufficient to write about it with authority: "The effects of human passion, though various, still partake of the same nature".²

It was a matter of controversy, of course, whether a high or low view should be taken of human nature. Charlotte Brontë seems to have thought that Jane Austen took a resolutely low view. Irony can imply such a view, as Hume realised:

"Some exalt our species to the skies... Others insist upon the blind sides of human nature, and can discover nothing, except vanity, in which man surpasses the other animals, whom he affects so much to despise. If an author possess the talent of rhetoric and declamation, he commonly takes part with the former: if his turn lie towards irony and ridicule, he naturally throws himself into the other extreme." (3)

The irony of this is a good illustration of his point; but Hume was not a compulsive ironist, and could see human nature in

1. The Fable of the Bees, ed. F.B.Kaye, (Oxford, 1924) i p. 229
2. Moberly: Rude or Refined Age, p.8.
3. Essays, p. 151

a more favourable light. So could Jane Austen, and in fact she and Charlotte Brontë both allow for dignity as well as meanness in human experience.

But they do conceive human nature differently. The finality of Jane Austen's style points to certain limitations of viewpoint. According to Hume again,

"nothing is more certain, than that despair has almost the same effect upon us with enjoyment, and that we are no sooner acquainted with the impossibility of satisfying any desire, than the desire itself vanishes." (1)

Maria Edgeworth puts the same strange point more simply: "With our hopes, our wishes cease."² If emotions are in themselves rational a rational account will leave nothing out. But according to T.H.Green:

"Man is not really mere man, though he may think himself so. He is always something potentially which he is not actually; always inadequate to himself; and as such, disturbed and miserable." (3)

This was in 1862. The lawyer Thomas Noon Talfourd (Dickens was to dedicate Pickwick to him) had expressed this new conception of human nature as early as 1815. As he expresses it, man is not only "gifted with capacities far beyond the extent of his knowledge, and with leanings and affections far above his earthly destinies",

1. A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A.Selby-Bigge, (Oxford, 1888) p. xxii

2. Julia and Caroline, p. 41

3. Estimate of Fiction, p. 13

he is "impelled by desires which nothing visible can satisfy".¹

A style adequate to this new conception of emotion will necessarily be indefinite - suggestive rather than precise - since, as Talfourd goes on to say

"how can boundaries be assigned to the province of those faculties which breathe and live among all that is visionary and mysterious?" (2)

'Prose-poetry' like Charlotte Brontë's (and Talfourd's) can thus be seen as an attempt to capture some of the nuances, the lights at the further limits of experience.

It can be seen, too, as susceptibility to a new form of metaphysical pathos: the pathos of the incomprehensible. Jane Austen's clarity is the stylistic correlative of empiricism. As Locke argued,

"It is not enough to have a confused perception of something in general. Unless the mind had a distinct perception of different objects and their qualities, it would be capable of very little knowledge". (3)

It is because Jane Austen's perceptions are "distinct", because she has "a clear and distinct perception of things, as they are in their own nature",⁴ that her style is clear. And clarity is a virtue, because the life of feeling is itself intelligible.

1. 'An Attempt to Estimate the Poetical Talent of the Present Age,' Pamphleteer, v (1815), p. 468

2. p. 468

3. Human Understanding, i, p. 202

4. A Key to the Pedigree of Logical Knowledge, (London, 1798), p. 12

There is - to Jane Austen as to empiricists in general - no necessary mystery about emotions: only the limits set by observation and intelligence.

But Jane Austen seems to have been one of the last imaginative writers to be susceptible to the pathos of intelligibility - to find inspiration in the idea (classically celebrated by Pope in his couplet on Newton) that so much could be understood. Charlotte Brontë, like many writers of the first half of the nineteenth century, was inspired instead by the idea that so little could be understood: by "the mysteries of our human nature", as it was commonly expressed. According to the Eclectic reviewer of Shirley, "those who look further into the mysteries of our nature, will readily discover the secret" of Caroline Helstone's attachment to Robert Moore.¹ The excitement Charlotte Brontë found in this notion can be seen from her juvenilia, as when Caroline Vernon is to be initiated into

"the mysteries of humanity now hidden, its passions and sins and sufferings, all its passage of strange error, all its afterscenes of agonized atonement." (2)

Against this, the finality of Jane Austen's style, and its freedom from metaphorical characterisations of emotion, have a further implication: that feelings each have their own definable

1. p. 744

2. Angria, p. 260

character. "Everything is what it is, and not another thing."¹

The use of metaphor in Charlotte Brontë, and the characteristic sources from which metaphors are drawn (flood and storm and organic life), suggests a broader process, a merging of emotional identities in a germinal and sustaining 'life'.

But not at the level of personal identity. It is because of the importance for authenticity of a conjectural historian's positing distinct persons - distinct subjects of experience identical in different experiences - that I have stressed the expression 'personal experience'. Neither Jane Austen nor Charlotte Brontë fail to make this supposition.

They differ, however, in the dangers they avoid. Two different kinds of threat to the integrity of personal experience can be identified: loss in general, common, or 'human' experience (this is, incidentally, why the expression 'human experience' has been used as little as possible) and dissolution into separate susceptibilities or states of consciousness (which is why it is not enough simply to say 'experience'). Scott, I have said, succumbs to the first threat; and in the last chapter Jane Austen's overcoming of the danger after Northanger Abbey was pointed out. It is the second which most threatens Charlotte Brontë.

It can be seen in certain tricks of style: "with her my curiosity

1. Butler: Sermons, p. 23

found gratification";¹ "The impulse under which I acted, the mood controlling me";² "All that was best in Graham sought Paulina".³ These imply divided subjects of experience. But as in the opposite case of Jane Austen, the threat is never more than a threat: Charlotte Brontë dissects without murdering.

The consistency with which these various premises are applied in both novelists points once again to their interest in authenticity.

They would naturally be inclined to call upon an idiom for interpretation and appraisal which would consolidate this. But here they were both confronted with a problem. The idioms which lay most readily to hand led straight back to "Novelism", whether in its emotionalist or moralistic form. (A fairly comprehensive list of examples was given in Chapter 2.)

This was no disadvantage to novelists who were happy to rely on a novelistic psychology: the 'folk psychology' of guilt and remorse already identified, and the more general decorum-governed psychology of which it was an example. Mrs. Inchbald and Maria Edgeworth, for example, show signs of interest in psychological theory, but they still present emotions as governed by the laws of decorum rather than of any science of the mind. And although Mrs.

1. JE, i, p. 125

2. V, ii, p. 73

3. V, ii, p. 285

Gaskell is clearly concerned to do justice to the realities of squalor and ignorance in Manchester, she is reluctant to give equal emphasis to the common psychological consequences of squalor.

But while for such novelists the idiom already established was sufficient, it would have been a serious disadvantage had either Jane Austen or Charlotte Brontë had to rely on it. In fact they each worked out a personal solution to the problem.

In Jane Austen's case this was to do three things: to combine elements from both the moralistic and emotionalist idiom; to use modifiers such as 'real' and 'genuine' with expressions which could otherwise be construed as appeals to one ethos or the other; and (to some extent) to incorporate expressions associated with more substantial moral or philosophical enquiry. In Charlotte Brontë's case the solution was to make radical use of a developed 'scientific' terminology, especially (but not only) that associated with phrenology.

This entails some modification of the accepted accounts of the two novelists' language. In Jane Austen's case (to begin with her again) the argument that she inherited "a prose style in which neither generalization nor abstraction need signify vagueness, because there was close enough agreement as to the scope and significance of such terms"¹ needs qualification. It is less a matter of 'inheritance', and more a matter of development.

1. Lascelles: Jane Austen, p. 107

When Maria Edgeworth uses the expression "a man of sense and virtue"¹ she is assuming agreement; when Jane Austen uses the expression "deficient in ... sense or feeling"² she is soliciting it.

The terms she takes over, in other words, are from diverse sources. It is fair to draw attention to her fondness for "The great abstract nouns of the classical English moralists",³ but only if one also notices that she takes expressions from moralists of different (and sometimes conflicting) traditions.

C.S.Lewis, who is the author of this last observation, cites as examples only the Rambler and the Idler. In this he is representative. There is a near consensus that Jane Austen's moral code is, in essence, the code of Dr. Johnson. Mary Lascelles maintains that "Her acceptance of Johnson's practical wisdom ... colours the view of life which her novels project".⁴ Dr. Leavis argues for the influence of Rasselas "not only on the surface (where it is obvious enough), but in the very ethos of her work".⁵ B.C.Southam judges that among "the external influences most generally at work in the mature novels" is "Johnson's moral rationalism".⁶

1. Belinda, iii, p. 86

2. P & P, p.153

3. C.S.Lewis: 'A Note on Jane Austen', EC, iv (1954), p. 363

4. Jane Austen, p. 43

5. The Common Pursuit, (London, 1952), p. 115

6. Jane Austen's Mss, p. 9

Even Walton Litz, who also ascribes to Jane Austen a " ' pre-romantic' feeling for life" argues that she is "committed... to a Johnsonian system of morality".¹

One would expect then that Jane Austen's moral idiom would be, with minor variations perhaps, the idiom of Dr. Johnson. And in fact Graham Hough, who considers "her most considered moral judgments call to mind the world of Johnson", speaks of "stylistic echoes".² When one compares the idiom of the two writers, however, one notices that Jane Austen takes over the more neutral words (which have in any case a wider usage), that she tends to avoid or play down the strong language of censure, and - most importantly - that she calls upon a further range of idiom which is not found in Johnson.

The presence of this further range of idiom has led Gilbert Ryle to suggest that Shaftesbury's was the predominant influence upon her language of appraisal:

"her ethical vocabulary and idioms are quite strongly laced with aesthetic terms. We hear of 'Moral taste', 'Moral and literary tastes', 'Beauty of mind', 'the beauty of truth and sincerity', 'delicacy of principle', 'the Sublime of Pleasures.' Moreover there is a prevailing correlation between sense of duty, sense of propriety, and aesthetic taste." (3)

1. Jane Austen, p. 13
2. 'Narrative and Dialogue in Jane Austen', Critical Q, xii (1970), p. 225
3. 'Jane Austen and the Moralists', Oxford Review, i (1966), p. 15

He also argues that Jane Austen and Shaftesbury use the word "mind", in "the same apparently idiosyncratic way... for the whole complex unity of a conscious, thinking, feeling and acting person."¹

This hypothesis has the advantage of unsettling the consensus that sees Jane Austen as deriving everything from Johnson, and it establishes what is probably the ultimate source of (one aspect of) her usage; but it is of course unnecessary to posit a direct link with Shaftesbury since phrases such as these derived their immediate currency for Jane Austen from being part of the staple idiom of the 'sensibility' ethos.² More importantly, once again, this account ignores the rest of her usage.

While both accounts are one-sided, however, they point to something which should not be missed. They allow one to qualify the notion of Jane Austen's indifference to general ideas. It is true that Jane Austen claimed (in a letter to James Stanier Clarke, the librarian to the Prince Regent) to be ignorant of "science and philosophy", and even to be "the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress",³ but this is not only mock modesty -

1. pp. 17-18

2. Cf. C.A. Moore: 'Shaftesbury and the Ethical Poets in England, 1700-1760', PMLA, xxxi (1916), pp. 264-325; Edith Birkhead: 'Sentiment and Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century Novel', Essays and Studies, xi (1925), pp. 92-116; A.R. Humphreys: ' "The Friend of Mankind" (1700-60) - An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility: RES, xxiv (1948), pp. 203-218; R.S. Crane: Idea of Humanities, i, pp. 188-213

3. Letters, p. 443

it is an ironic reflection on her correspondent and on novelists who filled their work with obtrusive and irrelevant learning. Chapman has already pointed out that she was a serious reader interested in religion and politics.¹ The language even of her letters reveals a further awareness of contemporary moral and psychological controversy:

"Earle and his wife live in the most private manner imaginable at Portsmouth, without keeping a servant of any kind. What a prodigious innate love of virtue she must have, to marry under such circumstances! " (2)

Her attitude to language is in any case the opposite of inert, and with this kind of awareness it is extremely improbable that she did not give thought to the general implications of usage: she had to take a stand on certain general issues simply in order not to use language slackly.

At the time she was writing these general issues linked questions of morality and psychology too closely for it to be possible to distinguish entirely two separate idioms of appraisal and interpretation. The very word 'moral' meant both 'ethical' and 'mental'. It is therefore not possible here to subdivide the exposition. On the other hand it is possible to separate those moral issues which Jane Austen used her novels

1. JA Facts and Problems, pp. 115, 216

2. Letters, pp. 25-6

among other things - to explore, from those moral issues she had to take a stand on simply in order to use, avoid or modify a particular range of idiom. Only the second is my concern in this chapter.

A good example of the sort of choice she was faced with was whether or where to use the word 'passion'. It has been said that "The opposition between passion and reason is a recurrent theme in Jane Austen's writing",¹ and if she had used these terms at all frequently she would indeed have had to commit herself to such an opposition.

In the 1794 revision of Dyche's dictionary, (a standard eighteenth-century dictionary and the most distinguished after Johnson's) 'passion' is defined as "violent commotion of mind, inclination for, or aversion against, a thing; so anger, love, joy, grief, &c."² 'Commotion' needs a further gloss, and already we have evidence that there is nothing either idiosyncratic or necessarily Shaftesburian about Jane Austen's use of 'mind'; but the key point is that 'passion' is a word that collapses the distinction between feeling and desire. The model of man implied is one of calm and disturbance: there is a state of control, ~~when~~ 'reason' is dominant, and then comes a 'passion' or 'the passions' to destroy this control. The person becomes 'at their mercy' and no

1. Southam: Jane Austen's Mss, p. 43

2. A New General English Dictionary, 17th ed., (London, 1794)

longer in command of himself. So in a minor work on the subject published in 1772, there is reference to "the violence of the Passions",¹ "the disorder of the Passions",² and "the empire of reason, we may... subject our passions to it".³ Human nature becomes a battle-field.

The opposition between reason and passion is explicitly invoked in other novels of Jane Austen's time,⁴ and the notion implicit in the etymology of 'passion' (from passio) - that passions are things that happen to one - is exploited:

"a passion had taken possession of her mind, which kept her broad awake the remainder of the night, - the passion of jealousy." (5)

And the word is extensively used by Johnson.⁶

Nor was it at all dated in Jane Austen's lifetime. In 1811 the poet and novelist Charlotte Dacre ('Rosa Matilda') published a novel called The Passions. Scott uses the word in 1824, as does Charlotte Brontë in her critical letter on Emma.

1. The Philosophy of the Passions, (London, 1772), p. 1

2. i, p. 21

3. i, p. 6

4. Simple Story, p. 131; Belinda, ii, p. 263

5. Belinda, ii, p. 42

6. See, e.g., Rambler, i, p. 271; The Idler and The Adventurer, ed. W.J.Bate, John M. Bullitt, L.F.Powell, (New Haven, 1963), pp. 100, 490

7. Scott on Novelists, p. 34

Jane Austen, on the other hand, hardly ever uses it.

Willoughby in Sense and Sensibility uses it in his long explanation of his misconduct to Elinor,¹ and Darcy speaks of the "force of passion" which overcame his pride, when confessing his love to Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice.² In the narrative proper of Sense and Sensibility it is used twice - ironically - as a synonym for 'love'.³ In Mansfield Park "the disappointments of selfish passion" are one of the things the narrator considers can excite little pity.⁴

This is sparing, and suggests little real function for the word in Jane Austen's moral idiom. The single exception is the reflection by Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice on the likely future happiness of Wickham and Lydia:

"how little of permanent happiness could belong to a couple who were only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue, she could easily conjecture." (5)

Mary Lascelles points out the stylistic awkwardness of this sentence;⁶ all one can say about the use of the words "passions", is that Jane Austen seems to have been momentarily off guard.

1. p. 322

2. p. 198

3. pp. 90, 378

4. p. 464. This is not offered as an exhaustive list.

5. p. 312. (Ch. 50)

6. Jane Austen, p. 92

Her main effort, that is, to reconcile reason and emotion. Of Anne Elliot in Persuasion she writes, "She had ... meant to oppose the too-common idea of spirit and gentleness being incompatible with each other".¹ It is a similar opposition to "too-common" notions that seems to inspire Jane Austen here. She does have Edmund in Mansfield Park say that "Crawford's feelings ... have hitherto been too much his guides",² and Emma say of Jane Fairfax's dissimulations, "her affection must have overpowered her judgment."³ More often, however, she goes out of her way to suggest the unity of the two principles. Children reach the "age of feeling and reason";⁴ a bad action is done "improperly and unfeelingly";⁵ and when Emma is reproaching herself for her treatment of Harriet she reflects, "How inconsiderate, how indelicate, how irrational, how unfeeling had been her conduct!"⁶

Again, moral judgment in Jane Austen is not a question of one faculty - whether 'reason' or 'understanding' or 'moral sense' or 'feeling' - but of the whole person. The phrase "gross want of

1. p. 172

2. p. 351

3. E, p. 419

4. MP, p. 391

5. MP, p. 349

6. E, p. 408

feeling and humanity"¹ is significant. Of all her novels, Mansfield Park is the one in which her idiom of appraisal is deployed most extensively, and there we find that expressions like "yourself, your rational self" and "the right reason in her" are complemented by "amiable sensations" and the collocations "Her heart and her judgment", "had not affection or principle enough."²

Furthermore, it is not Marianne Dashwood's feelings, nor even her failure to suppress them, that is condemned in Sense and Sensibility. It is her selfishness, or thoughtlessness, in failing to keep them under sufficient control to hide them from those she could only upset by revealing them, that judgment is passed on. To believe otherwise is to accept the "threadbare morality" of Mary Bennet in Pride and Prejudice. When Elizabeth decides to visit the ill Jane at Netherfield:

"I admire the activity of your benevolence," observed Mary, 'but every impulse of feeling should be guided by reason; and, in my opinion, exertion should always be in proportion to what is required.'" (3)

It might be thought that the notion of a divided human nature was implicit in a faculty psychology. And it is true that Jane Austen speaks of 'the understanding', 'the heart' (both these are in Johnson as elsewhere), and "That very dear part of Emma, her fancy";⁴

1. MP, p. 388

2. pp. 347, 324; 367; 159, 163

3. p. 32. (Ch. 7)

4. E, p. 214

that she refers to 'dispositions'; and that she can say that a particular incident (in this case Colonel Brandon's ceasing to visit Barton Park in Sense and Sensibility) "filled the mind and raised the wonder" of Mrs. Jennings¹ - as though a particular emotion were there to be raised. But even in Sense and Sensibility, an early work and of all her novels the most conservative in its morality and the most crude in its psychology, she does not really conceive of "component faculties of the human mind", as Coleridge, for example, understood them.² Hers is a psychology of character, or 'temper'.

The word she prefers, both in ascriptions and judgments, is 'feeling'. This was a word with much more favourable connotations in Jane Austen's time (by Charlotte Brontë's time, to judge from her own usage, the difference was merely one of degree, with "passions" the stronger word). And it was a relatively new word.. In the early editions of Dyche's dictionary it is defined as "one of the external senses, whereby we get the ideas of solid, hard, soft, light, colour, heat, cold &c."³ Only in the 1794 revision does the entry continue, "also sensibility, tenderness, perception." The OED dates this usage as early as 1588 but it gives no earlier date than 1771 for the plural

1. p. 70

2. See, e.g. Biographia Literaria, i, p. 14

3. A New General English Dictionary, begun by the Reverend Mr. Thomas Dyche, and now finish'd by William Pardon, 4th ed. (Dublin, 1744)

(in the sense relevant here). And no one who has read at all widely in eighteenth-century philosophy can have failed to notice the way in which the word gradually supplants 'passion' in the relevant contexts. Earlier, even those philosophers whose aim it is "to show the fair side of the human Temper",¹ while they supplement 'passions' with the softer 'affections', still speak of, for example, "the social passions"² - where 'feelings' would have been a much more suitable word had it been available. (The intermediate stage can be detected in a comment by William Richardson in 1774: "To be acquainted with the nature of any passion, we must know by what combination of feelings it is excited".³)

An advantage was that it suggested unity in the person who felt. According to a comprehensive book of synonyms by George Crabb, a legal and miscellaneous writer who at the time of compiling this book was a mature student at Oxford: "To feel is said of the whole frame, inwardly and outwardly; it is the accompaniment of existence."⁴ This reference to the "whole" person lies behind the more restricted "moral application", and makes feeling' a more general word than "sensation" or "sense".⁵

1. Francis Hutcheson: An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, (London, 1728), p. viii

2. Hume: Essays, p. 154

3. Shakespeare's Characters, p. 18

4. English Synonymes, (London, 1816), p. 455

5. pp. 455-6

Feelings can thus be associated not only with the "mind", but, in "serious" contexts, with the soul: when Louisa Musgrove is reprieved Anne sees Captain Wentworth

"with folded arms, and face concealed, as if overpowered by the various feelings of his soul, and trying by prayer and reflection to calm them." (1)

A possible disadvantage was its use as a cult word in the sensibility ethos. The Man of Feeling was consciously named.² It was this cult use, in which it was associated with "taste" and "delicacy", that made Johnson say "he hated a Feeler."³

In Emma, therefore, Jane Austen has Emma reflect that the Martins' behaviour when encountering Harriet at Ford's revealed "real feeling" and "genuine delicacy"⁴ (the modifiers serve the purpose both of inhibiting cult-responses and clearing the Martins of affectation: earlier Mr. Knightley is made to speak of "English delicacy"⁵). But to the actual assumptions of the cult - that feeling and taste and delicacy go together - Jane Austen shows herself to be sympathetic. And to the opposition between "feeling" and "the world". There can be little doubt that she endorses the terms of Elizabeth Bennet's judgment on Charlotte Lucas:

1. Pers., p. 112. (Ch. 12)

2. Cf. Erik Krämestäs: A Study of the Word 'Sentimental', and of other linguistic characteristics of Eighteenth-Century Sentimentalism in England, (Helsinki, 1951), pp. 92-3

3. Thraliana, ed. Katherine C. Balderston, 2nd ed., (Oxford, 1951), i, p. 541

4. p. 179

5. p. 149

"She had always felt that Charlotte's opinion of matrimony was not exactly like her own, but she could not have supposed it possible that when called into action, she would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage." (1)

And both her narrator and her admirable characters take "want of feeling" to be something contemptible.

One reason may be the association of "feeling" with awareness or perception - something one could learn from, as one learns what physical objects are like by 'feeling' them (in the earlier sense.) Mrs. Piozzi, earlier Mrs. Thrale and the friend of Johnson, notes this association with "quickness of perception" in her book of synonyms (which came out in 1794, halfway between Trusler and Crabb) - and also notes that this usage is new, and not easily found in a good dictionary.² For Wordsworth and Coleridge, of course, this connection was integral: profound thought at any rate was impossible without feeling.³

If this association at all touches Jane Austen's use of the word, the question arises: what was her attitude to the notion of the "moral sense"? The question is given added point by her sympathy to the association of feeling with delicacy and taste, since such an

1. P & P, p. 125. (Ch. 22)

2. British Synonymy, (London, 1794), i, pp. 234-5

3. See, e.g. Coleridge: Collected Letters, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, (Oxford, 1956-71), ii, p. 388

association underpins the notion.

The term may have been invented by Shaftesbury; he certainly gave it currency.¹ And if Jane Austen was at all substantially indebted to him (as Gilbert Ryle suggests) she ought to have demonstrated some sympathy with a notion so close to the centre of his philosophy.

In Dyche (the 1794 revision) the moral sense is defined as "the faculty by which we discern what is good, virtuous, beautiful, &c. in men's actions, manners, characters, &c." Its use to the emotionalist novel can be seen in such run-of-the-mill practitioners as Frances Brooke in 1769:

"Women are religious as they are virtuous, less from principles founded on reasoning and argument, than from elegance of mind, delicacy of moral taste, and a certain quick perception of the beautiful and becoming in every thing." (2)

It is also part of the moral world of Evelina, present for example in Mr. Villars' remarks about Mme Duval:

"As soon would I discuss the effect of sound with the deaf, or the nature of colours with the blind, as aim at illuminating with conviction a mind so warped by prejudice, so much the slave of unruly and illiberal passions." (3)

1. See William E. Alderman: 'Shaftesbury and the Doctrine of the Moral Sense in the Eighteenth Century', PMLA, xlii (1931), pp. 1087-94; cf. the same author's 'The Significance of Shaftesbury in English Speculation', PMLA, xxxviii (1923), pp. 175-95
2. The History of Emily Montague, (London, 1769), i, p. 225. (Quoted in J.M.S. Tompkins: The Popular Novel in England, 1770-1800, (London, 1932), p. 94)
3. p. 127. (Vol. 1, Letter 28)

This is much purer Shaftesbury than can be found in Jane Austen. Shaftesbury says:

"No sooner are actions viewed, no sooner the human affections and passions discerned (and they are most of them as soon discerned as felt) than straight an inward eye distinguishes, and sees the fair and shapely, the amiable and admirable, apart from the deformed, the foul, the odious, or the despicable." (1)

This point of view, however, is one Jane Austen puts into the mouth of Marianne Dashwood at her most fallible:

"'I am afraid,' replied Elinor, 'that the pleasantness of an employment does not always evince its propriety.' 'On the contrary, nothing can be a stronger proof of it, Elinor; for if there had been any real impropriety in what I did, I should have been sensible of it at the time, for we always know when we are acting wrong, and with such a conviction I could have had no pleasure.'" (2)

On the other hand, Jane Austen's position does not quite seem that of Maria Edgeworth in Belinda. When Mr. Vincent is prepared to keep the story of his gambling losses from Mr. Percival, Maria Edgeworth comments:

"here the acuteness of his feelings was to his own mind an excuse for dissimulation: so fallacious is moral instinct, unenlightened or uncontrolled by reason or religion." (3)

Jane Austen (until Persuasion, at any rate, when she moves nearer to Shaftesbury) seems to occupy a position halfway between these, Her word is "conscience". But her picture of conscience is

1. Characteristics, ii, p. 137

2. S&S, p. 68. (Ch. 13)

3. iii, p. 245. (Ch. 28)

not the more traditional - the light of God set in the brain to pass authoritative judgment. It is in fact much closer to the view elaborated in the eighteenth century by Bishop Butler.

She may of course have read Butler. There is no reference to him in her surviving letters, but his eighteenth-century popularity was such that there is a fairly good chance her father had a copy of his sermons in his library - which was a large one, though dispersed after the family left Steventon in 1801. On the other hand thought is a co-operative activity, and Jane Austen need not have met so basic a concept as this of conscience in any book.

Butler's notion of conscience is a result of his attempt to effect a compromise between the ideas of the rational intuitionists (Cudworth, Clarke, Balguy) and the 'moral sense' school (Shaftesbury, Hutcheson). His "conscience", or "reflection" is a faculty which shares the properties both of the moral sense and of the 'understanding' or 'moral reason' of the rationalists.¹ (The word 'reflection' in Butler's time meant not only "Consideration, Meditation;" but also what we call introspection: "the Notice which the Mind takes of its own Operations and the manner of them"²). Its function Butler takes to be: distinguishing between conflicting principles of action, passing judgment upon actions and the self who acts, and directing all other

1. Sermons, pp. 38-9, 245-57

2. Glossographia Anglicana Nova, (London, 1707)

"principles, passions and motives of action".¹ It was most usefully consulted in a 'cool hour', and then was almost infallible:

"let any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself, is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the least doubt but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstance." (2)

If Jane Austen read him, Butler may have been one of the channels through which some of Shaftesbury's ideas reached her. Butler adopts many of the earlier philosopher's ideas, and in the judgment of a contemporary of Jane Austen's (born ten years before her though writing later) "Butler owed more to Lord Shaftesbury than to all other writers besides."³ But his own contributions to eighteenth-century thinking - the particular notion of 'conscience' and a consequent interest in the psychology of moral judgments - are the features of his work which most strikingly anticipate Jane Austen's.

Like Jane Austen's, Butler's picture of conscience is not the more traditional. Rather he exploits the double meaning of 'reflection' to suggest both that conscience is easily consulted and that it is a working faculty. The mind must be calm; it must review, survey, judge. This I think is Jane Austen's belief. The goodness or otherwise of an action cannot be determined immediately, on the basis of instinctive

1. Sermons, pp. 46-59

2. p. 63

3. James Mackintosh: Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, 2nd ed., (Edinburgh, 1837), p. 191

approval or distaste (as Marianne Dashwood seems to believe); it can only be determined after reflection. She admits, "How quick come the reasons for approving what we like!"¹ but she also believes, I think, that insofar as the mind can, for example, "disengage itself from the injustice and selfishness of angry feelings",² it can reach a limited but valid moral conclusion.

Is there in fact any integral relation between taste and morality in Jane Austen? Can conclusions such as Gilbert Ryle urges be founded on her use of, say, "the beauty of truth and sincerity" - even in the mouth of Mr. Knightley?³

They certainly apply to her emotionalist contemporaries. Mrs. Radcliffe, for example, continuously uses the way characters respond to music, painting or scenery as an index of moral worth. In The Italian the nun Olivia is first shown to be a good woman by her having a noticeably better voice than the other nuns.⁴

But the question immediately arises: does Jane Austen distinguish the moral worth of people in this way? Are taste and morality two aspects of virtue? or are they rather two separate (if related) virtues?

1. Pers, p. 15

2. E, p. 403

3. E, p. 446

4. p. 86

The evidence of the novels is fairly conclusive. They are separate virtues. The use of an 'aesthetic' moral idiom is, in any case, not even confined to writers in sympathy with the sensibility ethos. Adam Sibbit, a conservative writer opposed to the ethos, asks the young statesman to contemplate the life and works of great forerunners, such as Burke, in order to "imbibe a true taste for moral beauty and moral grace."¹

What about the rest of Jane Austen's idiom of appraisal which recalls the sensibility ethos? It has to be conceded that this is extensive: to the words already instanced must be added "candour", and "sensibility" itself, together with significant conjunctions such as "beauty of mind",² "elegancies of mind",³ "her own more elegant and cultivated mind",⁴ and "the mind of taste and tenderness".⁵ But this is complemented with the more solid idiom of conservative morality: "judgment", "integrity", "rectitude", "sense", "understanding", "propriety".

At the same time it ought not to be forgotten that this is an achieved compromise. Jane Austen was well aware of the tendency of certain words to cluster together. She remarks playfully in an early

1. Influence of Luxury, p. 113

2. MP, p. 197

3. E, p. 136

4. Pers, p. 41

5. Pers, p. 84

letter to Cassandra, "Mrs. Milles, Mr. John Toke, & in short everybody of any Sensibility enquired in tender Strains after You."¹ For Johnson, too, "sensibility" and "tenderness" go together. But in Johnson they are both weaknesses: it is argued against us that "we may think the blow violent only because we have made ourselves delicate and tender";² and there may be compassion, but no praise, for "the sensibility of the tender mind".³ It is Jane Austen who associates sense and sensibility.

Where did she stand on the question: is human nature naturally benevolent or naturally corrupt? This is an issue which in some sense underlies almost all the issues so far considered, and one which governs the choice of a much wider range of idiom than might be appreciated at first sight. (it is not only the epithet 'good-natured' which is in question.)

'Passion' itself implied that feelings were at best dangerous: at worst they were evil. Since feelings are natural, this implied natural corruption in at least part of the self. The corruption of unregenerate human nature, "self-interested, inclined to the wrong",⁴

1. Letters, p. 14

2. Rambler, iii, p. 209

3. Idler, p. 55

4. Foster: Letters to a Friend, ii, p. 29

was an essential element in Evangelicalism, as I mentioned in Chapter 2. Trusler gives as an illustration of 'benignity':

"From the very instant of our birth, we experience the benignity of heaven, and malignity of corrupt nature."¹ Johnson's position is not absolutely clear. In an Adventurer, he states "Mankind are universally corrupt" but goes on "but corrupt in different degrees".² It is clear, however, that he had little confidence in feelings as motivators of moral conduct:

"JOHNSON: 'Pity is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them.'" (3)

It is also clear that he had a fairly tough-minded attitude to "natural affections" - the supposed special bond of love which bound parents and children.⁴

This is the side of Johnson attacked in an enquiry into his moral writings by William Mudford, published in 1802. Mudford accuses Johnson of 'enthusiasm' and superstition, but he singles out for special condemnation the tendency of his writings which is "destructive of all confidence between man and man, and subversive of all the social

1. Trusler: Words Esteemed Synonyms, i, p. 28

2. p. 489

3. Boswell: Johnson, i, p. 437

4. See, e.g. Rasselas, pp. 115-16. See also Robert Voitle: Samuel Johnson the Moralist, (Cambridge: Mass., 1961), esp. pp. 50-3

affections."¹ But it was a side that many influential writers in Jane Austen's time found sympathetic - among them Mrs. West, author of two extremely popular conduct books. To her the great danger in "the false doctrine of human perfectibility"² was not so much that it led to pride in the individual as that it led to revolution in the state. It was therefore essential to insist upon original sin - "an hereditary taint, the consequence of primeval rebellion"³ and to oppose cant words such as "generosity, greatness of soul, liberality benevolence", which are really "pride, pertinacity, indiscretion, and extravagance."⁴

Shaftesbury of course took the opposite view, as did Butler. To them the mind has to be "led astray" - as Mary Crawford's mind seems to have been to Fanny Price⁵ - since natural feelings are good: "Men are so much one body, that in a peculiar manner they feel for each other, shame, sudden danger, resentment, honour, prosperity, distress".⁶

It may be interesting to work out Jane Austen's position. The evidence of "mind" is inconclusive, since the word is - pace Gilbert Ryle - used by both sides in the dispute. It occurs for example in

1. A Critical Enquiry into the Moral Writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson, (London, 1802), p. ix
2. Letters to a Young Lady, in which the Duties and Character of Women are considered, (London, 1806), i, p. 15
3. p. 16
4. p. 17
5. MP, p. 367
6. Butler: Sermons, p. 41

the Letters on the Improvement of the Mind¹ by Mrs. Chapone (supposed by Thackeray to be the inspiration of Miss Pinkerton's academy, and in real life the friend of Hannah More.) It also occurs in Gisborne's chapter-heading "On the peculiar features by which the character of the female mind is naturally discriminated from that of the other sex."² Both writers use "mind" in the wider sense on which Ryle rests his case. Only three of Mrs. Chapone's chapters, for example, deal with mental improvement. This sense is widespread in the novel of the time.³ It can be seen in fact as a kind of secular translation of "soul", and the antithesis "mind"/"person" - exploited for example in Goldsmith's chapter-heading "The description of the family of Wakefield, in which a kindred likeness prevails as well of minds as of persons"⁴ - as a similar translation of the older "soul"/"body" antithesis. (In Jane Austen, of course, "person" is always the physical person.)

Nor can any conclusions be drawn from her idiom of particular ascription. Her preference of 'feeling' to 'passion' has already been commented on. Other words she uses here

1. (Dublin, 1773)

2. Duties of the Female Sex. (Title of Chapter 3)

3. See, e.g., Simple Story, p. 6; Beckford: Modern Novel Writing, p. 153; John Moore: Mordaunt, ed. W.L. Renwick, (London, 1965), p. 9

4. The Vicar of Wakefield, ed. Arthur Friedman, (London, 1974), (Title of Chapter 1)

are: 'state of mind', 'sentiment', 'sensation', 'emotion', and 'agitation'. The first preserves something of the older usage of "mind" into the twentieth century, but when "mind" meant the whole personality, the phrase must have been more expressive. It is necessary to remind oneself of this implication of the whole person to appreciate the sense of "he had passed from a thoroughly distressed state of mind, to something so like perfect happiness, that it could bear no other name"¹ - or even that of "grandeur of the country, and the retirement of Lyme in the winter, appeared exactly adapted to Captain Benwick's state of mind."² "Sentiment" to the turn of the century meant firstly 'thought' or 'opinion' (Trusler distinguishes, "Sentiment, Opinion, Thought".)³ Jane Austen uses it in this sense.⁴ She uses it more often, however, in the sense of 'feeling', especially the way one feels about somebody else. This is the sense which Mrs. Piozzi says in 1794 has recently crept into "talk", if not into good written usage.⁵ Thus Sir Thomas Bertram,

1. E, p. 432

2. Pers, p. 97

3. Cf. Crabb: English Synonymes, pp. 644-5, 713; see also B. Sprague Allen: 'The Dates of Sentimental and its Derivatives', PMLA, xlviii (1933), pp. 303-7; Erämetsä: Word 'Sentimental', pp. 23-5

4. See, e.g., E, pp. 201, 266

5. British Synonymy, ii, pp. 243-6

in Mansfield Park, was guilty of not taking enough notice of his daughter's "sentiments" regarding Rushworth;¹ in Emma, both Mr. Knightley's love of Emma and jealousy of Frank Churchill are "sentiments";² when Anne Elliot in Persuasion wants to know how Captain Wentworth now feels about her, she asks herself "Now, how were his sentiments to be read?"³ "Sensations" is used - as mentioned in the last chapter - in a broader sense than is common now, as a more or less exact synonym of 'feeling' (but without 'feeling's' uses as a term of appraisal.) "Emotion" had for some time been a closer synonym of "agitation" than of 'feeling'. The expression "we might despise them without emotion", from the Man of Feeling,⁴ would make little sense if the modern meaning were substituted. A calm contempt is indicated. A clear example of the closeness of the word to "agitation" comes in A Simple Story. Miss Milner's hands shake, "but no other emotion witnessed what she felt."⁵ This sense continues at least to 1816: George Crabb distinguishes "Agitation, Emotion,

1. p. 461

2. p. 432

3. p. 60

4. p. 41

5. p. 178

Trepidation, Tremor".¹ There may thus be more paradox underlying Wordsworth's "emotion recollected in tranquillity" than twentieth-century readers are likely to realise. Jane Austen's three early novels exploit this earlier sense; but in her three later novels there seems to be some progression towards the modern meaning (a fact which suggests that the use of the word in the earlier novels survives from the first drafts, and also suggests some conservatism in Crabb's distinction.) By Persuasion this is obvious. Something of the old sense seems to survive in "The first ten minutes had its awkwardness and its emotion",² but in "Surprise was the strongest emotion raised by their appearance",³ the modern meaning seems more apt.

"Agitation" itself would seem to need no further gloss. But it does raise the question: agitation of what? It may be agitation of the whole "mind", and sometimes it clearly is. But it is also agitation of "spirits".

This area of Jane Austen's idiom of interpretation might be expected to be better evidence for her attitude to the 'benevolent'/'corrupt' issue, since it is more distinctively psychological.

1. English Synonymes. pp. 59-60

2. p. 153

3. p. 216

In fact it provides no evidence of this kind, since Jane Austen uses the physiological vocabulary of "spirits", "nerves" and "humours" less to explain than to characterise. All the same, I think that modern readers assume that Jane Austen is here using dead metaphors when she is in fact probably being quite literal, so it seems worthwhile looking at this area of idiom before passing on to an area which does suggest some answer to the 'benevolent'/'corrupt' question.

One cannot tell whether Jane Austen was fully committed to the doctrine of temperaments, but this could still be taken seriously in Charlotte Brontë's time, as I shall try to show later in this chapter, and so references such as that to Captain Wentworth's "sanguine temper",¹ need not be taken metaphorically. (Though they may have to be, if what I argue about 'temper' below is accepted.) Again, while "humour" is a synonym of 'mood' in Jane Austen, its close association with "spirits" ought not to go unnoticed. In Sense and Sensibility, for example, we find not only "They were all in high spirits and good humour",² but Mrs. Dashwood's comment: "this is all an effusion of immediate want of spirits, Edward. You are in a melancholy humour".³

1. Pers, p. 27

2. p. 63

3. p. 103

Early editions of Dyche's dictionary define 'humour' as

"any juice or liquor that any way arises in, or affects the body; also the disposition or constitution of a person's mind or body, occasioned by the too great or too small quantity of some particular juice or fluid in the body".

The 1794 edition omits the explanation in terms of fluids, but Crabb shows that it was still tenable in 1816:

"Humor literally signifies moisture or fluid, in which sense it is used for the fluids of the human body; and as far as these humors or their particular state is connected with, or has its influence on, the animal spirits and the moral feelings, so far is humor applicable to moral agents." (1)

'Nerves' are more specifically medical. In an early letter Jane Austen says of her brother Edward

"If his nervous complaint proceeded from a suppression of something that ought to be thrown out, which does not seem unlikely, the first of these disorders [a stomach complaint] may really be a remedy".(2)

Susie Tucker notes how 'nervous' switched during the eighteenth-century from the sense 'strong and forcible' - because 'muscular' - to 'weak and susceptible' - as a result of the new medical use. She cites Dr. Cheyne's On Nervous Diseases (this is in fact the sub-title of a work called The English Malady, published in 1733) - and notes how affectation of "nerves" became a standing joke.³

1. English Synonymes, p. 546

2. Letters, p. 44

3. Protean Shape, p. 120

This explains the comedy of both Mrs. Bennet's nerves, and Isabella's in Emma - she "had many fears and many nerves".¹ The notion went on being taken seriously in medicine however. The doctor John Cooke published his Treatise on Nervous Diseases in 1823.

'Spirits' seem to have been conceived as some sort of mobile vapour. The expression "animal spirits" actually derives from 'anima', the soul, and not from a belief in brute energy, but by Jane Austen's time this seems to have been forgotten. On the other hand, in a paper on wit and humour read to the Royal Irish Academy in 1789, William Preston, a Dublin dramatist, still assumes their real existence. In mirth, he says,

"the mind is but slightly affected... The due secretion of the humours is but little disturbed, and no very violent access of animal spirits is thrown on the breast".(2)

It is hard not to see "spirits dancing in private rapture"³ as merely figurative, but except in expressions such as "in spirits" or "out of spirits", the mobility of spirits is emphasised: they rise or flutter, get irritated or depressed (this is

1. p. 92

2. 'Essay on Ridicule, Wit and Humour', Trans. Royal Irish Academy, ii (1788), Polite Literature, p. 78. (Dates sic.)

3. Pers, p. 240

where 'depression' comes from). Since their rising or falling is, however, at least to some degree in the control of the self - Elinor Dashwood replies to Lucy Steele "with an exertion of spirits which increased with her increase of emotion"¹ - Jane Austen did not need to consider them definitely literal or definitely figurative. Her general attitude to the relation between emotions and bodily change may well have been that of Shaftesbury's follower, the philosopher Francis Hutcheson:

"Whether the only Seat of these Habits, or the Occasion rather of these Dispositions, be in the Body; or whether the Soul itself does not, by frequent Returns of any Passion, acquire some greater Disposition to receive and retain it again, let those determine, who sufficiently understand the Nature of either the one or the other." (2)

Jane Austen, in fact, explains emotions in the same way as she presents them - in terms of persons. Two forms are common: a reference back to general experience, and a reference to a person's particular character. It is the first which can be seen in a comment like "such violence of affliction indeed could not be supported forever".³ No. (psychological) reason why is

1. S & S, p. 130

2. Passions and Affections, p. 38

3. S & S, p. 83

offered; this is simply the way things are. This sort of explanation is intelligible enough, but the second, and its attendant idiom, needs closer attention.

It seems, in the first place, to have been a form of explanation that became second nature to her as quite a young girl. In 'Frederic and Elfrida', one of the earliest of her extant juvenile works - perhaps the very earliest, since it comes first in Volume the First - it is because Charlotte's "character was a willingness to oblige every one" that she brings her friend a bonnet.¹ In later life Jane Austen's terms are "affections", "propensities", and (most important) "temper" and "disposition". Are these naturally benevolent or naturally corrupt?

The key word is 'disposition'. In reading a comment such as Hume's "mankind are almost entirely guided by constitution and temper",² or Mrs. Barbauld's "the varieties of temper and disposition in men are infinite",³ it is possible to miss the distinction implied. As Crabb explains it, 'disposition' is a matter of the "whole mind", 'temper' a matter of "the bias or tone of the feelings".

1. Minor Works, p. 4

2. Essays, p. 222

3. Misc. Pieces in Prose, p. 13

'Disposition' is also permanent, something one can do nothing about. Errors of 'temper' can be corrected if there is a good disposition, "but where there is a bad disposition there are no hopes of amendment."¹

There is some internal evidence for Jane Austen's considering 'disposition' the permanent feature, in particular her association of the word with "nature". She writes of Elizabeth Bennet:

"It was not in her nature, however, to increase her vexations, by dwelling on them. She was confident of having performed her duty, and to fret over unavoidable evils, or augment them by anxiety, was no part of her disposition."(2)

And Anne Elliot concludes of Mrs. Smith

"A submissive spirit might be patient, a strong understanding would supply resolution, but here was something more; here was that elasticity of mind, that disposition to be comforted, that power of turning readily from evil to good, and of finding employment which carried her out of herself, which was from Nature alone."(3)

Against this are expressions such as "Catherine's disposition was not naturally sedentary"⁴ - which might be one word shorter if 'disposition' were necessarily innate - and some references

1. English Synonymes, pp. 386-7

2. P & P, p. 232. (Ch. 41)

3. Pers. p. 154. (Ch. 17)

4. NA, p. 240

which suggest something as transitory as 'opinion' or 'mood'.¹
 This second instance seems to reflect a further sense of the word, however. As for the first, many explanations are possible. The important point, however, is that 'disposition' need not by itself necessarily suggest what is innate, for the distinction to hold: it only needs to be the word which is most readily used for the purpose.

The crucial question becomes then: are Jane Austen's characters assumed to have vicious 'dispositions' (or 'natural dispositions')? And the answer would seem to be: never. Where she sees something to blame in a character (even something so slightly to blame as John Knightley's reserve) she speaks of 'temper'. When she speaks of 'disposition' it is to give credit.

One reference to a vicious 'disposition' occurs: "I am inclined to think that her own disposition must be naturally bad, or she would not be guilty of such an enormity, at so early an age."² It may be of some help in determining Jane Austen's own attitude to notice that this comment (on Lydia Bennet) occurs in a letter from Mr. Collins.

Further evidence of her own more optimistic attitude to human nature is provided by her obvious preference of the lower key "affections" (things by which one is affected) and "inclination"

1. See, e.g., NA, p. 208; S & S, p. 28

2. P & P, p. 297

to "propensities". Crabb suggests that 'propensity' indicates "a downward direction".¹ This need not be so: in A Simple Story Dorriforth is said to be a stranger to the real propensities of [Miss Milner's] mind".² Earlier, Hume writes "A propensity to hope and joy is real riches: One to fear and sorrow, real poverty."³ What is clear, however, is that 'propensity' once again suggests something more permanent, perhaps innate: 'inclinations' and 'affections' are amenable to control. Jane Austen does use 'propensities' (her characters more than the narrator), but it is not a word much weight of explanation is rested on. She clearly prefers to explain feelings in terms of the local and controllable rather than in terms of the continuous or the unchangeable.

The rest of her usage bears this out. What she concedes are differences in intelligence and emotional susceptibility - her own terms are "understanding" and "heart". Here "nature" does provide variably: "Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, and the deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education or society".⁴ Mrs. Smith's "spring of felicity was in the glow of her spirits, as her

1. English Synonymes, p. 558

2. Simple Story, p. 8

3. Essays, p. 220

4. P&P, p. 70

friend Anne's was in the warmth of her heart."¹

'Heart' is also used, of course, as a synonym of 'conscience'. The expression "heart or conscience" occurs in Persuasion.² Emma finds something in her treatment of Harriet "which her own heart could not approve".³ Johnson uses the word in this way:

"To be driven by external motives from the path which our own heart approves.. is to submit tamely to the lowest and most ignominious slavery". (4)

But it is feelings, especially feelings of tenderness and generosity, that the word is used of in such expressions as 'goodness of heart'. 'Goodness of nature' is similarly innate, but it refers to the same restricted range of feelings, as does its opposite 'ill nature': Miss Bingley's "ill-natured attack" in Pride and Prejudice, is unkind.⁵ It is not her whole 'nature' that is in question.

Immorality, as opposed to insensitivity or coldness of heart, is never nature's fault alone. It is a matter of "character", or (above all) of "temper". Darcy in Pride and Pejudice argues

¹. Pers, p. 252

². p. 199

³. E, p. 185

⁴. Rambler, iii, p. 209. (185)

⁵. p. 269

"There is, I believe, in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome." (1)

But the very feature of his own "disposition" he is here referring to - his inability to change his opinion of people, the "Prejudice" of the title - is something he in fact overcomes. And when he has actually come round to the correct (Jane Austen's) opinion, it is education, and not "disposition", which he considers responsible for his earlier bad behaviour:

"As a child I was taught what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit." (2)

Two brief further points need to be made on this score. Firstly, while education is sometimes, it is not always, necessary as a corrective. The novelist Amelia Opie, in her Temper of 1812, includes on the title page of all three volumes the maxim: "A horse not broken becometh headstrong, and a child left to himself will be wilful." In the novel itself can be encountered "the violence of her uncorrected temper",³ "the intoxications of self-love",⁴ - 'self-love' is not one of Jane Austen's terms - and pointing

¹. p. 58. (Ch. 11)

². p. 369. (Ch. 58)

³. (London, 1812), i, p. 15

⁴. i, p. 16

the moral at the end, "the importance of a well-governed temper".¹
This is to take a much stronger line than Jane Austen.

Secondly, there is nothing particularly old-fashioned about her idiom. I have referred to her conservative literary tastes, but her idiom of interpretation is the idiom of her time. De Quincey, for example, born ten years later, and writing four years after her death, uses her terms for psychological analysis. He writes of the peculiar pride of the children of bishops, and adds: "Doubtless, a powerful understanding, or unusual goodness of nature, will preserve a man from such weakness".²

A final point about Jane Austen's idiom of appraisal. While she is clearly convinced of the importance of education in the formation of character, she does not insist on the need for a specifically Christian education. And yet to Hannah More in 1819 this was "Britain's last, best hope".³ And to Adam Sibit in 1800 while education should hold up "the charms of virtue" to young people⁴, this is secondary. Its first effort must be to impress a due sense of religion.⁵

1. iii, p. 368

2. 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater', London Mag, iv (1821), p. 300

3. Moral Sketches, p. 112

4. Influence of Luxury, pp. 134-5

5. pp. 116-61

Moreover, Jane Austen has less to say about the importance of education in checking "insubordination". Hannah More notes that, frightened for their property and their lives, the rich finally abandoned the argument that the poor would behave better if kept illiterate and ignorant, and began to provide them with a Christian education. But why, she asks, do they not provide a Christian education for their own children?

"If we have begun to instruct the poor with a view to check the spirit of insubordination, that spirit requires little less suppression in our own families." (1)

'Suppression' is not an element in Jane Austen's idiom of appraisal, nor "Self-abasement, self-examination, and prayer",² nor Mrs. West's "spirit of insubordination and discontent".³

Nor do specifically religious expressions figure largely in her general idiom. She may have believed that "Morality... to be useful, must be Christian";⁴ she may have believed, with Johnson, that there should be "a continual reference of every action to the divine will";⁵ but this is not stressed in her novels. According to

1. Moral Sketches, p. 85
2. Moral Sketches, p. 122
3. Young Lady, i, p. 6
4. Philosophy of Passions, i, p. xiii
5. Rambler, iii, p. 209

Hannah More in 1819, "There has seldom been a period in which there was more talk of religion, than that in which we live."¹ In her letters Jane Austen can be specifically Christian: in a letter of condolence she writes, "the goodness which made him valuable on Earth, will make him Blessed in Heaven".² In the novels her emphasis is on this world: in her dismissal of Henry Crawford, it is this which takes the stress.³ In this again her Christianity is the Latitudinarian Christianity of Butler, rather than the Evangelical Christianity of her own day. (She was not a solitary survivor, of course.) Or perhaps it is of such eccentric Evangelicals as John Foster. He complains that the 'good man' of polite literature never talks of God and Christianity specifically;⁴ but he also argues that

"christian doctrine should be given, if it can, in that uncoloured neutral vehicle of expression which is adapted indifferently to common serious subjects".⁵

Of Charlotte Brontë's idiom there is much less to be said. It might even be argued that there can be nothing to say, since those

1. Moral Sketches, p. 215

2. Letters, p. 19

3. MP, pp. 468-9. (Ch.48)

4. Letters to a Friend, ii, pp. 234-9

5. ii, p. 150

elements of her idiom which belong to the first half of the nineteenth century will already have been glossed, and those elements whose meaning and significance is (nearer to) that of the present time will not need to be explained.

There is some truth in this. Many of the issues which concerned people earlier in the nineteenth century persist, together with their attendant idiom. The Times review of Mrs. Gaskell's Life, for example, saw in it "a creditable testimony to the tendencies of human nature".¹ This was in 1857. In 1853 Charlotte Yonge, in The Heir of Redclyffe, was still concerned with "temper" and the influences upon it. As late as 1844 David Masson could use the word "sensation" where a modern writer would use "experience".² In 1848 Robert Blakey, an academic historian of philosophy, could, when considering the need (some) philosophers have for imposing order on the life of feeling, speak of "mind, feeling, passion, sentiment, emotion, sympathy",³ and of "our internal movements, purposes and desires"⁴ ("movements" revealing the persisting concept of emotion as a kind of internal agitation). Charlotte

1. [Samuel Lucas:] 'Charlotte Brontë', Eminent Men and Popular Books, from 'The Times', (London, 1859), p. 186

2. 'On Emotional Culture', Fraser's Mag., xxix (1844), pp. 528- 535 (i.e. passim)

3. History of the Philosophy of Mind, (London, 1848), iv, p. 70

4. iv, p. 544

Brontë herself has Jane say in Jane Eyre, when being interrogated by St. John Rivers, "They all saw the embarrassment, and the emotion."¹

(The 'emotion' being the agitation which went with the feeling.)

Earlier in a letter, she had written of an employer:

"Her health is sound, her animal spirits are good; consequently she is cheerful in company. But, oh! Ellen, does this compensate for the absence of every fine feeling, of every gentle and delicate sentiment?" (2)

There would indeed be no point in simply listing survivals of the older idiom and developments towards the modern. But of course there is still something to be said. In the first place idiomatic progress is not linear, but involves 'blind alley' developments (words which are both introduced and vanish within a limited period). In the second place it is important to establish Charlotte Brontë's personal vocabulary - the range of idiom she could call upon in order to subvert the imperialist claims of novelese.

These two issues are closely related, since Charlotte Brontë's solution to her predicament as a novelist was - as I have said - to use a developed 'scientific' vocabulary; and the 'sciences' she drew from have all turned out to be blind alleys.

Reviewers noticed her interest in psychology. The Eclectic reviewer of the Life speaks of the knowledge of human nature

1. ii, p. 185

2. Correspondence, i, p. 181

necessary to write Jane Eyre, Shirley, and Villette - "such remarkable fictions".¹ The Illustrated Weekly, The People's Journal noticed "subtle, startling mental anatomy" in Jane Eyre.²

The novels by themselves allow one to guess at^a further interest in psychological theory. Her protagonists are credited not only with an interest in "soul searching", the analysis of particular characters, but with an interest in the general laws which govern character, and in the "human nature" which underlies them. Her earliest protagonist, William Crimsworth, is perhaps the most deliberate psychologist: "Now this speech interested me much, both because it brought out Hunsden's character, and because it explained his motives".³ He is easily given to general reflection on 'the human mind':

"whenever a danger or a horror is veiled with uncertainty, the primary wish of the mind is to ascertain first the naked truth, reserving the expedient of flight for the moment when its dread anticipation shall be realized." (4)

(There is some comedy in this analysis of course: the "dread anticipation" referred to is that of being made love to by a middle-aged woman.) And he is interested in the process of verifying theories:

1. 'Charlotte Brontë', p. 630

2. p. 269

3. Prof, p. 64

4. p. 96. (Ch. 8)

"They talk of affinities between the autograph and the character; what affinity was there here? I recalled the writer's peculiar face and certain traits I suspected, rather than knew, to appertain to his nature, and I answered, 'a great deal.' " (1)

Lucy is an observer of a similar kind. If in her case, the dry 'masculine' diction of Crimsworth is softened and varied, she is no less interested in questions of general psychology: "I was not long allowed the amusement of this study of character."²

Nor is this something only the protagonists are ascribed. The narrator of Shirley is equally given to general reflection - for example upon the effects of deliberate renunciation:

"For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test - some, it is said, die under it - you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive. This you are not aware of, perhaps, at the time, and so cannot borrow courage of that hope. Nature, however, as has been intimated, is an excellent friend in such cases; sealing the lips, interdicting utterance, commanding a placid dissimulation: a dissimulation often wearing an easy and gay mien at first, settling down to sorrow and paleness in time, then passing away, and leaving a convenient st^oicism, not the less fortifying because it is half-bitter.

Half-bitter! Is that wrong? No - it should be bitter: bitterness is strength - it is a tonic. Sweet mild force following acute suffering, you find nowhere: to talk of it is delusion." (3)

1. p. 273. (Ch. 21)

2. V, i, p. 41

3. i, pp. 149-50. (Ch. 7)

There is, moreover, external evidence for Charlotte Brontë's interest in psychological theory. One of the books listed in the catalogue of the Brontë Parsonage Museum is Isaac Watts' Doctrine of the Passions, of which the subtitle is "a Brief and Comprehensive Scheme of the Natural Affections of Mankind, attempted in a plain and easy method; with an account of their names, nature, appearance, effects, and different uses in human life". It contains Charlotte Brontë's autograph.¹ This is the 1791 edition of a book by the well-known hymn-writer which was first published in 1729, as part of his Discourses of the Love of God, and first independently published (in England), it seems, in 1732, when it was called the 'second edition' presumably since it had already been published with the Discourses. "Corrected and Enlarged" editions were published throughout the eighteenth century (Watts died in 1748), of which the 1791 edition is at least the sixth. (A "5th edition" was published in 1770.)²

This interest in psychological theory might not seem to square with the susceptibility to the pathos of mystery mentioned earlier.

1. J. Alex. Symington: Catalogue of the Museum and Library, (Haworth, 1927), p. 160
2. As well as the catalogues of the Bodleian library, British Museum, and Dr. Williams' Library, see Stoke Newington Central Library: Catalogue of Exhibition bi-centenary Dr. Isaac Watts, (London, 1948). There is no mention of this work in Samuel J. Rogal: 'A Checklist of Works by and about Isaac Watts (1674-1748)', New York Public Lib. Bulletin, lxxi (1967) pp. 207-15

But the two do in fact go together. Science of the kind Charlotte Brontë was interested in implies a 'mysterious human nature' : it supplies a key to (some of) the mysteries.

As it happens, she probably got very little in this respect from Watts. His aim, as he states in his preface to the original Discourses, is not to advance the state of knowledge but to diffuse what is known more widely, especially among less educated people.¹ What he has to say about particular emotions is fairly straightforward - though his comments on love clearly had an impact on Charlotte Brontë, as I argue in Chapter 7. On her idiom, his main effect probably was to reinforce her fondness for "passion" itself, and to encourage her in two notions which the use of the word itself made more likely: that passions are of the body as much as of the soul, and that they need to be kept under strict control.

Thus Watts distinguishes between "passions" and "affections". Angels may have the latter - for example, love and hatred, desire and aversion, joy and sorrow, fear and hope. But only humans have 'passions', since they involve "Commotions of animal Nature".²

His full definition of 'passions' is:

"those sensible Commotions of our whole Nature, both Soul and Body, which are occasioned by the Perception of an Object according to some special Properties that belong to it."(3)

1. Discourses of the Love of God, (London, 1729), p. viii

2. The Doctrine of the Passions Explained and Improved, 5th ed. (London, 1770), p. 4

3. p. 5

This may have encouraged Charlotte Brontë's interest in the physical aspects of emotion (and perhaps even alerted her to the possibilities of 'object-apprehensions': Watts' stress on "Perception" as cause is acute.) Similarly an attitude of her own may have been re-inforced by his argument that the passions, insofar as they are "natural Affections" are basically good, but need to be controlled, especially since this will make us better men, better Christians, and help us to die happily.¹

Associated with this rather old-fashioned psychological theory is a range of idiom Charlotte Brontë shares with Jane Austen - not only "feeling" and "emotion" and "state of mind" but the less durable "propensities", "susceptibilities", "sentiment", "nerves", "spirits", "temper". (She even uses "person" in the same way: Crimsworth reflects, "It is true Frances' mental points had been the first to interest me... but I liked the graces of her person too."²) The distinction between "heart" and "temper" recurs: of Miss Mann Caroline Helstone discovers "it was not her heart so much as her temper that was wrong". "Nerves" are even less permanent. Lucy Snowe comments on Paul Emanuel: "it was only his nerves that were irritable, not his temper that was radically bad".⁴

1. pp. vii - ix

2. Prof, p. 320

3. Sh, i, p. 260

4. V, ii, p. 216

There are some small differences here. Charlotte Brontë takes a less optimistic view of human nature than Jane Austen. She is prepared to credit "ill-temper" and "vicious propensities".¹ And her use of "nerves" is serious, even technical. Crimsworth recalls: "I only thought of walking, that the action of my muscles might harmonize with the action of my nerves".² When Jane Eyre drinks tea with the Rivers, "I was mightily refreshed by the beverage ... it gave new tone to my unstrung nerves".³

Charlotte Brontë's use of the 'humours' idiom also has a technical ring which is not so obvious in Jane Austen: "Donne, indeed, was of that coldly phlegmatic, immovably complacent, densely self-satisfied nature which is insensible to shame."⁴ And it has to be remembered that the doctrine of temperaments could still be taken seriously as late as 1848. According to Robert Blakey,

"It is generally conceded that there is much truth in the doctrine of temperaments. Every physician takes it in some measure as a guide in his professional avocations."⁵

But of course there were considerable developments in psychological theory during Charlotte Brontë's lifetime. According to Blakey again:

1. Prof, pp. 137-8

2. Prof, p. 58

3. JE, ii, p. 186

4. Sh, i, p. 400

5. Philosophy of Mind, iv, p. 553

"It has become almost a common remark, that in Great Britain mental philosophy has been entirely stationary for nearly the last half century."

The new developments were foreign importations. And only one was at all 'philosophical'. This was the vitalistic psychology of Fichte and Schelling.² Neither of these philosophers is mentioned in Charlotte Brontë's letters; and while many of Fichte's works were translated into English in the 1840's, and Schelling's Philosophy of Art in 1845, their more strictly philosophical works did not appear in English until after her death. (Passages appeared in an anthology by F.H.Hedge published in 1849.)³ On the other hand Charlotte Brontë was interested in contemporary German literature; and she read Carlyle.

But once again one has to remember the co-operative nature of thought, the way it is sustained socially, in order to account satisfactorily for the presence of these new ideas - and the consequent additions to the idiom of interpretation - in Charlotte Brontë .

What signs of vitalist sympathies are there in Charlotte Brontë? There is, in the first place, a renewed interest in "instinct" and the

1. i, p. 1x

2. See George Sidney Brett: A History of Psychology, (London, 1912-21) ii, pp. 36-7; Gardner Murphy: Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology, 5th ed., (London, 1949), pp. 46-7

3. See B.Q.Morgan : A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation 1481-1927, With Supplement 1928-35, 2nd.ed. (Stanford, 1938)

instinctive. Much is attributed to instinct which would now be attributed to conditioning: according to Jane Eyre,

"I did what human beings do instinctively when they are driven to utter extremity - look for aid to one higher than man: the words 'God help me! 'burst involuntarily from my lips."¹

And the narrator of Shirley has this to say of a woman who asked a man to explain his behaviour: "Nature would brand such demonstration as a rebellion against her instincts".² 'Instinct' also yields knowledge. William Crimsworth observes "I had an instinctive feeling that it would be folly to let one's temper effervesce often with such a man as Edward."³ And Jane Eyre comments, during St. John Rivers' revelations,

"I knew, by instinct, how the matter stood, before St. John had said another word: but I cannot expect the reader to have the same intuitive perception, so I must repeat his explanation." (4)

'Instincts' are also associated with the animal, especially the wild animal, in Man. Louis Moore confides to his journal, "In managing the wild instincts of the scarce manageable 'bête fauve,' my powers would reveal."⁵ Charlotte Brontë is prepared to explain emotions in these terms. When Caroline and Shirley hear Robert Moore's voice on the night of the attack on the mill,

1. JE, ii, pp. 111-12. (Ch.27). The Clarendon ed. (p. 388) has "looked for aid".

2. i, p. 149

3. Prof, p. 22

4. JE, ii, p. 252. (Ch.33)

5. Sh, ii, p. 295

"They could tell by its tones that his soul was now warm with the conflict: they could guess that the fighting animal was roused in every one of those men there struggling together, and was for the time quite paramount above the rational human being." (1)

'Instinct', though, identifies only one of the mysterious forces in man for which names are found. Others are "impulses" and "powers". "Powers" is much more active than the earlier "capacities": its use can be seen in the comment of Louis Moore's just quoted, and in Jane Eyre's "I experienced firmer trust in myself and my own powers".² 'Impulse' in Maria Edg^eworth is another name for wilful passion;³ in Charlotte Brontë it suggests something much deeper. According to Crimsworth:

"There are impulses we can control; but there are others which control us, because they attain us with a tiger-leap, and are our masters ere we have seen them." (4)

That "ere we have seen them" is important: it suggests unconscious feelings and motives - as 'impulse' does again in Jane Eyre's discerning comment on St. John Rivers' preaching:

"When he had done, instead of feeling better, calmer, more enlightened by his discourse, I experienced an inexpressible sadness; for it seemed to me - I know not whether equally so to others - that the eloquence to which I had

1. Sh,ii, p. 396. (Ch. 39)

2. JE, i, p. 383

3. See, e.g. Belinda,iii, p. 270

4. Prof,p. 313. (Ch. 23)

been listening had sprung from a depth where lay turbid dregs of disappointment—where moved troubling impulses of insatiate yearnings and disquieting aspirations." (1)

This allowance for the unconscious means that feelings and actions not only have 'reasons'; they have "Motives". The word "unconscious" also occurs, though not in the broader modern sense — it tends to mean 'of which one happened not to be aware', rather than 'of which one could not be aware'. One possible exception may be noted, in Lucy Snowe's drugged night walk in the park:

"My vague aim, as I went, was to find the stone-basin, with its clear depth and green lining; of that coolness and verdure I thought, with the passionate thirst of unconscious fever. Amidst the glare, and hurry, and throng, and noise, I still secretly and chiefly longed to come on that circular mirror of crystal, and surprise the moon glassing therein her pearly front." (2)

'Unconscious' fever may be simply 'a fever I was not aware I was suffering from' — but followed by the "secretly[sic]... longed" in the next sentence, it suggests at least 'a fever I was not aware to be governing me'.

A word which suggests the whole person, conscious and unconscious together, is "being": Rochester tells Jane "my being longed for renewal".³ And sustaining both is "life":

1. JE, ii, p. 196, (Ch. 30)

2. V, ii, p. 338. (Ch. 38)

3. JE, ii, p. 119

signs of renewed interest on Robert Moore's part, for Caroline, "would have brought back abundance of life where life was failing".¹

The other developments in psychological theory which affect Charlotte Brontë's idiom are not 'philosophical' at all. They were associated rather with medicine, or pathology. This is the source of Lucy Snowe's expression "hysteric agitation". When her pupils cry at the announcement that Paul Emanuel is no longer to teach them, Lucy comments scornfully "their emotion was not of much value; it was only ~~an~~² hysteric agitation".

It is also the source of some of the new, 'advanced' theories in which Charlotte Brontë was interested. An interest in 'advanced' thought is characteristic of any avant-garde: the ideas which are likely to appeal are those which are moderately subversive. They will be subversive to the extent to which they attempt to unsettle existing notions, to reveal relationships which a given intellectual orthodoxy finds it in its interests to conceal - and the opposition they consequently excite among contemporaries is often another source of satisfaction.

The irony in the case of the theories in which Charlotte Brontë was interested is that they were all blind alleys, at least in the forms in which they were propounded during her lifetime. (Two of them ~~emphasise~~ the determining power of the body on the

1. Sh, i, p. 359

2. V, ii, p. 313

life of feeling, and this is the one aspect which - in a modified form persists. Otherwise they are quite exploded.)

There are three theories altogether: animal magnetism, physiognomy, and phrenology. Of these the third is the most important (here).

Animal magnetism or 'mesmerism', after the Austrian physician Friedrich Mesmer, who died in 1815, supposed there to be some sort of invisible power which drew people together or gave one person power over another. It can be seen in Crimsworth's comments in the letter to his friend which opens The Professor: "What animal magnetism drew thee and me together I know not".¹ Blakey speaks of it in 1848 as very popular, "particularly within the last ten years".² The Scottish physiologist J.H. Bennett, then a professor at Edinburgh, spoke of a "Mesmeric Mania" in that city in 1851.³ What ~~was~~ valuable in the theory is now incorporated in the notion of 'hypnosis' - a word invented by the doctor James Braid in 1842, in order to explain differently the phenomena invoked by mesmerists.⁴

1. p. 1. Cf. Sh, ii, p. 152. (Ch. 24)

2. Philosophy of Mind, iv, p. 370

3. The Mesmeric Mania of 1851, (Edinburgh, 1851)

4. Neurypnology; or, the Rationale of Nervous Sleep, considered in relation with Animal Magnetism, (London, 1843)

Charlotte Brontë was interested in the older theory, but not necessarily wholly convinced. According to Harriet Martineau, Charlotte Brontë persuaded her to 'mesmerise' her one Sunday evening, but Harriet Martineau stopped the minute it began to work. In a letter to James Taylor, of January 1851, Charlotte Brontë wrote:

"You asked whether Miss Martineau made me a convert to mesmerism? Scarcely; yet I heard miracles of its efficacy and could hardly discredit the whole of what was told me. I even underwent a personal experiment; and though the result was not absolutely clear, it was inferred that in time I should prove an excellent subject." (1)

The word "physiognomy" is one Charlotte Brontë likes:

St. John Rivers comments on Jane Eyre in her exhausted semi-sleep after being taken in, " ' rather an unusual physiognomy; certainly not indicative of vulgarity or degradation.' " ² The science of physiognomy was the work of the German mystic poet, Johann Lavater, who died in 1801. Blakey defines it as the science "of discovering the internal feelings and intellectual capabilities of man, by certain external indications."³

He also notes that the hey-day of physiognomy was the 1770's and 1780's, and that it had sunk into "obscurity and forgetfulness"

1. Correspondence, iii, pp. 200-1

2. JE, ii, p. 173

3. Philosophy of Mind, iv, p. 547

before Lavater's death. It would thus seem not to be the new and controversial theory I have suggested it to be, but in fact it was both in the 1840's to the extent that it was associated with phrenology.

Charlotte Brontë's use of phrenological idiom has already been commented on, by Wilfred Senseman and more recently by Ian Jack.¹ Both make several interesting points, Jack for example on the effect of belief in phrenology on Charlotte Brontë's visual imagination. Jack also notes that others took phrenology seriously at the time: he instances George Eliot and G.H.Lewes.² But this is done in a rather defensive spirit, and what neither Senseman nor Jack draws attention to is the significance of a novelist's use of phrenological idiom at this time. Revealing is a comment by a Tait's reviewer on Mrs. Gaskell's Life, that while Charlotte Brontë's phrenological terms are correctly used, the phrenology itself is crude.³ Much the same kind of comment might have been made by a reviewer of a novelist earlier this century who wrote of the "id" or the "super-ego".

1. Wilfred M. Senseman: 'Charlotte Brontë's Use of Physiognomy and Phrenology', Papers of the Michigan Academy, xxxviii (1952), pp. 475-86; Ian Jack: 'Physiognomy, Phrenology and Characterisation in the Novels of Charlotte Brontë', BST, xv (1970), pp. 377-91

2. 'Physiognomy in Charlotte Bronte', p. 383

3. p. 293

The resemblance (in these terms) of phrenology to Freudian psycho-analysis is in fact uncannily close - even to its arising in Vienna. Phrenology in Charlotte Brontë's lifetime was what psycho-analysis was earlier this century: a controversial, new, Continental explanation of the life of feeling. For supporters, who were naturally drawn from the avant-garde, it was an exciting new science; thus an anonymous writer on the use of phrenology to novelists, in a work published in 1848, claims that while previous understanding of the mind has been "reared wholly on the restless sands of speculation", phrenology is "erected on the immovable rock of science."¹ For opponents, who tended to be conservative in other respects, it was mere humbug and quackery. It is still possible to find people who feel this way about psycho-analysis; to their predecessors in the first half of the nineteenth century a phrenologist was a "feeler of heads, a cranioscopist, a teller of fortunes from cerebral bumps and excrescences!"² Had phrenology not turned out to be everything (or almost everything) its opponents held it to be - and this is not something a novelist could foresee - the resemblance might have been noticed before.

Charlotte Brontë herself took phrenology very seriously. On one of her visits to London, she went with George Smith to

1. Phrenology; in relation to the Novel, the Criticism, and the Drama, (London, 1848), p. 18

2. (Richard Chenevix:) 'Wall and Spurzheim - Phrenology', Foreign Quarterly Rev., ii (1828), p. 1

a Dr. Browne, a then fashionable phrenologist, to have her character read. The 'character', which is extant, seems to me astonishingly accurate, though it is not clear whether it is this 'character' or Smith's (they went as Mr. and Miss Frazer) that Charlotte Brontë refers to as "a sort of miracle - like - like - like as the very life itself" - more probably Smith's.¹

It is no part of my purpose here to give any sort of history of phrenology. The important point historically is its novelty in the 1840's and 50's - its founder, the Austrian Franz Gall only began lecturing in Vienna at the turn of the century. The science was introduced to England largely by Dr. Johann Spurzheim, who became Gall's pupil in 1800 and his associate in 1804, and who came to England at the end of the wars with France.² The first phrenological society was founded in England in 1820 by George Combe;³ by the 1830's there were apparently several such societies and more than one journal.⁴

The use of phrenology to (more ambitious) novelists was something seriously argued in the anonymous monograph Phrenology; in relation to the Novel, the Criticism, and the Drama, referred to above. The author argues that novels have to do with feelings, and appeal to the feelings, and therefore need "the directive

1. Correspondence, iii, p. 258

2. (Chenevix:) 'Phrenology', pp. 17-19

3. (Chenevix:) 'Phrenology', p. 19

4. See the article on 'Phrenology' in the 11th ed. of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, (Cambridge, 1910-11)

aid of philosophy."¹ Phrenology will assist in the creation of verisimilitude - "will communicate to the fictionist's frigid fancies the glow of truth".² It will also assist a novelist to authenticity, since behaviour is a product of feelings, feelings need to be understood, and phrenology is the best way to understand them.³ But its main use is to help a novelist explain feelings. The ordinary power of novelists, "accuracy in identifying and representing certain mental manifestations",⁴ needs to be supplemented by phrenological understanding. Science must replace intuition.⁵

I do not suppose Charlotte Brontë read this monograph, but she certainly acted on its principles. The consequences for her idiom of interpretation are clear.

In the first place it explains her idiosyncratic use of the word 'faculty'. A good example can be found in one of the manuscripts foreshadowing Villette. Bessie Shepherd comments on Rose (the later Polly): "It was but too evident that the imaginative faculty wrought with almost fatal strength in this curiosity of an organisation."⁶ In the older faculty psychology there were

1. p. 19

2. p. 21

3. pp. 21-4

4. p. 55

5. pp. 63-9

6. 'Mss foreshadowing Villette', p. 282

few faculties. To phrenologists there were several, (and to each "faculty" an "organ"). And some one or two of them were supposed to be particularly strong - as the "imaginative faculty" in Rose - and therefore to determine character.

This is the heart of phrenology, in fact. According to George Combe in 1819,

"Gall and Spurzheim's Philosophy may be summed up in two propositions. 1st, That the mind manifests a plurality of innate faculties, - meaning by the word Faculty, a power or instrument of thought of a limited nature, having specific functions: and 2dly, That Each faculty manifests itself by means of distinct organs, and that these organs are different parts of the Brain." (1)

Spurzheim's particular contribution was to order the faculties into two "Orders" and six "genera"; to change the name of some faculties (for example, from "theft" to acquisitiveness"); and to add eight new faculties - one of these being the "organ of ideatity", which Charlotte Brontë refers to on more than one occasion.²

The main contributions to Charlotte Brontë's idiom made by phrenology are of course the technical terms which strike every reader - the various 'faculties' (and 'organs') themselves: "veneration", "adhesiveness", "caution" (or "cautiousness"), "benevolence", "conscientiousness", "self-esteem", "wonder", "destructiveness", and so on all appear to be authentic phrenological terms.

1. Essays on Phrenology, (Edinburgh, 1819), p. xvii

2. (Chenevix:) 'Phrenology', pp. 21-6, esp. p. 22

The best example of her way of using these terms is the analysis of Mr. Yorke that opens the fourth chapter of Shirley.¹ It is too long to quote here, but one point about it ought to be noted. Ian Jack sees phrenology as having much to do with Charlotte Brontë's physical presentation of character, but it should be observed that the phrenological terms only appear after the bridging sentence, "I did not find it easy to sketch Mr. Yorke's person, but it is more difficult to indicate his mind."² And indeed the main use of phrenology to Charlotte Brontë seems to me that suggested by the author of the 1848 monograph now twice referred to: to make sense of the life of feeling.

Here of course it was open to serious objections. Again like psycho-analysis, phrenology excited objections from two directions: from doctors, who thought it fanciful or far-fetched; and from the orthodox, who thought it immoral. Thus the chemist and sometime journalist Richard Chevenix, in an article I have already made considerable use of, distinguishes the technical medical objections from "those founded upon fatalism, materialism, and atheism".³

Materialism was an early charge brought against phrenology. It is the main brunt of the attack by J.P. Tupper, surgeon to the Prince

1. i, pp. 61-8

2. i, pp. 61-2

3. 'Phrenology', p.34

Regent, in 1819.¹ And it is the heart of the 1848 attack by Blakey. Blakey ends by calling phrenology "a beggarly collection of unmeaning words and crude conceptions."² But he devotes a 24 page chapter of his book to the subject, and what really disturbs him about phrenology is its assumption that physiology and psychology have something to do with one another - an assumption he had devoted 17 pages to demolishing earlier in the book.³ And of course phrenology was materialistic in this sense: the author of the 1848 monograph, for example, criticises Jane Austen for - in a sentence from Mansfield Park - contrasting "mind" and "head", on the grounds: "it is beyond our comprehension as to where else the young lady's mind could be."⁴

This almost certainly posed problems for a devout (if idiosyncratic) Christian like Charlotte Brontë. But the second orthodox objection - that of "fatalism" - much have exercised her much more.

J.P.Tupper notes that phrenology gives a particular answer to the question:

1. An Inquiry into Doctor Gall's system concerning Innate Dispositions, the Physiology of the Brain, and Materialism, Fatalism, and Moral Liberty, (London, 1819), pp. 88-190
2. Philosophy of Mind, iv, p. 606
3. iv, pp. 553-70
4. Phrenology, Novel, Criticism, Drama, p. 31

"Is man born with or without determined faculties and dispositions? or does he acquire them in consequence of his relation with the external world after birth?" (1)

The very language Charlotte Brontë shares with phrenologists - the equation of "instincts" and "innate faculties" made throughout his 1828 article by Richard Chevenix - suggests such a premise. And this premise leads to certain conclusions. As the 1848 monographist puts it: "What we act is enabled less by what we think than what we feel";² and our feelings depend on our (phrenological) constitution: they impel us.³ Man for phrenologists becomes a distinctively limited creature:

"Man acts and thinks by virtue of the primitive faculties which Providence has implanted in his nature; man can act but by these; he can give himself no new power or faculty; within his own limits he is as much confined as the crustaceous animal that lives within its shell".⁴

Against this, Charlotte Brontë re-introduces an older 'faculty': the "will". The concept is important to her: few notions are more so. And the word as a result is an important element of her idiom: "Diana looked and spoke with a certain authority: she had a will, evidently."⁵

1. Dr. Gall's system, p. 2

2. Phrenology, Novel, Criticism, Drama, pp. 11-12

3. p. 30

4. (Chevenix:) 'Phrenology', p. 47

5. JE, ii, p. 180

With the word "will" go a number of elements in her idiom of appraisal that receive less stress in Jane Austen: as well as "conscience" and "soul", Charlotte Brontë emphasises "Reason" (frequently with the initial capital), "heaven", "eternity", "immortality". Crimsworth writes of "Religion":

"She speaks of that world as a place unsullied by sin - of that life, as an era unembittered by suffering; she mightily strengthens her consolation by connecting with it two ideas - which mortals cannot comprehend, but on which¹ they love to repose - Eternity, Immortality".

And of course she invokes "God", under many names. This range of idiom gives a new dimension to the life of feeling: important emotions always have a further, supernatural, context, which Jane Austen may in fact have assumed but does not, in her novels, see any need to articulate.

This range of idiom is, of course, found quite widely in the novel of Charlotte Brontë's time - though it is my impression that in none of the novels I have read is it deployed quite as consequentially as it is in Charlotte Brontë (especially in Jane Eyre). No single source for it need be found. (Here everyone concedes the social character of thought.)

Its presence - and its consequences - in Charlotte Brontë can be seen not only as a qualification of the implications of her use of phrenological terms, but as a further blow against novelese. Of course in appraisal Charlotte Brontë (like Jane Austen before her)

1. Prof, p. 224. (Ch. 19)

is occasionally forced back upon the idiom of the sensibility ethos - Crimsworth condemns his "continental English" pupils for their "imbecile indifference to every sentiment that can elevate humanity";¹ when Mrs. Pryor sings Caroline hears in her voice "a tender vibration from a feeling heart".² But it is the silly self-centred Ginevra Fanshawe who uses the idiom against Lucy Snowe: "you have such nerves... I believe you feel nothing. You haven't the same sensitiveness that a person of my constitution has."³ And it is the much firmer language of passion and struggle, of divine rewards and sanctions, that Charlotte Brontë stresses.

A final point of contact with Jane Austen ought to be noted. Charlotte Brontë is as unsympathetic as Jane Austen is to the idiom of subordination and self-suppression. The persistence of this idiom in Charlotte Brontë's day can be seen in her younger contemporary, Charlotte Yonge. She was associated with a high-church Anglicanism (th Oxford movement: she was a personal friend of Keble) rather than the Evangelicalism which was fashionable earlier in the century. On the other hand, it may not be without significance that in 1888 she wrote a life of Hannah More.

There is in her novels a great deal of gaiety and wit, and she generally has her characters point morals for themselves and each other,

1. Prof, p. 142

2. Sh, ii, p. 157

3. V, ii, p. 372

rather than doing it herself through the narrator. But her characters and their feelings do not matter to her the way Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë's characters do to them. The novels remain therefore entertainment for respectable families, and the necessary concessions to moralism are made.

Her earliest novel, Abbeychurch, published in 1844, is sub-titled "Self Control and Self Conceit". The novel centres on a visit to a Mechanics' Institute - where some months previously a single "Chartist" had managed to speak - by the daughters of a High Tory clergyman. At one point this is referred to as a "sin".¹ But, as the sub-title suggests, the important terms of appraisal are, on the one hand "humbling herself" (a virtue), and "right feeling and self-command,"² on the other hand "self-willed and unkind" and "eagerness and self-will".³ At the end of the novel Elizabeth, one of the main characters, concedes "much that is fearfully wrong in me to be corrected".⁴

Charlotte Yonge's best-known novel, The Heir of Redclyffe, was published in 1853, the same year as Villette. Again, what is condemned are "sins.. idleness and insubordination... the reckless pursuit of pleasure, the craving for excitement, the defiance of

1. (London, 1844), p. 167

2. pp. 168, 210

3. pp. 168, 280

4. p. 311

rule and authority, till folly had become vice, and vice had led to crime".¹ What is praised is "the spirit of self-sacrifice".²

The use of such novels to early Victorian society - such edifying but highly enjoyable pastimes - is obvious. If both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë are unsympathetic to the idiom of subordination, this is because to them the novel is a more serious matter, something which can bear the weight of a personal testing of values in imagined action and experience. And it is in the light of the use the novel was to them as individuals that the range of emotions they treat needs to be considered. I now turn to this question.

1. (London, 1853), i, p. 89

2. ii, p. 33

Chapter Six

Emotions

Of what use was the novel to Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë as individuals? And why did they need to use imagined experience to test values, to explore substantial questions of morality? Was there not a consensus of values in Jane Austen's time at least?

For this last proposition there would seem to be considerable support among modern commentators. As Graham Hough puts it:

"It is obvious that such fiction as hers could only be written when there was an accepted law of social and moral behaviour to which allegiance was generally paid. Jane Austen evidently does not suspect for a moment that any serious person could dispute her standards; and in her own day it appears no serious person ever did. (They began to do it in the next generation.)" (1)

Jane Austen, it is important to remember, was the younger contemporary of Blake and Mary Wollstonecraft and James Mill. (Bentham, who was born nearly thirty years before her, outlived her.) And to say that these were not Jane Austen's kind of 'serious people' is to give away the case.

Such 'general' allegiance to particular standards as can be observed, then, is among people of a certain class, a certain location. But even here one has to take note of (limited) controversies - over the general issues of morality glanced at in the last chapter, over

1. 'Narrative and Dialogue in Jane Austen', p. 222. (I choose this quotation as a clear expression of what I take to be a common view; Graham Hough in the article from which the quotation comes shows himself perfectly aware of the point I make in the next sentence.)

Evangelicalism, over 'sentimental Jacobinism', over the claims of town and country, over the role and standing of the clergy, over the right of daughters to choose their own husbands. (All these controversies affect Jane Austen.)

It would seem important, therefore, to consider the kind of society in which Jane Austen lived and wrote - and developments which occurred to the time of Charlotte Brontë. Of course no comprehensive survey is called for, even if I were qualified to present one. But it does matter to get hold of certain salient facts.

The first point to be noted is the accelerating pace of visible change. The increase in population was not spectacular during Jane Austen's lifetime, nor the growth of towns, and she herself probably noticed neither, any more than (living where she did) she would herself have seen the effects of the enclosure movement or of the early stages of industrial revolution. (She may have encountered gas lighting.) But she lived in a society which was, as a whole, very aware of these changes - "the numerous innovations of this innovating age", as Hannah More put it in 1819.¹ It is the sense of change that counts, and during Charlotte Brontë's lifetime this is very likely to have intensified, as not only factories and great cities (with their slums) multiplied, but macadamised roads and omnibuses and

1. Moral Sketches, p. 131

railways came to transform the landscape.

These visible changes are likely to have been unsettling on their own. More unsettling, probably, was the transformation of the social order itself from a hierarchical society of 'ranks' into a divided society of 'classes'. This manifests itself during Jane Austen's lifetime through a flurry of new words for the more extreme opponents of the hierarchical society - and for its embattled defenders. In 1819 Hannah More is (still) using 'democracy' as a scare word.¹ The years before had seen the introduction of "democrat", (and "democratism"), "insubordination", "equalitarian", and the verbs "republicanize" "revolutionize", "democratize" - together with "counter-revolution" in 1793. Words associated with the French Revolution include "sans-culotte" and the all-purpose "jacobin", with "jacobinize", and later, "anti-jacobin."² John Foster comments on the use of these words in 1805:

"One may here catch a glimpse of the policy of men of a superior class, in employing these terms as much as the vulgar, in order to keep them in active currency." (3)

These are not the only coinages to manifest threats to the social order. More important are the new words for "tradesmen" and their "trades" - not so much those which reflect (objectively) new roles and

1. Moral Sketches, p. 145

2. Here I must acknowledge the aid given by Thomas Finkenstaedt, Ernst Leisi, Dieter Wolff: A Chronological English Dictionary, (Heidelberg, 1970)

3. Letters to a Friend, ii, pp. 8-9

services (these include "capitalist of 1791, and "banking-house" of 1809), as those which reflect attitudes to them: "profiteer" of 1799; and (after Jane Austen's death) "millionaire" of 1826, "nouveau riche" (an English coinage) of 1828, and "sharp practice" of 1847.

Perhaps even more revealing are the new derogatory words for social pretension: "stuck up" of 1829, "snobbery" of 1833, "sycophantish" and "toadyism" of 1840, "high falutin'" of 1848, "swank" of 1854.¹ Confronted with claims of social superiority people were apparently less willing to concede them than in the past.

What these words were provoked by, it would seem, was the existence of a new class of self-made rich men, too large to be assimilated into a hierarchical society on the old terms. Earlier, men who made a fortune out of "trade" (or their sons or daughters) could simply move up a rank: this is what Bingley in Pride and Prejudice is still doing, by purchasing an estate. After the industrial revolution, and the increase in numbers of large-scale employers, the notion of 'ranks' itself came to be called into question. As Asa Briggs points out, in some quarters employers and employees in the new manufacturing towns could together be seen as 'industrial orders',

1. Neither of these last two words are particularly likely to have been in general use in England during this period: "highfalutin'" was an American word; "swank" a dialect word - which the OED states not to have come into general use until the turn of the century.

and as having interests in common which opposed those of the 'non-productive' landowning aristocracy.¹ 'Classes' superseded 'ranks'.

And now, as the division of labour progressed, and as different life-styles were brought face to face on equal terms (each, that is, making such a claim) there flourished a multiplicity of what can most appropriately be called - following Carlyle - 'sects':

"every little sect among us, Unitarians, Utilitarians, Anabaptists, Phrenologists, must have its Periodical, its monthly or quarterly Magazine; - hanging out, like its windmill, into the popularis aura, to grind meal for the society." (2)

The existence of these periodicals, in fact, manifests more than a growth in the size and a spread in the (geographical) distribution of the reading-public - with a consequent need for specialist reviewers - it manifests the existence of several distinct 'publics'. As James Mill argued (according to his son):

"periodical literature...cannot, like books, wait for success, but must succeed immediately, or not at all, and is hence almost certain to profess and inculcate the opinions already held by the public to which it addresses itself, instead of attempting to rectify or improve those opinions." (3)

Thus each 'sect' had its own values, and system of valuation, which periodicals could re-inforce for members of the sect itself, and assert

1. 'The Language of "Class" in Early Nineteenth-Century England', in Ann Briggs and John Saville (edd:) Essays in Labour History, (London, 1967), pp. 43-73
2. 'Signs of the Times', p. 61
3. John Stuart Mill: Autobiography, ed. Jack Stillinger, (London, 1971), p. 57. Cf. Horne: Men of Genius, p. 255

against the claims of rival sects.

Clear confirmatory evidence for this multiplication of sects and their need to identify each other is once again provided by the words coined during the period. These new words (for identifiable groups and for their rival beliefs) include "aristocrat" of 1776,¹ "squirearchy" of 1804, "middle-class" of 1812, "working-class" of 1813. After Jane Austen's death there were "revivalist" of 1820, "socialism" of 1831,² "chartist" of 1838, (and "chartism" of 1839), "anglo-catholic" and "communist" of 1841, "Plymouth Brethren" of 1842,³ "anglicanism" and "secularism" of 1846, "vegetarianism" of 1851,⁴ and "Broad Church" of 1853.

Of all the new values that came to prominence with this multiplication of sects, none, probably, was more unsettling than the ethic of the new "capitalists". A host of coinages reflects it: "competitive" of 1829, "self-help" of 1831, "individualism" of 1835, "self-culture"⁵ and "self-reliance" of 1837, "individualist" and "go-ahead" of 1840.

These are the facts worth noting about the society in which Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë lived and wrote. And if, with hindsight, the changes in Jane Austen's lifetime seem less unsettling,

1. This is the date given in the CED; the OED gives 1789 as the earliest English use.

2. Again a CED date; the OED gives 1839 as the earliest English use.

3. The sect apparently dates from c. 1830

4. A further CED date; the OED gives 1853 as the earliest use.

5. CED: OED 1847

it is important to remember that they appear to have seemed unsettling enough to those who lived through them, and who judged them against (what they took to be) earlier stability, rather than against a revolutionary future they could not foresee.

This is not to gainsay what has been said earlier about the actuality of a unitary 'good taste', or about the sense of community implicit in Jane Austen's prose. Standards of literary excellence are not immediately (in either sense of the word) affected by social change: as I have already argued. Moreover, as I hope I have also made clear, 'good taste' was a survival (undermined by poets during Jane Austen's lifetime, and by prose writers soon after her death) and the 'impersonality' of Jane Austen's prose was a personal achievement - though an achievement made easier by certain immediate conditions.

It is other immediate conditions at which it is now necessary to look. The mediate pressures of a society in the process of being transformed are themselves important: they probably occasion uncertainty, a need for self-definition and self-justification which may be no less pressing for being unconscious. And the actual social predicament of both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë also matters: being unmarried women of a class for which marriage was the norm, being clergymen's daughters without a formal occupation in a society which had no real place for them - except what Jane Fairfax insinuates

and Charlotte Brontë knew to be the white slavery of governessship - this almost certainly re-inforced the need to write and to some extent conditioned the form writing took. But the conditions which mattered most were more immediate, ~~more~~ personal.

Why did Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë write novels of the kind they did? This is really three questions, of which the middle is the easiest to answer. Although Charlotte Brontë first appeared in print as a poet; and although Jane Austen - as her novels and some juvenile dramatic sketches show - might have made a capable playwright, the novel was by far the likeliest form for women of their time, and women having no contact with the metropolitan literary world, to exploit successfully. According to Hannah More in 1799,

"Such is the frightful facility of this species of composition, that every raw girl while she reads, is tempted to fancy she can also write." (1)

She goes on:

"Is a lady, however destitute of talents, education, or knowledge of the world, whose studies have been completed by a circulating library, in any distress of mind? the writing of a novel suggests itself as the best soother of her sorrows! Does she labour under any depression of circumstances? writing a novel occurs as the readiest receipt for mending them!" (2)

Lurking in this dismissive irony, in the facile invocations of "distress of mind", and "depression of circumstances" is the beginnings of an answer to the other two questions (which combine

1. Strictures on Female Education, i, p. 170

2. i, p. 171

to form the question asked at the head of this chapter.) Not that the stress should be laid on the element of compensation, even if expressed in a form more adequate than Hannah More's - to demonstrate its real pervasiveness. Literature speaks of a sense of power as well as a sense of loss.

In fact the sense of loss and the sense of power are so interdependent that they can hardly be got clear of one another for the purposes of analysis. The very impulse to share which I have already spoken of (the impulse which distinguishes writing from day-dreaming) may be both bounty and a call for help. A writer may both share his joy in created characters and their emotional lives, and call upon the reader to confirm their reality. As for the work itself, the imaginative dramatisation of a predicament may call attention to a further state of power (the creativity which informs the dramatisation) as well as to a further state of loss (the predicament which is dramatised).

Having said this, though, there is no harm in approaching the novels of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë through the element of need or insufficiency casually invoked by Hannah More. What needs did their novels fulfil?

Jane Austen seems to have written out of a need to balance the claims of self against the claims of society, and out of a need to make fun of what she found irritating or threatening. (The second impulse combines happily with a pleasure in amusing other people - though this can be seen as a further way of coping with potential

threats.) The predicament she dramatises is her own: that of an intelligent and sensitive woman lost in a society of people on the whole less sensitive and much less intelligent - a society moreover in which it may have been dangerous for anyone to show that he was "wiser or wittier than his neighbours."¹

Charlotte Brontë's needs seem to have been multiple: to balance the claims of imagination against the claims of reality; to lead in imagination a life denied by society; to exorcise a fear of being pre-destined for hell; to avenge herself on what she found humiliating or cramping. (The first and third impulses, leading her to posit in her novels a world of mysterious coherence combine happily with a pleasure in mystifying other people.) The predicament she dramatises is a generalisation of her own: that of a friendless wanderer in search of a lost home.

These formulations have already blurred some important differences between each novelist's individual works. It is no part of my purpose to add to the blur, but the needs of both can be seen as the expression of a feeling even more fundamental (a feeling which some may have experienced more acutely, but which was presumably shared widely): the feeling of being thrown back on oneself for one's own salvation.

1. E, p. 288. Much of this analysis probably derives from D.W.Harding: 'Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen', Scrutiny, viii (1939-40), pp. 346-62; and Marvin Mudrick: Jane Austen, Irony as Defence and Discovery, (Princeton, 1952). Both these accounts are unbalanced; but they compel one to define one's own understanding.

One possible explanation for this is the dissolution of society into isolated, self-conscious, elements - a process, which, if it did take place, seems to have begun early in the eighteenth century. What suggests such a development is the growing number of new compound words based on 'self'. Words are the tools of thought, and like other tools they are fashioned to answer a need. Of the 'self-' compounds which have to do with the private life of feeling (as opposed to the public presentation of self), only "self-love", "self-pity", and "self-confidence" were coined before the eighteenth century. ("Self-command" is first recorded in 1699.) Many more words of this kind were coined during the eighteenth century, with the climax coming during Jane Austen's lifetime, when the first recorded usages occur of "self-importance", "self-consequence", "self-approach", "self-distrust", "self-satisfaction", "self-sacrifice", and "self-assertion".

Whatever the explanation, the feeling identified, and the more particular needs which the two novelists appear to have had in common, point to the range of personal experience common to the novels of both: the feelings associated with the struggle of the self to exact from others what is due to the self, and from self what is due to others. The remorse which results from claiming too much for the self, the mutual contempt and antipathy associated with conflicting assumptions of superiority, the passive resignation or active resentment of the

defeated self, the satisfaction or pride of the triumphant self, the joy of finding the self accepted at its own (or an even higher) valuation - these emotions form the stuff of the ten novels.

Of course there are differences even here, differences which can best be assessed by looking more closely at individual novels. And there are important differences in range and emphasis which reflect the needs unique to one novelist or the other. These again can only be assessed by closer inspection of individual works.

Before examining particular novels in this light, however, it is worth glancing at what are almost accidental differences between the two novelists: differences which are not a matter of their chosen themes or the predicaments they dramatise but of something else. (What else, is a complicated question). Two spring immediately to mind: the depth of feeling attributed to children, and the emphasis placed on feelings for the natural world.

In the first chapter of Sense and Sensibility, the elder Mr. Dashwood ties up his estate in such a way that it must pass to his great-great-nephew, who had

"gained on the affections of his uncle, by such attractions as are by no means unusual in children of two or three years old; an imperfect articulation, an earnest desire of having his own way, many cunning tricks, and a great deal of noise". (1)

This seems to sum up much of Jane Austen's attitude to children and their feelings. Much the same tough-minded attitude re-appears in her letters: "My dear itty Dordy's remembrance of me is very pleasing to me - foolishly pleasing, because I know it will be over so soon."¹ The possible exception is Fanny Price at the beginning of Mansfield Park, whose feelings are both childish and presented sympathetically:

"Lady Bertram, without taking half so much trouble, or speaking one word where he spoke ten, by the mere aid of a good-humoured smile, became immediately the less awful character of the two." (2)

But Fanny is already ten at this point, and Jane Austen's relative lack of interest in children's feelings is reflected in the fact that only a page or two is devoted to her first days at Mansfield Park, and that Fanny is fifteen at the opening of the next chapter.

The summarising reference to "imperfect articulation" in the passage from Sense and Sensibility needs to be set against the loving detail of the account of Polly in the opening chapter of Villette, with its "Tor-rer-ably well" and "Not par-tic-er-er-ly".³

Polly is not only credited with the extremes of adult emotion:

1. Letters, p. 24

2. p. 12. (Ch. 2)

3. i, p. 21

"no furrowed face of adult exile, longing for Europe
at Europe's antipodes, ever bore more legibly the
signs of home sickness than did her infant visage." (1)

Her sufferings are even (I take it) compared to the last sufferings
of Christ on the cross:

"When the street-door closed, she dropped on her knees
at a chair with a cry - 'Papa!'
It was low and long; a sort of 'Why hast thou
forsaken me?'" (2)

After this, it is almost an anti-climax for Lucy to comment, "She
went through, in that brief interval of her infant life, emotions
such as some never feel".

Emotions perhaps equally powerful are attributed to the child
Jane Eyre, especially the anger and fear which possess her in the
red-room.

If Jane Austen has no such interest in the feelings of children,
she cannot be accused of failing to attribute feelings for natural
beauty at least to her sympathetic characters. Catherine Morland's
simple-mindedness and (relative) ignorance distinguish her from
Jane Austen's other heroines, but even she is in this respect conceded,
by Henry Tilney, "a great deal of natural taste."³ (The irony of
Jane Austen's account of the effects of his lecture on the picturesque
is turned as much against him as against Catherine.) Elizabeth Bennet

1. i, p. 13. (Ch. 2)

2. i, p. 29. (Ch. 3)

3. NA, p. 111

is full of enthusiasm at the prospect of a visit to the lake district; Fanny Price is so moved by the beauty of a fine March morning in Portsmouth, with "the effects of the shadows pursuing each other ... with the ever-varying hues of the sea now at high water, dancing in its glee and dashing against the ramparts", that she almost forgets she is walking arm in arm with Henry Crawford.¹ The appeal of nature to Emma is such that when she is disturbed by the thought that Mr. Knightley might love Harriet,

"Never had the exquisite sight, smell, sensation of nature, tranquil, warm, and brilliant after a storm, been more attractive to her. She longed for the serenity they might gradually introduce". (2)

Anne Elliot is moved by autumn's "tawny leaves and withered hedges";³ and shares in the general admiration for Lyme and its surroundings,

"above all, Pinny, with its green chasms between romantic rocks, where the scattered forest trees and orchards of luxuriant growth declare that many a generation must have passed away since the first partial falling of the cliff prepared the ground for such a state". (4)

Such admiration for nature was of course commonplace in the novel of Jane Austen's immediate predecessors - sufficiently commonplace for Beckford to parody it in 1796. Lucinda Howard goes to Wales,

1. MP, p. 409

2. E, p. 424. (Ch. 49)

3. Pers, p. 84

4. p. 96. (Ch. 11)

"hoping, amidst the wild scenery of mountains and natural cascades, to be able to indulge her romantic passion more tranquilly, than she could do among large assemblies, and the public amusements of high life." (1)

On the other hand, Bradley says of Jane Austen, "we find scarcely a trace of the new modes of feeling towards nature."² That is to say, presumably, that her characters are moved by nature, but not powerfully inspired. But in this she is not uniquely conservative; the attitude towards nature exemplified, for instance, in Hazlitt's 'On the Love of the Country', first published in the Examiner in 1814, and emphasising "that soothing emotion which the sight of the country hardly ever fails to infuse into the mind",³ does not seem very different from Jane Austen's - though he knew Wordsworth personally, and quotes from him in the essay.

I mention Wordsworth since it seems likely that it is 'romantic' feelings that Bradley has in mind. And of course in my account of Jane Austen's heroines I have so far ignored Marianne Dashwood, and the often quoted discussion about "dead leaves":

1. Modern Novel Writing, i, p. 162

2. 'Jane Austen', p. 13

3. Works, iv, p. 17

"'Oh!' cried Marianne, 'with what transporting sensations have I formerly seen them fall! How have I delighted, as I walked, to see them driven in showers about me by the wind! What feelings have they, the season, the air, altogether inspired! Now there is no one to regard them. They are seen only as a nuisance, swept hastily off, and driven as much as possible from the sight.'

'It is not every one,' said Elinor, 'who has your passion for dead leaves.'" (1)

Is this, as it is sometimes said to be, a satire on 'romantic' feelings (in the modern sense of the word)?

It seems extremely unlikely. Romanticism needs to be identified to be satirised, and the word - in the relevant sense - is not recorded before 1844. The word 'romantic' at this time still meant 'to do with romances', as it did at the time of its coining in 1659.² It had both a pejorative sense - 'foolishly imbibed from romances' - and an affirmative sense - 'with the charm of romances'. The first underlies the reference in Belinda to "romantic notions of gratitude, and love",³ and Sandford's comment in A Simple Story that "young men are frequently romantic in their notions of love"⁴ - as well as the "romantic passions" invoked by Beckford above. And this is the sense assumed to be common by John Foster in a long essay on the word published in 1805: it is, he says, "a standard expression of contemptuous dispatch".⁵

1. S & S, pp. 87-8. (Ch. 16)

2. See Logan Pearsall Smith: Four Words, Romantic, Originality, Creative, Genius, (Oxford, 1924), p. 5

3. i, p. 131

4. p. 316

5. Letters to a Friend, ii, p. 10

Jane Austen uses the word in the pejorative sense in Sense and Sensibility, referring to Mrs. Dashwood's "romantic" generosity,¹ but it is the affirmative sense which appears in the passage from Persuasion above. Nowhere, however, does she use it of a specific, 'new', range of feelings.

What is being ridiculed in the "dead leaves" discussion is not any particular kind of feeling, in fact - only excessive enthusiasm, not untouched by affectation. Jane Austen's sympathy for feelings for nature is not in abeyance in Sense and Sensibility.

While she sympathises with feelings for nature, though, and is not reactionary in emphasising feelings of a particular kind (two facts which redeem her from whatever is critical in Bradley's comment), she is of her time. This can be seen by setting Fanny Price's (or Anne Elliot's implied) reaction to the sea against Charlotte Brontë's as expressed in a letter (to her friend Ellen Nussey):

"Have you forgot the sea by this time Ellen? is it grown dim in your mind? or you can still see it dark blue and green and foam-white and hear it - roaring roughly when the wind is high or rushing softly when it is calm?" (2)

This is not only to be powerfully inspired by nature; it is to achieve a kind of identification. This is the feeling ascribed to William Crimsworth after his final quarrel with his brother, when

1. p. 6

2. Correspondence, i, p. 191

he walks into the country and draws strength from "the far-declined sun... a chill frost-mist ... the clear, icy blue of the January sky", the rapid current of a river swelled by the melting of late snow, and the final sunset, "glinting red through the leafless boughs of some very old oak trees surrounding the church".¹

This is the feeling ascribed to Jane Eyre when she watches the rising moon before returning to Thornfield on the evening of her encounter (unknown to her) with Rochester: the sky "a blue sea absolved from taint of cloud", the moon in its orb moving towards "midnight dark in its fathomless depth and measureless distance", with "trembling stars that followed her course".²

This is the feeling ascribed to both Shirley and Caroline as they fall silent together one evening at Fieldhead (the evening they discuss Cowper and Rousseau), while the western wind roars high round the hall, and Shirley sits at the window "watching the rack in heaven, the mist on earth, listening to certain notes of the gale that plained like restless spirits".³ And this is the feeling ascribed to Lucy Snowe walking through dark still fields after visiting her old nurse, with the Aurora Borealis shining in the north, and a "keen, low breeze" blowing.⁴

These examples, of course, all reflect the sense of a deep

1. Prof, pp. 58-9. (Ch. 5)

2. JE, i, pp. 193-4. (Ch. 12)

3. Sh, i, p. 320. (Ch. 12)

4. V, i, p. 65. (Ch. 5)

connection between self and the world which I have spoken of as informing Charlotte Brontë's technique. As well as being a means for ascribing or establishing other feelings, the sense of such a connection allows for this particular feeling of reciprocity.

Such feelings are distinguished not only in kind from the feelings towards nature Jane Austen attributes to her characters; they are also distinguished in frequency.

Not much can be said at this point in the way of explanation of this change of emphasis. I want to look first at the individual purposes of the two novelists - and at the developments in purpose, or inspiration, from novel to novel.

Northanger Abbey will serve as a useful introduction to whatever is constant in Jane Austen's procedure. Attention is usually directed to the burlesque of the 'Gothic' in this novel - a burlesque which was (at the time of its original sale to the publisher Crosby in 1803, at any rate) both timely and traditional.¹ And part of Jane Austen's purpose here is to make fun of 'Gothic' ~~emotions~~ - though not the superstitious terror analysed by J.C. Dunlop in 1814. (The analysis may not in fact be his: he ascribes it to an un-named "elegant writer".)

1. For the timeliness see Tompkins: Popular Novel, p. 243; for the tradition of burlesque see Archibald Bolling Shepperson: The Novel in Motley, (Cambridge: Mass., 1936), pp. 154-81

"There exists ... in every breast at all susceptible of the influence of imagination, the germ of a certain superstitious dread of the world unknown, which easily suggests the ideas of commerce with it. Solitude - darkness - low-whispered sounds - obscure glimpses of objects, tend to raise in the mind that thrilling mysterious terror, which has for its object 'the powers unseen, and mightier far than we'." (1)

Catherine's terrors are rather of human malevolence. Her curiosity is for historical mysteries.

But these emotions, however memorably presented, do not take the real stress of the novel. A more important part of Jane Austen's purpose is to ridicule or debunk the notion of the 'heroine', the girl whose superior feelings assure her a 'special destiny'.

In this, Northanger Abbey carries on from Jane Austen's juvenilia. The spirit behind these early works is sometimes held to be critical. Even Mary Lascelles speaks of "the main purpose of these burlesque pieces, their criticisms of ... false conventions".² This is, I think, to misplace the emphasis. It is not the spirit of criticism which animates these childish works, it is the spirit of playfulness. The novels and other works burlesqued in Volume the First and its successors are not objects of distaste or disapproval: they are simply material on which comedy can get to work. (Comparison with the burlesques in the Anti-Jacobin, which are animated by distaste and disapproval, clarifies this point.)

1. John Dunlop: The History of Fiction, (Edinburgh, 1814), iii, p. 380

2. Jane Austen, p. 10

Not is Jane Austen's evocation in the juvenilia of a world of pure comic selfishness necessarily evidence of sharp observation or of moral purpose. She does not, it seems to me, detect selfishness: she assumes it. Universal selfishness serves as a comic premise, and affectations of superior feeling or generosity can be exploded simply by measuring them against it. It is this comic technique, and not insight or observation, which leads to the humour of

"A sensibility too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my Friends, my Acquaintance and particularly to every affliction of my own, was my only fault, if a fault it could be called." (1)

A similar playfulness, and a hardly modified comic premise, govern the account of emotions given in the early chapters of Northanger Abbey. Feelings (including Catherine's at this point) are assumed to be shallow. The possibility of any sort of strong feeling in the situations in which the characters find themselves is ridiculed as the typical falsification of novels.

But the novel opens out as it progresses. The real world begins to enter, as something more than a playful counterpart to 'romantic' expectations. As this happens, feelings are allowed to become more substantial: Catherine's anger and vexation at finding herself duped by the Thorpe's on the morning she was to go out with the Tilney's, for example, or her anxieties about Isabella and her brother.

1. Vol 2nd, p. 6. ('Love and Friendship')

What this seems to indicate is that other impulses than playfulness have come into play. Catherine's situation has become more interesting to Jane Austen in its own right. The playfulness persists, but sympathy for a created character and her feelings comes to transform it. And now the book opens out even more. Catherine is placed in a genuinely oppressive situation (with her dismissal by General Tilney) and credited with justifiably strong feelings of grief and disappointment.

After this an even more surprising development occurs.

Northanger Abbey is not in any sense an exploratory book. Knowledge of the world and good sense are not tested as values: they are demonstrated to be necessary, both in their own right and as correctives to feeling and imagination. But to see no more than this in the novel is to miss its richness. It is to miss the way in which, in the penultimate chapter, in Mrs. Morland's attempt to cure Catherine of what she takes to be affectation, sense is shown to be inadequate:

"There was a great deal of good sense in all this; but there are some situations of the human mind in which good sense has very little power; and Catherine's feelings contradicted almost every position her mother advanced." (1)

Allowance is now made for something very like the 'romantic' fantasy - of the heroine whose feelings are misunderstood or minimised by the less percipient people around her - which the novel began by ridiculing.

1. p. 239. (Ch. 29)

In Jane Austen's novels from Northanger Abbey on this secondary impulse becomes dominant. Characters are still created and credited with emotions in order to be laughed at: but no longer the central characters. They serve instead to allow Jane Austen to dramatise a predicament: the predicament already defined.

This impulse to dramatise is also an impulse to explore: to balance the claims of self against the claims of society, (as already mentioned), and to explore certain issues of value which the predicament imposes - general issues, but issues only of concern to Jane Austen because of her interest in the predicament.

A third impulse can be detected in the novels later than Northanger Abbey: conscientious distrust. In the form of conscientious distrust of the self's assumptions of superiority it may have fortified the ridicule in Northanger Abbey, but this seems unlikely - to the extent that Catherine Morland is not only presented as simple-minded, but does not herself claim to be a heroine: this is a claim made by the ironical narrator. But later heroines do make at least implicit claims of superiority: of the sort implied in Emma's drawing consolation from the fact "that Harriet's nature should not be of that superior sort in which the feelings are most acute and retentive".¹ (Erlebte Rede and the

1. E, p. 138

prevailing irony here make it difficult to work out the degree to which Jane Austen sympathised with this reflection - but the novel as a whole does bear out just such a comparative valuation of Emma and Harriet.)

Conscientious distrust of her powers of ridicule is the second form distrust takes. In a letter (to Fanny Knight), Jane Austen comments "Wisdom is better than Wit, & in the long run will certainly have the laugh on her side".¹ This is an ad hominem (or ad feminam) comment, and probably a commonplace.² But it evokes a tension which is not absent from the novels. The problem can be seen in Shaftesbury's formulation of the differences between two kinds of ridicule:

"There is a great difference between seeking how to raise a laugh from everything, and seeking in everything what justly may be laughed at." (3)

The problem, of course, centres on the "justly" of the second aim.

By speaking of conscientious distrust - in either form - I do not mean to suggest that Jane Austen wrote in a spirit of solemn self-correction: but in the spirit of Yeats' aphorism: "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry."

This quarrel with the self is most obvious - but also most

1. Letters, p. 410

2. See, e.g., Belinda, i, p. 266, where the same antithesis occurs.

3. Characteristics, i, p. 85

unbalanced - in Sense and Sensibility. The novel opens on an absurd and ^{un}just society: an estate is left to a family who are in no need of money (in the first edition, as Chapman's edition of the novel shows, Jane Austen even overdid their lack of need.¹) It is left to them for the sake of a two or three year old child, and on the grounds of his (quite unexceptional) childishness. The inheritors, moreover, are immediately established as shallow, self-interested people (the husband weak, the wife more coldly calculating). The most natural reaction to such a society is that of Marianne Dashwood - yet she is humiliated, by the novel, for it.

This is not done, I think, in the manner of Northanger Abbey. To see the novel as a demonstration of the need for prudence to temper sensibility is to miss the fact that, although the irony of the novel is directed against both extravagant expressions of feeling and narrow self-interest, it is noticeably sharper when employed against the second. There is an imbalance here which makes for incoherence in the final chapters. And what it suggests is that Jane Austen's conscientious distrust - of the self's assumptions of superiority - has been forced too far. This in turn implies that what is laid out for sacrifice in this novel is her own sensibility.

For her affinity with Marianne Dashwood the evidence of the novel itself must count. It is supported by the testimony of whichever

1. p. 383

member of her family wrote "To Miss Jane Austen the reputed Author of 'Sense and Sensibility', a novel lately publish'd."

In this scrap of commendatory verse there occur the lines

"On such Subjects no Wonder that she shou'd write well,
In whom so united those Qualities dwell;
Where 'dear Sensibility', Sterne's darling Maid,
With Sense so attemper'd is finely pourtray'd.
Fair Elinor's Self in that Mind is exprest,
And the Feelings of Marianne live in that Breast." (1)

Moreover, the author of the Memoir mentions that some (slight) acquaintances of the Austen family said, when Sense and Sensibility came out, that Elinor was a portrait of Cassandra, and Marianne of Jane. Austen-Leigh allows that the first might be true. He rejects the second not on the grounds of personal knowledge, but on the theoretical grounds that "The young woman who, before the age of twenty, could so clearly discern the failings of Marianne Dashwood, could hardly have been subject to them herself."² With Yeats' aphorism in mind, one might reply with at least equal theoretical plausibility, that only a young woman who was subject to such feelings could have written so interestingly about them.

It is important not to simplify the novel. There are two aspects to Marianne's sensibility, and one - her tendency to self-pity - may not have found an affinity in Jane Austen. Here she

1. Included in R.W. Chapman: Jane Austen, A Critical Bibliography, 2nd ed., (Oxford, 1955), p. 19

2. Memoir, p. 17

may well have found material for impersonal comedy, as her brother James does in his picture of Richard Rueful for the Loiterer. Rueful argues, "the greatest enjoyment which human nature can receive consists in the comfort of repining, and the luxury of complaint."¹

But Marianne's more interesting emotions are those which reflect her enthusiasm and her affection for others. Jane Austen ascribes to the blocking characters in this comedy an almost universal touchiness, spite, possessiveness and pride. Marianne's consequent contempt, her anger on behalf of others of real feeling as well as on her own behalf, is presented most strikingly in the episode of Elinor's painted screens. Her outburst - after such things as Mrs. Ferrars's rudeness, and Fanny's "dread of having been too civil" - is an expression not of any kind of affectation but of real generosity:

"This is admiration of a very particular kind! - what is Miss Morton to us? - who knows, or who cares, for her? - it is Elinor of whom we think and speak.'

And so saying, she took the screens out of her sister-in-law's hands, to admire them herself as they ought to be admired." (2)

The reaction of Mrs. Ferrars - "'Miss Morton is Lord Morton's daughter.'" - might seem to make this outburst all the more reasonable, but the point the novel seems to make, by drawing

1. No. xxxi, p. 4

2. S & S, p. 235. (Ch. 34)

attention to Elinor's pain, is that no matter how rude the unfeeling are, the feeling must preserve a heroic self-control. The protective camouflage, it seems, must not be dropped.

Elinor's emotions, it is important to note, are from the first either consequences of, or contrasts to, Marianne's. Jane Austen refers in a letter to "my Elinor"¹, but this does not make her the heroine. She is presented initially as feeling anxiety on behalf of her mother and sister, and while much of the novel is seen from her point of view, and her fear and unhappiness and achieved self-control during the Lucy Steele episode are powerfully realised, nevertheless the object of her love - Edward Ferrars - is more shadowily presented than Willoughby, and it is on Marianne's feelings (and Willoughby's) that the stress falls at the end.

Willoughby's emphasised remorse in fact seems a little strong even for a comedy of poetic justice. In spite of his horses and dogs, the sense lingers that both he and Marianne are making do with second best: this may be good morality, but it is an inappropriate comic ending. And what gives further grounds for uneasiness is that while one of the chief characters is not invited to the banquet, one of the imposters triumphs. Lucy and

1. Letters, p. 273

Robert are re-established in his mother's favour (while Edward is still no more than tolerated) -

"a most encouraging instance of what an earnest, an unceasing attention to self-interest, however its progress may be apparently obstructed, will do in securing every advantage of fortune, with no other sacrifice than that of time and conscience." (1)

Irrational society never triumphs so absolutely again. The blocking characters generally have to sacrifice (some) happiness as well as conscience.

But this makes the later novels less exploratory. A particular answer is assumed to what in Sense and Sensibility is still a question: do feeling and virtue necessarily imply happiness?

Happiness was a common obsession in the century in which Jane Austen was born. Two examples will have to do. The first is from Locke, writing just before the century began: "If it be further asked, - What is it moves desire? I answer, - happiness, and that alone."² The second is from John Moore, writing (in his novel Mordaunt) in 1800:

"The great end and object of every government ought to be the happiness of the governed. We conceive the diffusion of happiness to be the grand purpose even of creation." (3)

1. p. 376

2. Human Understanding, i, p. 340

3. p. 10

But happiness implies control or moderation of desire and feeling: this Locke recommends, and Hutcheson gives hints on how it is to be done.¹ Mr. Villars, in Evelina, recommends the curbing of ambition, "since to diminish expectation, is to increase enjoyment."² A Loiterer paper exposes the fate of those who cannot moderate emotion: "they will be tortured by the poignant delicacy of their own feelings, and fall the Martyrs to their own Susceptibility."³

Against this, sympathisers with the sensibility ethos could argue that moderation is an evasion of human possibility, that it cuts the happy off from both the greater miseries and the greater joys of the feeling.⁴ Marianne's attitude is symbolised in the walk she and Margaret take on the morning they meet Willoughby:

"They gaily ascended the downs, rejoicing in their own penetration at every glimpse of blue sky; and when they caught in their faces the animating gales of an high south-westerly wind, they pitied the fears which had prevented their mother and Elinor from sharing such delightful sensations." (5)

This ends in rain and a sprained ankle, and if these lead to the acquaintance with Willoughby, this in turn produces avoidable misery. The novel, then affirms moderation.

1. Locke: Human Understanding, i, p. 350; Hutcheson: Passions and Affections, pp. 165-203

2. p. 18

3. No. xlvii, p. 5

4. See, e.g., Edgeworth: Julia and Caroline, pp. 6-7

5. p. 41. (Ch. 9)

It does this at a certain price - even if to affirm moderation is in keeping with a comic perspective - and the linked question: does virtue imply happiness? is left hanging in the air. On the whole Jane Austen appears to agree with Shaftesbury that "To love, and to be kind; to have social or natural affection, complacency and good will, is to feel immediate satisfaction and genuine content", and that "animosity, hatred, and bitterness, is original misery and torment".¹ Hume agrees with this in essence, but in his essay 'The Sceptic', he points out that

"all vice is indeed pernicious; yet the disturbance or pain is not measured out by nature with exact proportion to the degree of vice, nor is the man of highest virtue, even abstracting from external accidents, always the most happy." (2)

Persons with a keen sense of honour or propriety will ~~thus~~ feel pain which those without it will avoid; persons incurably self-seeking or unmindful of the feelings of others will be content when those with lively sympathies cannot be. This is not a point of view in keeping with a comic perspective, but it is explored (and even confirmed) in Sense and Sensibility. It contributes a further incongruity to the text.

This, I think, establishes what is constant in Jane Austen's procedure. It is only necessary to look briefly at the four remaining

1. Characteristics, i, p. 334

2. Essays, p. 230

novels, particularly since the range of emotions presented in each novel remains fairly constant.

Pride and Prejudice, according to family tradition, was originally called First Impressions. This suggests that the novel was (in its early form) a further burlesque of the sensibility ethos - 'first impressions', the ability of a hero or heroine to know character by intuition and (most important) to fall in love at first sight, was an important element in the novelised ethos. The contrast between Jane and Elizabeth may have been as central to this book as that between Elinor and Marianne was in Sense and Sensibility: Jane's 'candour' tempering Elizabeth's confidence in 'first impressions'.

This in itself would have been interesting, especially since 'candour' was a fashionable virtue associated with the sensibility ethos.¹ It suggests a kind of fifth column strategy: devastating affected sensibility with one of its own weapons. And 'candour' remains an important element in the book in its present form.

The word did not mean then what it means now. When Lady Delacour, in Belinda, describes Clarence Hervy as "the most candid man in the world",² she is not praising his frankness: but his leaping to the defence of every possible position. This is as Jane Austen defines

1. See Bowles: State of Society, pp. 138-9; West: Young Lady, ii, pp. 337-72, 393-408

2. i, p. 129

the word (through Elizabeth, talking to Jane) in Pride and Prejudice itself:

"Affectation of candour is common enough; - one meets it every where. But to be candid without ostentation or design - to take the good of every body's character and make it still better, and say nothing of the bad - belongs to you alone." (1)

But in the novel as we have it almost all signs of the book's origins in a continuing quarrel with the self have vanished. Playfulness, the joy in a heroine who insists upon finding amusement in foolish emotions even where the person who experiences them is in earnest, has been given its head. Elizabeth not only suffers much less - at the hands of Wickham - than Marianne from Willoughby: at the end she forces Darcy into admitting that he fell in love with her for her impertinence.²

General issues are touched on by the way (and thus thicken the texture of the novel): the importance of education, the importance of love in marriage (I deal with this in the next chapter).

But does the novel as a whole explore any substantial questions? Or is it simply an expression of joy in ridicule, a comic triumph for the self over society?

One possible question the novel might be thought to be exploring is that suggested by the novel's titles - both the earlier and the

1. pp. 14-15. (Ch. 4)

2. p. 380. (Ch. 60)

present title, which are connected. But while Darcy has to humble himself for his pride, Elizabeth suffers no more for her prejudice than a difficulty in persuading her family that she loves him when he does. The danger of judging people too quickly is not substantially explored.

A question that perhaps is explored is the proper scope of irony. Elizabeth's lively wit is not only contrasted with Jane's 'candour' and Mary's moralism. (Where the comic spirit is amused, candour excuses, and moralism generalises into commonplaces.) It is contrasted with her father's more defensive irony: an irony which can be seen - and in the Lydia episodes is seen - as an evasion of responsibility. But no very profound or lasting emotion results.

In this novel, only pleasant emotions linger. The jealousy and anxiety and anger of the blocking characters are seen in almost continuously comic perspective: the shame and mortification necessarily ascribed to the sensitive characters are soon converted to gratitude and joy. The self has its way.

Mansfield Park does not exploit a wider range of emotions. But now painful emotions are less transient. Jane Austen may not dwell on guilt and misery in this comedy, but she does present them more substantially than before.

And two contemporary issues are substantially introduced: 'Sentimental Jacobinism' and Evangelicalism. Their presence in this

one novel is enough to redeem Jane Austen from either the ironic charge or the imputed virtue of betraying "shocking indifference" to all the intellectual upheavals of her age.¹

'Sentimental Jacobinism' is introduced only to be dismissed. It is one of the forces with which Mansfield Park - quite properly seen (like the later Howard's End) as a symbol of something abiding in England - has to cope. The threat comes through Lovers' Vows.

It is worth pointing out how popular not only "sickly and stupid German Tragedies",² but Kotzebue himself was at this time. According to Carlyle in 1838,

"Kotzebue, not so many years since, saw himself, if rumour and hand-clapping could be credited, the greatest man going; saw visibly his Thoughts, dressed-out in plush and pasteboard, permeating and perambulating civilised Europe; the most iron visages weeping with him, in all theatres from Cadiz to Kamtchatka". (3)

His appeal was "great emotions". In Belinda, Lady Delacour is glad that Mr. Vincent has left for Germany: she comments;

"I dare say he will find in the upper or lower circles of the empire, some heroine in the Kotzebue taste, who will alternately make him miserable, till he is happy; and happy, till he is miserable. He is one of those men, who require great emotions." (4)

1. A charge brought - to demonstrate its unimportance - by C.S. Lewis. See Studies in Words, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, 1967), p. 329

2. Wordsworth: 'Preface', p. 243

3. 'Walter Scott', p. 35

4. iii, p. 298

But it is not so much his overpowering emotionalism as his immorality and his revolutionary politics that most threaten Mansfield Park. This was the aspect of Lovers' Vows that horrified Mrs. West. In her (1806) Letters to a Young Lady, she specifically instances Lovers' Vows as a representative fashionable but immoral play.¹

This 'fashionable' is itself an important point. Mansfield Park is threatened not so much from below as from above. Lovers' Vows comes with Mr. Yates, "the younger son of a lord with a tolerable independence",² who had been about to act in it at an aristocratic house party - "at Ecclesford, the seat of the Right Hon. Lord Ravenshaw, in Cornwall".³ His easy aristocratic manners are themselves the object of disapproval and ridicule: when Sir Thomas encounters him ranting upon the stage in the billiard room, his "easy indifference and volubility in the course of the first five minutes seemed to mark him the most at home of the two."⁴ But it is the association of the nobility with the sentimental Jacobinism of "the German" that is the real object of disapproval.

The significance of this conjunction can be seen in a comment by Hannah More in 1799 (the italics are her own):

1. ii, p. 316; Cf. Whitford: 'Satire of Sentimentalism', pp. 179-83

2. MP, p. 121

3. p. 121

4. p. 183

"The newspapers announce that Schiller's Tragedy of the Robbers, which inflamed the young nobility of Germany to enlist themselves into a band of highwaymen to rob in the forests of Bohemia, is now acting in England by persons of quality!" (1)

Evangelicalism is a more complex challenge. It is a personal challenge: in the continuing quarrel with her self, Jane Austen could have found no apter embodiment of everything she instinctively disliked and felt conscientious respect for than the Evangelical movement.

It was Evangelicalism that carried through the war on absentee clergymen which is responsible for Edmund Bertram's dilemma (Henry Tilney had been, at least for some of the time, an absentee cleric, without this causing him or Jane Austen any apparent anxiety). And that his determination to live in his parish is a sign of Evangelical tendencies is shown by Mary Crawford's mocking allusion:

"A pretty good lecture upon my word. Was it part of your last sermon? At this rate, you will soon reform every body at Mansfield and Thornton Lacey; and when I hear of you next, it may be as a celebrated preacher in some great society of Methodists, or as a missionary into foreign parts.'" (2)

Here Mary Crawford isolates three of the features of contemporary Evangelicalism - the stress upon reformation or conversion (even members of the Established Church stood in need of conversion to true Christianity), the prestige of good preachers, and the upsurge

1. Strictures on Female Education, i, p. 38

2. MP, p. 458

of interest in foreign missionary work. The relation of Evangelicalism to Methodism (to which Mary Crawford also refers) needs to be explained (briefly).

Wesley had no desire to break with the Established Church, in which he was ordained; but during the 1780's his followers were gradually driven out. In 1782 the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion had to register itself as a Dissenting Chapel; in 1784 Wesley began to ordain his own preachers; and in 1787 all Methodist places of worship were forced to register themselves as Dissenting.¹ The break was not absolute, however, because there were a number of clergymen who remained Anglican while sympathising with (and befriending) Wesley and Whit^efield: these were the first Evangelicals. By the turn of the century they were a powerful and organised party within the church. Since they still had close connections with the Methodists, who were now gaining their support largely among the working people of the towns and agricultural labourers, it was always possible to insult the Evangelicals by calling them Methodists.²

Jane Austen's attitude towards the Evangelicals underwent some fluctuation. In 1809 she wrote to Cassandra, mentioning Hannah More's Coelebs in Search of a Wife, published earlier that year: "You have by no means raised my curiosity after Caleb; - My disinclination for

1. See Paul Sangster: Pity My Simplicity, The Evangelical Revival and the Religious Education of Children 1738-1800, (London, 1963), pp. 15-23

2. See Elie Halévy: England in 1815, trans. E.I. Watkins and D.A. Barker, 2nd ed., (London, 1949), pp. 410-55

it before was affected, but now it is real; I do not like the Evangelicals."¹ In 1814, the year Mansfield Park appeared, she wrote to Fanny Knight: "I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be Evangelicals, & am at least persuaded that they who are so from Reason and Feeling, must be happiest & safest."² (This is the letter in which she argues that wisdom is better than wit.) Even though this change of attitude may be for the benefit of her young correspondent, the force of the word 'safest' needs to be considered. Two years later her personal dislike of Evangelicalism again comes to the surface in a letter to Cassandra: "We do not much like Mr. Cooper's new Sermons; - they are fuller of Regeneration & Conversion than ever - with the addition of his zeal in the cause of the Bible Society."³

In Mansfield Park itself Evangelicalism is treated more sympathetically, as a counterweight to thoughtlessness and lack of principle. A novelist with an ability to feel herself into stubbornly individual characters like Jane Austen is capable equally of feeling herself into sympathy with otherwise unsympathetic attitudes. This adds to the comedy at the end a sense of momentous struggle, in which sides now have to be taken: and liveliness is seen to be linked with "vice".

1. Letters, p. 256

2. p. 410

3. p. 467

This is conscientious distrust at its fullest. But for all this, Mansfield Park remains a comedy. The emotions of Edmund during his dilemma have little in common with the deep sense of guilt and correspondingly deep aspiration of St. John Rivers in Jane Eyre (also an Evangelical clergyman, and supposed to be of the same generation). And the fuller emotions of Fanny Price - which take the novel's stress - her loneliness, her embarrassment, her bewilderment and apprehension, have their appropriate comic reward.

Nor is Fanny Price an Evangelical heroine. Not only does she not explicitly compare her actions "with the rules of the gospel", as Mrs. Chapone recommends young girls to do;¹ it is an instinctive goodness that animates her - the "affectionate heart" and "strong desire of doing right", that were hers from the first.² And even while she is good, she is not perfect. The measure of Jane Austen's tenderness for her (which is noticeable) can be taken by seeing that Fanny inherits the ingenuousness of Catherine Morland and the sensibility of Marianne Dashwood. Her moralising, such as it is, is less a sign of goodness than enthusiasm (in the modern sense). Jane Austen, I think, finds this quality in her both natural and loveable, and irresistibly comic.

Of Emma, Jane Austen wrote

1. Improvement of Mind, i, p. 69

2. MP, p. 17

"I am very strongly haunted with the idea that to those readers who have preferred 'Pride and Prejudice' it will appear inferior in wit, and to those who have preferred 'Mansfield Park' very inferior in good sense." (1)

This suggests that she may have attempted in the novel to build upon both its immediate predecessors, to reconcile playfulness and conscientious distrust.

If so, to a large extent she seems to have succeeded. The comedy is never darkened, or its equilibrium threatened, by conscientious moralising - as the penultimate chapters of Mansfield Park perhaps are. But a balancing of self against society more sophisticated than Jane Austen had managed before is successfully attempted.

I say more sophisticated because society is now seen clearly as itself a jumble of heterogenous selves. A more impersonal valuation is ascribed to the narrator in earlier novels: what is sound in social valuation is authoritatively rescued from what is absurd. In Emma, after the opening pages, the narrator allows everyone to speak for themselves, in their own terms. Jane Austen glances at such things as the danger in young women's cultivating inferiors, (a danger already pointed out by Mrs. Chapone²) but the question she substantially explores in Emma is this: how close can any individual get to the truth - about himself and his emotions,

1. Letters, p. 443

2. Improvement of Mind, i, pp. 97-8

about others and their emotions, about the conduct really appropriate to a given situation?

The problem, as Jane Austen presents it, is that persons are committed to a personal point of view, a personal way of discriminating and understanding. Misjudging, misinterpreting, and misplacing of importance sum up the action of Emma. But correct judgment, correct interpretation, and correct placing of importance only emerge out of accidental discoveries and the clash of opinion: no individual can transcend himself.

This is particularly obvious in the case of Mr. Woodhouse - health and comfort, and dangers to health and comfort, are his only standards. But a similar restriction to the self's own point of view can be traced in the other characters. It is Emma's continuing downfall - and it limits even Mr. Knightley.

This is to take issue with Graham Hough, who argues:

"Mr. Knightley is always right; he is the beau idéal, a personal embodiment of the moral and social norm."¹ To see what a beau idéal is really like, we have to look at Belinda's Clarence Hervey, of whom it can be said that "there was no species of knowledge for which he had not taste and talents".² But even Clarence Hervey, profound "metaphysician" though he is, is not always right (Rousseau misleads him, for example), And this is an odd remark indeed to make about

1. 'Narrative and Dialogue in Jane Austen', p. 222

2. i, p. 219

Mr. Knightley.

He is, it matters to realise, as much governed by feeling as the other characters. He is an admirable man, with good feelings: his anxiety about Emma's mind matches her father's about her health. But his feelings of jealousy for Frank Churchill not only distort his judgment when Frank Churchill's behaviour is ambiguous: they linger even when his behaviour is cleared up. The whole of his reaction to Frank Churchill's letter¹ is a personal reaction: his indignation, his contempt, his begrudging admiration are justified, but make him no more "right" about Frank Churchill than Emma. And his later writing off of the value of his moral influence on her ("I do not believe I did you any good. The good was all to myself, by making you an object of the tenderest affection to me."²) can be taken two ways. This is either excessive generosity: he was right then and wrong now. Or it is final undeception: he is right now and was mistaken before. Either way he remains^a fallible - a thoroughly admirable but fallible - human being.

Two final points. The Box Hill episode demonstrates Jane Austen's continuing distrust of her powers of ridicule. The temptation to which Emma gives way, in making fun of Miss Bates to her face, is one to which it is overwhelmingly probable that Jane Austen was prone.

1. E, pp. 444-8

2. p. 462

Again it is her predicament that is dramatised.

But there is one addition to the range of emotions presented in Emma. In previous novels Jane Austen had shown herself to share Johnson's tough-mindedness about 'natural affections'. In Emma not only is the concept evoked, in an early discussion of Frank Churchill between Mr. Knightley and Emma:

"... What has Mr. Frank Churchill done, to make you suppose him such an unnatural creature?"

'I am not supposing him at all an unnatural creature, in suspecting that he may have learnt to be above his connections...' (1)

The emotion itself is presented, in the real bond of love between Emma and her father.

Persuasion shows her returning to her earlier tough-mindedness in this respect. There is little I want to say here about this novel, since I deal with it in some detail in the next chapter. Here it is only necessary to point out that while Jane Austen's playfulness is a little subdued, that there is more malice and less fun in ascriptions of shallow feelings - in Mrs. Musgrove's "large fat sighings", for example² - nevertheless she dramatises her own predicament more closely than ever before, and Anne - unlike Mr. Knightley - is always right. She was right to love Wentworth, and right to take Lady Russell's advice: it was Lady Russell who was wrong.³ (Anne's disapproval of

1. p. 145. (Ch. 18)

2. p. 68

3. p. 246

Sunday travelling¹ may mean that Jane Austen has come to sympathise with another Evangelical attitude; it need not.)

In first invoking the notion 'dramatising a predicament' I mentioned that the predicament might be an individual one - or it might be a social predicament, or a common human predicament. It need be personal only to the extent that it is a matter of pressing personal concern. Jane Austen's chosen predicament seems to have been very close to hers as an individual; Charlotte Brontë's does not. She lost her mother, and two sisters, early, but she was never the friendless, rootless castaway that each of her protagonists is (though the predicament is softened for the two heroines of Shirley.)

Something much more widespread than an individual predicament is involved - something which many writers in the early nineteenth century express: a profound sense of homelessness. ('Home' is a magical word to Charlotte Brontë even in her juvenile work, written at home when one parent at least, not to mention affectionate brother and sisters, and devoted family servants, were within call.)

What led to this? - to the sudden obsession with doomed wanderers? - the Ancient Mariner, Childe Harold, Cain, The Wandering Jew, the Flying Dutchman? What accounts for the widely dispersed emotion that found an objective correlative in such images as that of "Ruth, when, sick for home, / She stood in tears amid the alien corn"?

The emotion is itself ascribed to protagonists, in Charlotte Brontë, and occasions many more: not only a profound loneliness - (profound because not affected by social intercourse), but nostalgia, wanderlust, the exile's longing for Eden. It can be seen, perhaps in a purer form than in any of the novels, in one of the manuscripts anticipating Villette, in which the later Polly is the narrator. She says she remembers the voyage to England; describes it; then asks:

"Whence did we come? Where had we lived? What occasioned this voyage? Memory puzzles herself to reply to these questions... this is all she reads - We came from a place where the buildings were numerous and stately, where before white house-fronts there rose here and there trees stright as spires ... people on foot, brightly clad with shining silks...carriages rolling along rapid and quiet." (1)

One possible explanation of the emotion - and the predicament,- is suggested by this passage. The "quiet" wheels of the carriages,- quiet because dreamt rather than remembered, suggest that it is dreaming - the withdrawal into fantasy itself - that makes the real world dull, oppressive, unstable, threatening. The longing for home is thus a longing for reconciliation with the world.²

These impulses, together with those already identified, need to be examined in the individual novels.

The Professor, like Jane Austen's first two novels, is only a pointer to its author's later success. But, in this, it is closer to Sense and Sensibility than to Northanger Abbey. It is not that

1. 'Mss foreshadowing Villette', p. 278

2. When David Copperfield comes out from the dream world of Covent Garden, he feels "a stranger upon earth". Oxford Illustrated ed., (London, 1947), p. 286. (Ch. 19)

new impulses emerge to check the initial impulse; it is that extreme conscientiousness unbalances (or better, dis-balances). The impulse to avenge, seen in the presentation of Zoraide Reuter and the Belgian pupils - of both sexes - is perhaps the least tampered with: but because Crimsworth is a man the first, particularly, is not integrated. In other respects what the book reveals is a deliberate pulling of punches.

Coming to the novel from Jane Austen one notices obvious differences in the range of emotions presented: Charlotte Brontë allows more for the physical in the attraction between the sexes. And she more directly explores such issues as the proper limits of society's sway.¹ But the way in which, say, the first kiss of Frances Henri and Crimsworth is presented hardly suggests the "fire" which George Eliot found in her later work. ("Quite as much as in George Sand, only the clothing is less voluptuous."²)

What the punch-pulling most disturbs is the presentation of the basic predicament. Here it does not matter so much that the protagonist is a man: it is the failure, (failure seen with hindsight) to draw out of his situation its full potential - the attempt to make him an ordinary man, to give him an accidental, contingent relation with the world, to leave him enjoying conventional happiness, that spoils the novel.

1. Prof, pp. 359-61. (Ch. 25)

2. Letters, ii, p. 91; cf. Arnold to Clough, p. 132

The finest passage in the book, as far as the presentation of emotions is concerned, is Crimsworth's sudden possession by "hypochondria" after his successful proposal to Frances Henri.¹ It is as though Charlotte Brontë had to include this, as though even here she could not present achieved love without the context of a murderous threat to the self. But it is not prepared adequately, and after it Crimsworth declines into the "happiness" derided by T.H. Green:

"i.e.... the extraction of the greatest possible amount of enjoyment from a world to which it seems to be accidentally related." (2)

In future novels happiness is only a stage on the journey.

But how much of this journey is already present in The Professor? Which of the important later elements can be detected?

In the first place Crimsworth is a lonely, homeless man: "my boyhood was lonely, parentless; uncheered by brother or sister".³ He also has to make his way against contempt, resentment, envy, spite - all the emotions with which conformists confront the nonconforming. He is a (tempered) outcast in X—— society. Part of his life is a struggle against the self. And he travels to find fulfilment.

The imagery of the book also points to later success: the animal

1. pp. 320-3. (Ch. 23)

2. Estimate of Fiction, p. 5

3. p. 322

imagery, with its sense of conflict within and without - "the dragon within" Frances Henri, now Mrs. Crimsworth,¹ or her hovering round Hunsden and Victor "like a dove guarding its young from a hovering hawk";² and the Eden imagery - the "Promised Land" which England is to Frances Henri earlier.

Struggle and wandering are present, then, even if in a muted form. But in this form they do not speak for Charlotte Brontë: for the feeling identified by the Christian Remembrancer reviewer of Villette (Anne Mozley, a woman with High Church sympathies):

"A feeling is always conveyed which it would be unjust to call envy, implying rather a kind of yearning, a sense of isolation, which may not belong wholly to situation, and perhaps is inseparable from keen penetration".(3)

And by Charlotte Brontë herself, in a letter to Ellen Nussey of 1836, ten years before beginning even The Professor:

"I have some qualities which make me very miserable, some feelings that you can have no participation in, that few, very few people in the world can at all understand. I don't pride myself on these peculiarities, I strive to conceal and suppress them as much as I can, but they burst out sometimes, and then those who see the explosion despise me, and I hate myself for days afterwards." (4)

This feeling finds more satisfying expression in Jane

Eyre.

In the first place, Jane is more obviously homeless: an orphan

1. p. 365

2. p. 376

3. xxv (1853), pp. 431-2

4. Correspondence, i, p. 141

like Crimsworth, but knowing even less about her dead parents. As she describes herself later, she is "quite alone in the world, cut adrift from every connection",¹ and "a wanderer on the face of the earth".² She is also a branded wanderer, not a small child but a "toad"³, and finding it necessary to expiate some fault which she cannot comprehend ("What does Bessie say I have done?' I asked."⁴) And she is not even certain of her humanity. She may be a tiny phantom, "half fairy, half imp"⁵ or a "fiend": "Mrs. Reed ... gazed at me as if she really did not know whether I were child or fiend".⁶ Later, in Villette, Charlotte Brontë is to make the situation even more mysterious.: Lucy is a child cast upon the waters before the book begins, and she is not only an orphan - she resolutely keeps the secret of her parentage.

The loneliness and restlessness ascribed to Jane Eyre in this situation is thus presented more powerfully than in The Professor. So are the emotions which confront the self on its perilous journey home.

These emotions are ascribed to the self as well as to others:

1. i, p. 154

2. i, p. 383

3. i, p. 35

4. i, p. 2

5. i, p. 15

6. i, p. 38

not only witches and ogres have to be successfully challenged, but Giant Despair. And this is not, whatever these terms suggest, a fairy-tale or fantasy which authenticity in the presentation of personal experience conceals: this, I think, is how Charlotte Brontë saw the real world.

The struggle with the self may do as an example. This was something the reviewers found especially well done in Jane Eyre. As the Eclectic reviewer of Shirley put it (about the earlier book):

"In the dissection of character, and the nice tracing of internal struggles, it displayed a power infinitely superior to the clumsy contrivances of many contemporaries." (1)

The necessity for such "internal struggles" was something which seems to have been widely assumed. It is a commonplace found even in Whately's (1851) book of synonyms:

"As long as we live on this earth, the best must spend their lives in resisting and struggling against temptations, and controlling evil tendencies". (2)

Nor is Charlotte Brontë's presentation of malignant hatred or other powerful emotions a matter of fantasy. This again was how she saw the world. There was her experience of governess-ship to confirm it: "She said that none but those who had been in the position of a governess could ever realize the dark side of 'respectable' human nature".³ And the mad rages of her brother:

1. p. 739

2. A Selection of English Synonyms, (London, 1851), p. 104

3. Life, p. 154

"For some time before his death he had attacks of delirium tremens of the most frightful character; he slept in his father's room, and he would sometimes declare that either he or his father should be dead before morning. The trembling sisters, sick with fright, would implore their father not to expose himself to this danger". (1)

Even had she not had this background of strong and malignant emotion in her own life, the authenticity of Charlotte Brontë's novels would not necessarily be threatened by fantasy - by imagining what she had never known. Conjectural history allows for such imagining - improbabilities threaten plausibility or verisimilitude, but not authenticity. The truths that are stranger than, need not be strangers to, fiction: as Hegel is supposed to have said, Nature is full of freaks.

Thus, in further positing in Jane Eyre (as she does not in The Professor) a world of a mysterious coherence, she is not merely exorcising a fear of being pre-destined for hell - she had earlier described herself (to Ellen Nussey) as

"smitten at times to the heart with the conviction that —'s ghastly Calvinistic doctrines are true - darkened, in short, by the very shadows of spiritual death!" (2)

She is, rather, expressing a sense which may come to many religious people, especially those who brood upon biblical incidents and their

1. p. 263

2. Correspondence, i, p. 147. Cf. i, p. 143: "if the Doctrine of Calvin be true I am already an outcast".

traditional interpretations: that nothing is random, or contingent. God is working in the smallest event, and everything may turn out to have some hidden significance. The tone of the opening of Chapter 21 of Jane Eyre ought to be carefully considered:

"Presentiments are strange things! and so are sympathies; and so are signs; and the three combined make one mystery to which humanity has not yet found the key. I never laughed at presentiments in my life, because I have had strange ones of my own. Sympathies, I believe, exist: (for instance, between far-distant, long absent, wholly estranged relatives: asserting, notwithstanding their alienation, the unity of the source to which each traces his origin) whose workings baffle mortal comprehension. And signs, for aught we know, may be but the sympathies of Nature with man," (1)

This is not, it seems to me, an appeal to the reader to accept a convention: it is a request for serious consideration of an idea.

The assumption of an immediately sustaining God introduces a range of emotions which again are absent from Jane Austen: the awe, devotion and sense of guilt which form part of the self's relationship with its (personally confronted) Creator. It is this relationship which sustains Jane Eyre at the darkest stage of her quest, when she is a literal outcast on the heath.

The structure of Jane Eyre is just such a series of trials or ordeals as the words "quest" or "perilous journey" suggest. At every turn the self is confronted by threats - by stagnation and boredom

as much by danger and anger; at another level, by flood and petrification as much as by fire. Charlotte Brontë writes badly - because vaguely - about happiness: the word "bliss" is always a danger signal. But from Jane Eyre on, happiness becomes less important. At the end of Jane Eyre it is rather concord, harmony, that matters (and St. John Rivers' longing that in fact closes the book.) The word "fulfilment", in the sense 'having worked out one's destiny; having developed one's gifts and character to the full' was not available to Charlotte Brontë. The OED gives no earlier example than 1920. But this is nevertheless what Charlotte Brontë is now interested in. In Villette even (this kind of) fulfilment is transcended.

An emotion that is associated with one of the earliest of Jane's ordeals has not yet been mentioned: the fear of death. This again was something Charlotte Brontë herself felt keenly. Mrs. Gaskell quotes a letter from 'one of her friends'

"Charlotte was certainly afraid of death. Not only of dead bodies, or dying people. She dreaded it as something horrible. She thought we did not know how long the 'moment of dissolution' might really be, or how terrible. This was just such a terror as only hypochondriacs can provide for themselves". (1)

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that these ordeals are real ordeals: the stagnation for example that threatens Jane Eyre is not

1. Life, p. 111

the waste land of a self-enclosed mythical or dream world, it is the stagnation imposed upon (many) women by the society in which Charlotte Brontë lived. "Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot."¹

This theme is taken up again in Shirley. This book has a more complex structure than Jane Eyre, even if it evokes a broadly similar range of emotions. I have argued in an earlier chapter that the novel hardly hangs together: but I pointed out at the time its planned unity. The "dryer matter" of Shirley - which Charlotte Brontë thought readers might not take to² - is a serious investigation of social arrangements. This is now supposed to take the stress, and the lives of Caroline and Shirley herself only to form part of the exploration.

Elements of the quest pattern are retained. Both Caroline and Shirley are orphans (though Caroline regains her mother.) And Caroline longs for Hollow's Cottage "as much almost as the First Woman, in her exile, must have longed to revisit Eden."³ At the end, too, she and Robert - like Jane Eyre and Rochester - form an island complete in themselves:

1. JE, i, p. 181

2. Correspondence, iii, p. 35

3. i, p. 357

"The air was now dark with snow: an Iceland blast was driving it wildly. This pair neither heard the long 'wuthering' rush, nor saw the white burden it drifted: each seemed conscious but of one thing - the presence of the other." (1)

It is a mistake, however, to see this as the essence of the novel, set in so much unnecessary social comment. Society is foreground in this novel, not background. The relations between the clergy and their parishioners - or that between employers and employees - the predicament of "old maids", the role played in society by different creeds: all these matter as much as the personal relations of the two heroines. Or rather, their personal relations are themselves socially problematic (in two different ways) and therefore form part of the arrangements to be explored. And the end, rather than the reconciliation of the self with the world, is the reconciliation of society with itself. Energies must not be allowed to go to waste (like "old maids"), or to take control of rational men (as in the struggle between masters and men): it is necessary to find some equilibrium.

Perhaps because of her pondering of the power of unreason in society (in Methodists as much as in Luddites, as Charlotte Brontë presents them), she came to a sharper sense of the unconscious powers in individuals. At any rate, in the presentation of Martin towards

the end of the novel, she introduces, if not a new emotion, a new understanding of emotion: for example when he meets Caroline in the wood.

"Martin contemplated her with inexpressible curiosity, In one sense it was, as he would have expressed it, 'nuts' to him to see this: it told him so much, and he was beginning to have a great relish for discovering secrets; in another sense, it reminded him of what he had once felt when he had heard a blackbird lamenting for her nestlings, which Matthew had crushed with a stone, and that was not a pleasant feeling." (1)

The growth of new emotion in Martin, the beginning of something that is not quite love and not simply love of power, is an extension of Charlotte Brontë's range.

Villette returns, as I have suggested, to the quest pattern. With Persuasion, I deal with it more fully in the next chapter. Here one feature only needs to be observed: the addition to the range of emotion presented in Jane Eyre a sense of wonder and bitterness at the perversity of the self (perhaps taking up the hint suggested by Martin) in satisfying needs which the merely conscious self can hardly comprehend. The great scene is that at the end of ^{the} Chapter 'M. Paul keeps his Promise'.

Paul Emanuel comes looking for Lucy. "There, in that first classe I was, thence I had been watching him; but there I could not find courage to await his approach."² She runs, at the prompting of

1. ii, p. 360

2. All quotations are from ii, pp. 220-2. (Ch. 33)

"the coward within", to take "sanctuary in the oratory". There she waits, with "an unaccountable, undefined apprehension". She hears him passing through all the classrooms; she is about to go to him, at last, when a glib lie heads him off. Madame Beck sees him out.

"As that street-door closed, a sudden amazement at my own perverse proceeding struck like a blow upon me. I felt from the first that it was me he wanted - me he was seeking - and had not I wanted him too? What, then, had carried me away? What had rapt me beyond his reach? He had something to tell: he was going to tell me that something: my ear strained its nerve to hear it, and I had made the confidence impossible. Yearning to listen and console, while I thought audience and solace beyond hope's reach - no sooner did opportunity fully arrive, than I evaded it as I would have evaded the levelled shaft of mortality."

Her "reward" is "dead blank, dark doubt, and drear suspense". "I took my wages to my pillow, and passed the night counting them."

This is beyond Jane Austen's ken. And if a case can be made for her superiority in technique - and perhaps such a case can be made, in spite of the difficulty of comparing techniques so dissimilar - no such case can be made for her on the grounds of the range of emotions presented. She is better at the quieter emotions than Charlotte Brontë, and better at mixed feelings. But the absence from her novels of the emotions associated with death, the supernatural, and sexual desire - however much the literary decorum of comedy or actual social decorum explain it - is an absolute loss.

(No such charge can be brought against Charlotte Brontë.)

This is not a point to pursue. There is more to be got out of simply setting the two novelists' practice side by side than out of comparative evaluations. And it remains to look closely at the way they present a particular emotion. Love is the obvious candidate.

Chapter Seven: Love

If the treatment of a single emotion is worth looking at, love is the obvious candidate because of the prominence it is given in both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë. But in giving it this prominence, of course, they are in no way unique.

Johnson's "A small tale, generally of love" is not an idiosyncratic definition. The novel, as a form, had a reputation for being obsessed with love throughout the period considered here. According to the Trifler, a diminutive Scottish weekly, in 1796:

"Novel reading is now the only taste of the day.
Volumes upon volumes are heaped up, and the
subject through the whole of them is love." (1)

And in 1835, J.F. Stephen commented:

"The well-known dogma of Aristototele, that the object of a tragedy is to excite terror and pity, might be paraphrased by saying that it is the object of a novel to describe love ending in marriage." (2)

These are antagonists' opinions; but David Masson, who had a higher view of the novel's capacities, makes the same disgruntled point. He observes that in spite of the many fields of action and experience the novel might interestingly concern itself with - art, philosophy, war, the love of nature, politics - it is in fact, almost exclusively, restricted to love and marriage.

1. 'Richard Maw-Worm': Trifler, 2nd ed., (Edinburgh, 1797), p. 105 (No. xvii. Quoted in Mayo: Novel in Magazines, p. 140)
2. 'Relation of Novels to Life', p. 171

Why was this? Masson's answer is significant. Men, he says, usually only read novels between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. And society allows women, of whatever age, nothing to be interested in but love.¹

Of course some individuals and social groups were even opposed to this interest in love. It was an important element in hidebound opposition to the novel as a form:

"It is to be feared, the moral view is rarely regarded by youthful and inexperienced readers, who naturally pay the chief attention to the lively description of love, and its effects; and who, while they read, eagerly wish to be actors in the scenes which they admire." (2)

But the survival of the novel as a form is quite probably the result of the reluctance of either women to be denied, or their male protectors to deny them, some vindication of their own interests in their own form. (Masson may well be wrong in not allowing the possibility of male readership beyond the age of twenty five; I have argued in Chapter 2 that the assumption that only women read novels was a fiction; but fictions that are widely assumed may be widely acted upon.)

This point may be put more decisively. The novel can be seen as a repository of all the feelings and aspirations systematically denied by society. Of these, at this time, the most important were

1. British Novelists, pp. 294-6

2. Knox: Essays, i, pp. 101-2; cf. Mangin: Light Reading, pp. 7-8

the feelings and aspirations of women. For its readers, both discriminating and omnivorous, the most important function the novel fulfilled (even as a pastime) was the vindication of the value of love, and of the capacities of women. It was not so much, I think, the vicarious thrill of being loved that underlay the novel's appeal; it was the confirmation of a capacity to love, as an equal.

Was this capacity systematically denied by society? And what evidence is there that this was a fundamental element of the novel's appeal? I shall take the first question first.

Something as general as the value placed by society or particular social groups on women's capacities or on love as an emotion it is impossible to establish with any confidence. But it may be put forward as a hypothesis that both women and love were undervalued - undervalued in the eyes of women and their male defenders - and spokesmen may be identified.

Since the novel as we know it was an eighteenth-century phenomenon, it is from the eighteenthth century in the first place that spokesmen need to be found. They can be found in Swift and Chesterfield.

Swift's 'Letter to a Young Lady, on her Marriage' was written in 1723. Addressed to a girl whose husband has been chosen for her

by her parents - Swift approves of this - it succeeds, through its dismissive irony, not only in poking fun at the love which is a matter of "Charms and Raptures", but also in suggesting that what might otherwise be thought of as the characteristic behaviour of affection - for example, expressing anxiety when a husband is out late - is simply affectation.¹ (There is no suggestion of a more than local irony.) It is not that Swift would necessarily have refused to concede the possibility of a genuine life of feeling; it is rather that there is no form it could take in this letter - the rendering of behaviour is so detailed and the terms of the rendering so question-begging. There is no way of escape open to the girl except the "Match of Prudence, and common Good-Liking, without any Mixture of that ridiculous Passion which hath no Being, but in Play-Books and Romances."²

But at least Swift, while stressing women's efforts to turn themselves into monkeys, allows the 'Young Lady' the possibility of turning herself into an adequate companion for her husband by reading and reflection. Chesterfield considered this the real affectation.

It was in 1748, the year in which Clarissa appeared, that he gave his son his opinion of women (writing, as he thought, confidentially -

1. Irish Tracts 1720-23 and Sermons, ed. Herbert Davis, (Oxford, 1948), p. 87

2. p. 89

the letters were only published after his death). Now that the boy is about to enter society, Chesterfield says, he will need to know what women are really like:

"Women, then, are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle and sometimes wit; but for solid, reasoning good-sense, I never in my life knew one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four-and-twenty hours together. Some little passion or humour always breaks in upon their best resolutions." (1)

He then presents his norm of good relations between men and women:

"A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly, forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with, serious matters; though he often makes them believe he does both". (2)

What is even more striking than his choice of alternatives here is what the alternatives exclude: the possibility of intense mutual affection between a man and a woman considered as equals.

How widely attitudes such as these were held, is, as I have said, a matter of conjecture. But they would help to explain, for example, the extraordinary appeal of Clarissa to its first women readers. Swift's approval of arranged marriages is embodied in Clarissa in the Harlowes, Chesterfield's approval of gallantry (trifling, playing, humouring, flattering) in Lovelace: both are symbolically defeated by Clarissa and the power of love.

1. Letters, ed. Bonamy Dobrée, (London, 1932), iv, p. 1209

2. p. 1209

Another symbolic defeat takes place; of poetry by the novel. In poetry, the literary form with (I assume) the most social prestige, love as a substantial emotion seems to have lost ground to a perfectly conventional love:¹ a matter of Phoebes and Celias and lovers' panting on their mistresses breasts - an abstraction out of which something can be made. (This persisted into Jane Austen's lifetime in, for example, Sir James Bland Burges' The Birth and Triumph of Love (1796) - written for Princess Elizabeth, and reprinted with her illustrations in 1823.) Lovelace both quotes from and practises this sort of poetry, but it gives way not only before the example of Clarissa's steady feelings but before his own growing love.

Clarissa might count as evidence for my second point: that vindication of the capacities of women as a sex was a fundamental element in the novel's appeal. Further evidence can be found in two of the most common motifs of the emotionalist novel: 'the love that cannot be told' and the 'heroic surrender'. They emphasise the lastingness and the generosity of love.

Jane Austen's attitude to both these motifs was irreverent. She pokes fun at the first in Frederic and Elfrida (which may, as I have said, be her earliest extant work):

1. Cf. F.W. Bateson: A Guide to English Literature, 2nd ed., (London, 1967), pp. 108-10

"they loved with mutual sincerity but were both determined not to transgress the rules of Propriety by owning their attachment, either to the object beloved, or to any one else." (1)

And she glances at the second at the climax of Emma itself:

"there was time also to rejoice that Harriet's secret had not escaped her, and to resolve that it need not and should not. - It was all the service she could now render her poor friend; for as to any of that heroism of sentiment which might have prompted her to entreat him to transfer his affections from herself to Harriet, as infinitely the worthier of the two - or even the more simple sublimity of resolving to refuse him at once and for ever, without vouchsafing any motive, because he could not marry them both, Emma had it not. She felt for Harriet, with pain and with contrition; but no flight of generosity run mad, opposing all that could be probable or reasonable, entered her brain.".(2)

But both she and Charlotte Brontë are concerned to vindicate the capacities of women and the importance of love. It is an important point of contact not only between the two novelists but between them and their contemporaries.

The militant championing of women is obvious enough in Charlotte Brontë: it can be seen in many passages quoted from or referred to earlier in this investigation. In Jane Austen it is present as an undercurrent, emerging at certain points in a sharpening of the irony: for instance in Northanger Abbey:

1. Minor Works, p. 4

2. p. 431. (Ch. 49)

"Whether she thought of him so much, while she drank her warm wine and water, and prepared herself for bed, as to dream of him when there, cannot be ascertained; but I hope it was no more than in a slight slumber, or a morning doze at most; for if it be true, as a celebrated writer has maintained, that no young lady can be justified in falling in love before the gentleman's love is declared, it must be very improper that a young lady should dream of a gentleman before the gentleman is first known to have dreamt of her." (1)

(This is, ironically, directed against one of the public pronouncements of Richardson.) It is the same militancy which finds its most explicit expression in Persuasion, especially in the conversation between Anne and Captain Harville.² It matters especially not to miss the significance of Anne's remark: "Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands."³

This militancy gave to the contemporary novel two of its most important themes: the power of love to defeat gallantry, and the need for marriage to be based upon prior love. Of these, the second is the one which most nearly survives intact from Jane Austen to Charlotte Brontë

Jane Austen's attitude to marriage is sometimes taken to be the disenchanted one of Charlotte Lucas:

1. pp. 29-30. (Ch. 3)

2. pp. 231-6. (Ch. 23)

3. p. 234

"Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want."(1)

It is a disadvantage of erlebte Rede that a careless reader may mistake it for the author's own voice; but it must be pointed out that this is one of a character's own reflections (the force of the epithet "well-educated" should be noted), and that it is preceded by her reflection, "Mr. Collins to be sure was neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome, and his attachment to her must be imaginary."² And shortly before this the narrator has spoken authoritatively (if not without irony), in explaining why Charlotte did not want a long engagement:

"The stupidity with which he was favoured by nature must guard his courtship from any charm that could make a woman wish for its continuance; and Miss Lucas, who accepted him solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment, cared not how soon that establishment were gained." (3)

The irony of "pure and disinterested" is simple but telling: Charlotte Lucas is, in fact, simply a more sophisticated - an authenticated - successor of a type Jane Austen ridicules in her juvenilia - the young girl who is determined to be married before

1. P & P, 122-3. (Ch. 22)

2. p. 122

3. p. 122

all else.

The only heroine in Jane Austen who does not fall in love with her husband before marriage is Marianne Dashwood, who gives her hand to Colonel Brandon "with no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship",¹ and as I have argued in the last chapter, Sense and Sensibility is an awkwardly self-denying book; the rather chilly tone of the passage explaining how Marianne comes to accept Brandon is the result of assumed tough-mindedness.

In her letters, as in her other novels, Jane Austen's real opinions are clear: there is the wry remark on Lady Sondes' second marriage, "I consider everybody as having a right to marry once in their lives for love, if they can",² and there are the more serious letters to her niece Fanny Knight in 1814. (Fanny had written to her for advice.) In the first letter Jane Austen states quite simply, "Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection;"³ in the second, written a fortnight later, she asks Fanny to consider

"How capable you are (yes, I do still think you very capable) of being really in love - and how full of temptation the next 6 or 7 years of your Life will probably be - (it is

1. p. 378

2. Letters, p. 240

3. p. 410

the very period of Life for the strongest attachments to be formed) - I cannot wish you with your present very cool feelings to devote yourself in honour to him. It is very true that you never may attach another Man, his equal altogether, but if that other Man has the power of attaching you more, he will be in your eyes the most perfect... nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound without Love, bound to one, and preferring another." (1)

This last predicament is Maria's in Mansfield Park, which she had completed earlier in the same year; and in the novel Jane Austen expresses the contempt (for the loveless marriage) which she could not allow herself in the letter. The letter, however, is explicit enough.

Just as explicit are the opinions of her brothers' Loiterer. Their contempt for the loveless marriage comes out most strongly in the twenty-seventh paper (by Henry Austen) in a passage which anticipates Jane Austen's irony as well as her morality:

"Let every Girl who seeks for happiness conquer both her feelings and her passions. Let her avoid love and friendship as she wishes to be admired and distinguished. For by these means she will always keep her own secrets and prefer her own Interest. No inconsiderate Affection will deter her from breaking a promise, or from sacrificing a previous to a more advantageous Engagement. No ridiculous principle of Consistency will draw a tear from her when parting from a Parent or a Friend... Nor should she forget that the death of her Husband will still add something more to her happiness...

1. pp. 417-18. (I have omitted what I take to be a tactical reference to the possibility of love after marriage.)

She will be cautious, therefore, how she suffers her interest to unite with that of a person whom it is her duty to torment whilst alive, and forget as soon as dead." (1)

It is important to note that this opposition is not simply to the marriage of convenience or the mercenary marriage. No doubt there were circles in which it was true that, as James Austen puts it,

"Should a beautiful and accomplished girl, in the bloom of eighteen, make over her person for life, to a battered rake of family and fortune, with no good quality on earth to recommend him, and old enough to be her father; her female friends would not hesitate to pronounce her well-married." (2)

But opposition to this seems to have been common. Richardson had dramatised it in Clarissa's rejection of the rich miser Solmes.

Mrs. Chapone wrote, "a mercenary marriage is a detestable prostitution"³.

And an anthology called The Beauties of Sentiment, published in 1801 and a useful guide to what was probably commonplace opinion at the turn of the century, includes in its section on marriage several extracts denouncing the mercenary marriage, and none supporting it.⁴

It is not surprising, therefore, that in Jane Austen the notion is the object of a poised irony, as in the opening sentences of

1. pp. 11-12

2. No. xix, p. 5

3. Improvement of Mind, i, p. 112

4. (London, 1801), ii, pp. 155-61

Manafield Park, and that Charlotte Brontë should attack it vehemently, as in the scene in Shirley in which Shirley confronts her uncle and his worldly views.¹ The climactic speech of this scene (" ' Sir, your god, your great Bel, your fishtailed Dagon, rises before me as a demon...' ") may not have the effect it is meant to have in the context- the language is excessively inflated. It is clear, however, that Shirley's revulsion is Charlotte Brontë's.

What is more significant is that they both insist upon the wider principle of love before marriage (if we leave Sense and Sensibility out of account, for the reasons mentioned above). This was to take sides on a genuinely controversial issue.

One of J.F. Stephen's main objections to the novel was that readers might imagine that the love with which the form was obsessed had something to do with marriage.

"The wisdom or otherwise of a step upon which so much of the happiness of life must turn, is made to depend, not on the mutual forbearance and kindly exertions of the two persons principally interested, but upon their feeling an exceptional and transitory passion at a particular moment." (2)

The doctor Michael Ryan, author of a wide-ranging book on marriage, shared Stephen's scorn: "Love at first sight, and ball-room and street matches, are generally the source of endless misery".³ This kind of love -

1. *ib.*, pp. 326-42. (Ch.31)

2. 'Relation of Novels to Life', p. 171

3. The Philosophy of Marriage, (London, 1837), p. 91

a ball-room or street match because it depended upon the couple having simply met one another by chance, rather than their having been introduced in order to be engaged - is, says Ryan, anticipating Stephen's phrase and therefore suggesting a wider use, merely "a transient excitement of feeling."¹

Ryan, however, while using the phrase "love marriage" pejoratively, also insists upon "mutual love" as a necessary condition of marital happiness;² this is puzzling until it becomes clear he is referring to a deliberate tenderness. Stephen provides a further gloss:

"It would be impossible for any one to dispute altogether the existence of some such passion as is the foundation of most novels; but it may safely be affirmed that it is very uncommon, that it is a very doubtful good when it exists, and that the love which the Prayer Book seems to consider as a condition subsequent to marriage, is something much more common and very different." (3)

In her letters, Charlotte Brontë seems to have mixed feelings on this subject. When her friend Ellen Nussey wrote to her for advice (as Fanny wrote to Jane Austen) she wrote back:

"I think, if you can respect a person before marriage, moderate love at least will come after; and as to intense passion, I am convinced that that is no desirable feeling." (4)

1. p. 91

2. pp. 28, 78

3. 'Relation of Novel to Life', p. 171

4. Correspondence, i, p. 206

This was in May 1840, when she was 24, and expresses a mood which was to recur. (After Ellen had rejected her suitor, Charlotte Brent's still maintained; "I believe it is better to marry to love than to marry for love".¹) But the advice is at least as revealing for her opinion of Ellen as of marriage, and it is another mood that she writes of proposals made to herself. After rejecting a proposal from Ellen's brother Henry, for example, she had written:

"I asked myself two questions: Do I love him as much as a woman ought to love the man she marries? Am I the person best qualified to make him happy?" (2)

She had answered the second question in her letter to the brother;³ now she answers the first:

"I had not, and could not have, that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him; and, if ever I marry, it must be in that light of adoration that I will regard my husband." (4)

This is, it would seem, the mood in which she wrote her novels.

The novel of Jane Austen's which most vigorously upholds the principle of love before marriage is Mansfield Park. The same militancy which informs Shirley's confrontation with Mr. Sympson

1. i, p. 246

2. i, p. 174

3. i, p. 173

4. i, p. 174

informs Fanny's confrontation with her uncle. (No doubt the transposition of a natural father/daughter confrontation into an uncle/niece confrontation has the same psychological origin in both novelists.) But in Jane Austen the effect is more subtle: Fanny scores a moral victory, but she herself hardly feels it as one, and she does not triumph over Sir Thomas in a flourish of bombast. We simply get the exchange: "'Refuse Mr. Crawford! Upon what plea? For what reason?'/ 'I cannot like him, Sir, well enough to marry him.'"¹ and Sir Thomas's subsequent reference to

"that independence of spirit, which prevails so much in modern days, even in young women, and which in young women is offensive and disgusting beyond all common offence." (2)

It is because of opinions such as these that Sir Thomas is made to suffer in the last chapter:

"his daughter's sentiments had been sufficiently known to him to render him culpable in authorising [the marriage of Maria to Rushworth] ... he had sacrificed the right to the expedient, and been governed by motives of selfishness and worldly wisdom." (3)

In Charlotte Brontë the principle finds fullest expression in Jane Eyre, where it is associated with another important theme - the right of women to find personal fulfilment in life. It comes

1. p. 315. (Ch. 32)

2. p. 318. ('Disgusting' here is closer to the modern 'distasteful'.)

3. p. 461. (Ch. 48)

to a head in the scene in which St. John Rivers proposes to Jane.

This scene is one of the most resonant in the book, and one of the most sharply dramatised explorations of the general issue. What unifies it is the contrast between natural life and unnatural demand. The wide presence of the first is evoked in the time of year (spring, with summer approaching) and in the setting. But as Jane and St. John begin their walk, growing things assume an inorganic hardness. The sky is a "stainless blue", the stream catches "golden gleams from the sun, and sapphire tints from the firmament"; the grass is an "emerald green, minutely enamelled."¹

The point at which they stop is bounded by growing things on one side, and a mountain which "shook off turf and flower" on the other. Against this setting St. John makes his remorseless demands, pressing Jane to go with him to India. As he argues, Jane feels "My iron shroud contracted round me; persuasion advanced with slow, sure step." In the same way that natural beauty had earlier taken on the hardness and brightness of jewels, now natural feeling begins to take on an alien shape: "My work, which had appeared so vague, so hopelessly diffuse, condensed itself as he proceeded, and assumed a definite form under his shaping hand." As Jane reflects, the thought which most repels her is "that he asks me to be his wife, and has no more of a husband's heart for me than that frowningⁿ giant of a rock,"

1. All quotations are from JE, ii, pp. 281-97 (Ch. 34)

and this makes the idea of sexual intercourse appalling:

"Can I receive from him the bridal ring, endure all the forms of love (which I doubt not he would scrupulously observe), and know that the spirit was quite absent? Can I bear the consciousness that every endearment he bestows is a sacrifice made on principle?"

When she turns to tell St. John what she has decided, the sense of his hardness and inflexibility is caught again: he is lying "still as a prostrate column;" but she sets up against him her strongest feelings:

"my sense, such as it was, directed me only to the fact that we did not love each other as man and wife should; and therefore it inferred we ought not to marry."

This feeling, strengthened by her realisation that St. John is not as high-minded as he first seemed to be - his desire is not only for God's glory but involves a personal drive for power - is what makes her continue to refuse him. The association between natural feelings and growing life is invoked again in her reflection that if she were only St. John's assistant,

"I should still have my unblighted self to turn to: my natural unenslaved feelings with which to communicate in moments of loneliness. There would be recesses in my mind, which would be only mine, to which he never came; and sentiments growing there fresh and sheltered, which his austerity could never blight, nor his measured warrior-march trample down."

What finally turns her opposition into active resistance is his remark that "undoubtedly enough of love would follow upon marriage

to render the union right even in your eyes.'" Her response is immediate:

"'I scorn your idea of love,' I could not help saying, as I rose up and stood before him, leaning my back against the rock. 'I scorn the counterfeit sentiment you offer: yes, St. John, and I scorn you when you offer it.' "

This is the climax; after this, and Jane's explanation of the importance of the difference between them, there is nothing for them to do but walk home, St. John gripped by an "iron silence".

The first theme which a militant championing of women gave to the contemporary novel, the power of love to defeat gallantry, does not survive unchanged from Jane Austen to Charlotte Brontë. But it is important in Jane Austen.

A useful definition of gallantry is embodied in Chesterfield's recommendations to his son, already quoted. The word 'trifling' is significant (Fanny Price at first considers Henry Crawford's proposal "mere trifling and gallantry"¹).

During the eighteenth century 'love' and 'gallantry' were often taken to be synonymous. In 1776 there appeared an anonymous Dictionary of Love with the sub-title "the Language of Gallantry Explained". (According to the book's preface, it is a reprint of a work published "near thirty Years ago".²) The book

1. MP, p. 301

2. (London, 1776), p. ii

itself is a lively little work, and a good introduction to most aspects of gallantry (it takes up a half-critical, half-admiring position). The entry on "Love" itself says that modern love is a matter either of gallantry or self-interest: the love which earlier generations praised has become a victim of the progress of politeness. (The book's fashionable, metropolitan, focus is obvious.)

Again, in Trusler's book of synonyms, just as fear is distinguished from terror, or wit from humour, love is distinguished from gallantry:

"As different as these words may appear, they have, nevertheless, been, and, are still, frequently, used, as synonymous, when intended to imply courtship." (1)

In the examples given to illustrate the uses of the two words, it is not always love that has more said for it:

"There is, always, honesty in love; but, it is troublesome and capricious; we consider it, now-a-days, as a distemper, or, as a weakness of mind. In gallantry, there is a degree of knavery, but, it is free and good-humoured; and, is become the taste of the age." (2)

(Whether out of principle, or as a concession to the times, this discussion is omitted from the second edition, published in 1783,

1. ii, p. 52

2. ii, pp. 53-4

and a curt discussion of love and affection substituted.¹⁾

It was a natural concern of a particular tradition of the novel to insist upon the distinction in meaning, and to attribute an attempt at confusion to its villains. In Clarissa, for instance, it is 'gallantry' which should be substituted for "love" in such remarks of Lovelace as:

"Love is an encroacher. Love never goes backward.
Love is always aspiring. Always must aspire.
Nothing but the highest act of Love can satisfy
an indulged Love." (2)

What in the conflict between Clarissa and Lovelace is a conflict of values (not everything is), is a conflict between love and gallantry. To Clarissa's ideal of love as mutual affection between (virtuous) equals, Lovelace opposes the ideal of gallantry, the "Life of Honour."

In Richardson's most conscious successors, Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth, the conflict is sustained. In Evelina the love of Orville is opposed to the gallantry of Sir Clement Willoughby, and later Lord Merton. Orville, of course, is a lord himself (it was one of the weaknesses of the novel pointed out by the Critical reviewer³⁾) but the class bias of opposition to gallantry comes out

1. p. 12

2. iv, p. 352

3. pp. 203-4

more clearly in Maria Edgeworth's Letters of Julia and Caroline (just as it does in the emotionalist novels of the period, in several of which gallantry and seduction are apparently specifically associated with Chesterfield's Letters to His Natural Son, after their posthumous publication in 1774.¹) In feeling, the point was, the 'respectable' classes could see themselves not only as equals of the nobility, but superior.

In Julia and Caroline Julia decides to marry Lord V- for money and position rather than Caroline's brother for love: Lord V-, predictably enough, turns out to be a dissipated rake. Julia becomes increasingly miserable and finally abandons him; she goes to live in France (presumably with a lover, but Maria Edgeworth's discretion is so pronounced as to be confusing). The last letter of the novel is from Caroline to Lord V- and describes Julia's return to England and her tragic death (already referred to in Chapter 3.) Here again gallantry combines with 'interest' as the enemy of love.

The treatment of gallantry in Jane Austen embraces what is most noticeably literary (in a bad sense) in her work; especially in the three early novels, but also in Mansfield Park, it seems slightly out

1. See Tompkins: Popular Novel, pp. 80-3

of key with its surroundings: it brings in with it an uncharacteristic tendency towards melodrama which, in Henry Crawford, for instance, verges on pantomime villainy. (The beginning of Chapter 24 is the clearest example of this.)¹ It is not until Emma that gallantry is simultaneously purged of its Wicked Seducer overtones and given an adequate local justification. In Frank Churchill gallantry is a minor blemish: his attentions to Emma, while dishonest, are not only for the sake of indulging his vanity; and, as he says in his long letter of excuse, he realised that there was no real danger of Emma falling in love with him.²

The nature of Jane Austen's objection to gallantry comes out most clearly in Persuasion. Again there are few Wicked Seducer overtones to Mr. Elliot. The first epithet associated with him is "polite", and this is his keynote. Even when he shows he admires Anne's beauty at Lyme (the encounter as strangers) he is "completely a gentleman in manner."³ He is, in fact, the very man Chesterfield wanted his son to be, "agreeable" and "pleasing" to everyone. As Anne sees, he achieves this by telling everyone what they want to hear, and by telling other people what he knows will be repeated to the person he wants to flatter.⁴ (Chesterfield

1. pp. 229-231

2. p. 438

3. p. 104

4. See, e.g., p. 159

recommends both practices.) Anne's opinion of Mr. Elliot, before she learns about his treatment of the Smiths, may reflect (perhaps less soberly?) Jane Austen's:

"Mr. Elliot was rational, discreet, polished, - but he was not open. There was never any burst of feeling, any warmth of indignation or delight, at the evil or good of others.... Mr. Elliot was too generally agreeable. Various as were the tempers in her father's house, he pleased them all. He endured too well, - stood too well with everybody. He had spoken to her with some degree of openness of Mrs. Clay; had appeared completely to see what Mrs. Clay was about, and to hold her in contempt; and yet Mrs. Clay found him as agreeable as anybody." (1)

What emerges from Mrs. Smith's revelations is that he is not only a calculating hypocrite, but a positively corrupt man.

The hypocrisy and corruption involved in gallantry are not invested, in Persuasion, with any kind of glamour. But the calculating male villain, especially if he has a history of seduction, has often been an object of fascinated interest in women's novels. Richardson, in spite of his grasp of feminine psychology, never seems quite to have accepted this consciously. He notes with indignant surprise that women-readers liked Lovelace, and even thought that Clarissa treated him badly; and in a series of editorial footnotes he draws attention to Lovelace's depravity, as though this had been overlooked. But what he has failed to take conscious note of, is that Lovelace's depravity could itself

1. Pers., p. 161. (Ch. 17)

be fascinating. Belford sees Lovelace "cruel as a panther";¹ in this glamorous light "artifices and exultations not less cruel and ungrateful, than ungenerous and unmanly"² are only likely to endear the character to a certain kind of reader.

This is the aspect of gallantry that survives in Charlotte Brontë, at least in Jane Eyre, where it enlivens the character of Rochester. In some of her contemporaries (Dickens, for instance) gallantry as a way of life could still be seen as a threat to a middle-class ideal of love. (This may be part of the function of Steerforth in David Copperfield: if his home background is not positively aristocratic, his attitudes are.)

Rather, the background of casual (but unfulfilling) sexual experience ascribed to Rochester makes him a symbol or embodiment of natural desire completely unregulated by principle or religion - as St. John Rivers symbolises the complete suppression of nature (at a cost of which Charlotte Brontë shows herself to be as aware as Freud.)

But this sexual experience is part of Rochester's glamour, and it formed part of his appeal for (some of) the first readers of Jane Eyre. They found in him

"an attraction, or at least a power, which
canonical heroes of Apollo proportions and
twenty-one summers, the walking gentlemen

1. Clarissa, iii, p. 267

2. iii, p. 82. (Footnote by 'editor'.)

of every-day fiction, are entirely devoid of." (1)

Here of course Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë on the one hand and their contemporaries on the other part company. Love is an emotion presented more substantially than many others in the novels of the latter, but in the end they abide by certain ("canonical") conventions. And while fantasy need not be at odds with authenticity, conventionality must.

What I am arguing is that Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë are concerned seriously to vindicate love and the capacities of women: to present this emotion, as they present others, as they saw it actually at work in the world. It was enough (in fact more comforting) for their contemporaries, for the vindication to be symbolic.

If this were true, we would expect to find (some) contemporaries expressing indignation at the transcending of conventions, the breaking of rules. And this is exactly what we do find. Not only is there straightforward hidebound opposition of the kind mentioned by a writer in the New Monthly Magazine in 1852:

"Fault has been found with Miss Austen, and with considerable show of justice, on account of the prodigious amount of love-making in her tales.

1. New Monthly Mag: 'Curren Bell', p. 300; cf. (James Lorimer:) 'Noteworthy Novels', NBR, xi (1849), p. 485

Love is the beginning, middle and end of each and all." (1)

There was indignation at the breaking of bounds, Harriet Martineau says of Charlotte Brontë, "Her heroines love too readily, too vehemently, and sometimes after a fashion which their female readers may resent".²

Sometimes this indignation is comical. The Spectator says of Shirley, without any apparent irony:

"The meanness attaching to a fortune-hunter seems to have established as an unalterable canon that the hero's wealth should precede his formal declaration of love". (3)

It was, however, the presentation of women's feelings that most offended. Here not only Harriet Martineau's comment, but one of Thackeray's on Villette, is instructive. He wrote to Mrs. Carmichael-Smith, his mother, in 1853:

"Villette is rather vulgar - I don't make my good women ready to fall in love with two men at once, and Miss Brontë would be the first to be angry with me and cry fie on me if I did." (4)

It is ~~interesting~~ that Thackeray assumes some sympathy on the part of Charlotte Brontë with the presentation of a conventional, ideal,

1. JACH, p. 136
2. 'Charlotte Brontë', p. 362
3. 'Currer Bell's Shirley', Spectator, xxii (1849), p. 1044
4. Letters, iii, p. 248

ⁱⁿ
femininity (why else should she be angry if Thackeray told truths like hers?): It is revealing that a novelist of his standing should take such a presentation to be mandatory for him.

Against this, some would argue that authenticity counted:

"is it or is it not the fact, that very many women do love as eagerly, as manifestatively, as outspokenly, as pusuingly - as Caroline Helstone for example? If so, let it be 'told' ". (1)

For such readers Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë wrote.

Had they no sympathy, though, for all the mystique that has grown up around love - for the conventions (if conventions is now the right word) which apply as much to love in life as love in novels? What about, for example, the notion of 'love at first sight'?

Towards this notion Charlotte Brontë's attitude is more ambiguous than Jane Austen's. The notion is most at home in novels like Mrs. Radcliffe's, where it is a convention of her imaginary world that good and evil are qualities that can be discovered in a character's appearance and bearing. Characters worthy of love will be seen to be so immediately - or even heard to be so, as Vivaldi hears Ellena singing in church in The Italian:

"So much indeed was he fascinated by the voice, that a most painful curiosity was excited as to her countenance, which he fancied must

1. Tait's: 'Curren, Ellis, and Acton Bell', p. 422

express all the sensibility of character
that the modulation of her tones indicated." (1)

Jane Austen seems to have had little sympathy with this idea: love may be a meeting of minds, but (like Dr. Johnson) she seems to have believed that no two minds were necessarily made for one another, and that the moment of meeting was of no particular significance. I have drawn attention in the last chapter to the significance of Pride and Prejudice's apparent first title. And in Sense and Sensibility, love at first sight is one of the most easily sacrificed victims of Jane Austen's quarrel with herself. In fact, only in the first three novels do the hero and heroine meet in the course of the novel; in Mansfield Park Edmund is not distinguished from the rest of his family until after Fanny has been introduced into it at the age of ten, and in the last two novels the central characters have already met. In Persuasion, where sensibility notions are more indulgently entertained than previously, this aspect of the mystique of love is still handled in a tough-minded way. Jane Austen writes of Anne and Wentworth:

"He was, at that time, a remarkably fine young man, with a great deal of intelligence, spirit and brilliancy; and Anne an extremely pretty girl, with gentleness, modesty, taste, and feeling. - Half the sum of attraction, on either side, might have been enough,

for he had nothing to do, and she had hardly anybody to love; but the encounter of such lavish recommendations could not fail." (1)

This is hardly less tough-minded than the disenchanted picture of love Johnson presents in Rasselas:

"A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of one another. Having little to divert attention, or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they shall be happy together." (2)

Charlotte Brontë's attitude towards the 'first meeting' is best seen in Jane Eyre and Villette. In Shirley both pairs of lovers have met (and three of the four fallen in love) before the action of the novel begins, and in The Professor the first encounter of Frances Henri and Crimsworth (she comes into one of his classes, late, and he has forgotten his glasses and so cannot see what she looks like) seems to be part of the deliberate effort at a deflationary, 'conscientious', authenticity already commented on.

In Jane Eyre the meeting of hero and heroine is ostentatiously prepared. It is a calm winter evening in which every sound can be heard; the moon is rising. Into this intensely feminised atmosphere a sudden masculine note intrudes - a "rude noise"

1. p. 26

2. p. 129

which breaks in upon the "fine ripplings and whisperings" of distant streams, "a positive tramp, tramp; a metallic clatter, which effaced the soft wave-wanderings." ¹ As the clatter of the horse's hooves gets louder a magical note is introduced: Jane half-expects the horse to be "a 'Gytrash' " - a ghostly animal which "haunted solitary ways." Suddenly there is another noise, and the dog (Pilot) appears: it is suggested that he is an apparition. But when Rochester comes into view on his horse he breaks the spell; and almost immediately falls. Jane goes to help him; she recognises in the stranger an affinity - he is not young, not elegant, and not good-humoured or polite: " the frown, the roughness of the traveller set me at my ease ". She helps him onto his horse; he gallops away. Charlotte Brontë points the significance of the encounter with dramatic irony:

"The incident had occurred and was gone for me: it was an incident of no moment, no romance, no interest in a sense; yet it marked with change one single hour of a monotonous life."

In Villette the meeting of Lucy Snowe and Paul Emanuel is less fraught with immediate significance: he is called in and

1. All quotations are from JE, i, pp. 185-192 (Ch.12)

asked to advise Mme Beck whether Lucy should be engaged as a teacher. He gazes steadily at her (he has "skill in physiognomy"), and decides her fate; "And with a bow and a 'bon soir' this vague arbiter of my destiny vanished."¹ There is here a kind of flirtation with the idea of 'first impressions' without commitment to it.

Here Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë seem themselves to part company. And of course their presentation of love differs in other respects.

There is, firstly, a difference in technique. Since the techniques are those already identified in Chapter 4, I shall say no more about them in themselves. They do, however, account for differences between the two novelists which have (to my mind) been misconstrued, and I want to glance briefly at these misconstructions.

Henry Bonnell, in an early comparison, argues:

"It was reserved for the great glory of Charlotte Brontë to paint the full picture of the passion of love from the woman's standpoint. Jane Austen presents the sentiment merely. It was still a day when a woman's love was regarded as the natural return of gratitude for the man's." (2)

1. i, pp. 104-5

2. Brontë Eliot Austen, pp. 456-7

The final comment here is misleading: it is not the "day" that accounts for such a notion of woman's love - there were those who defended this notion in Charlotte Brontë's day. It is also inaccurate as regards Jane Austen: of the heroines whose situation is relevant both Fanny Price and Emma fall in love not only before they are confident of being loved, but when they are under the impression (correct in Fanny's case) that the men they love love other women. But the interesting misconception is Bonnell's distinction between the "sentiment" and the "passion". What I think lies behind this distinction is a misreading of Jane Austen's technique.

A similar misreading seems to underlie Victorian analyses of Jane Austen's handling of love - even some of the most sympathetic and otherwise perceptive. Richard Simpson, for example, argues:

"Those who can only judge upon the evidence derived from her novels must be led to the belief that in her idea love was only an accident of friendship, friendship being the true light of life, while love was often only a troublesome and flickering blaze which interrupted its equable and soothing influence." (1)

And Lady Ritchie concedes that "It was not that Jane Austen herself was incapable of understanding a deeper feeling", but insists that the understanding is not embodied in her account of

1. JACH, p. 246

her heroines' emotional lives:

"Jane Austen's heroines have a stamp of their own. They have a certain self-respect and humour and hardness of heart in which modern heroines are a little wanting... Love with them does not mean a passion so much as an interest - deep, silent; not quite incompatible with a secondary flirtation." (1)

What seems to me to have happened is that all three writers, expecting a fuller description of sensations, of the 'inner feel' of feelings, have misunderstood the significance of its absence in Jane Austen. They have taken a habit for ^a judgment. Her reticence about the 'feèl' of love is in fact simply an instance of her general technique of referring feelings back to common experience.²

Where she does want to express a judgment - whether on the strength of feelings or their capacity to survive - she substantiates it in the only way a confirmed empiricist can: in an account of behaviour or consequences. She knew that there was no necessary correlation between a person's own sense of the power or profundity of his feelings and their actual resilience: something few Victorians perhaps, were prepared to admit. Not given the first, both Lady Simpson and Lady Ritchie misinterpret the second.

1. Toilers & Spinsters, pp. 52-3

2. Cf. "It is not the object of this work to give a description of Derbyshire, nor of any of the remarkable places through which their route thither lay; Oxford, Blenheim, Warwick, Kenelworth, Birmingham, &c. are sufficiently known." (P & P, p. 240)

Simpson also seems to have misunderstood the nature of the conflict between love and gallantry - he speaks earlier in his (1870) article of the "blaze of a great passion" eclipsing temporarily the "intelligent love" which is successful at the end.¹ While gallantry - and not "passion" - is present as a foil to love in all Jane Austen's novels (though in a cruder manifestation in Northanger Abbey), only in Sense and Sensibility does it become any more than a passing temptation.

Against these analyses we have to set that of Whately, a contemporary. He writes of Fanny Price's love for Edmund:

"The silence in which this passion is cherished - the slender hopes and enjoyments by which it is fed - the restlessness and jealousy with which it fills a mind naturally active, contented and unsuspecting - the manner in which it tinges every event and every reflection, are painted with a vividness and a detail of which we can scarcely conceive any one but a female, and we should almost add, a female writing from recollection, capable." (2)

The final conjecture may be unnecessary. What matters here is that a man at home with Jane Austen's technique has seen how 'vividly', with what 'detail', she presents Fanny's love.

So much for differences in technique. Other differences stem from the two novelists' different conceptions of the emotion itself.

1. JACH, p. 244

2. JACH, p. 100

But first it matters to see that they both share a sense of the distinctness of love as an emotion. In a letter of Coleridge's to his friend Henry Crabb Robinson, of 1811, he attributes to Wordsworth a notion of love as

"a compound of Lust with Esteem & Friendship, confined to one Object, first by accidents of Association, and permanently, by the force of Habit & a sense of Duty." (1)

This is what not only Mandeville, but Hume took love to be.²

Coleridge, however, goes on:

"Now this will do very well - it will suffice to make a good Husband - it may be even desirable (if the largest sum of easy & pleasurable sensations in this Life be the right aim & end of human Wisdom) that we should have this, & no more - but still it is not Love - & there is such a passion, as Love - which is no more a compound, than Oxygen, tho' like Oxygen, it has an almost universal affinity, and a long & finely graduated Scale of elective Attractions." (3)

Earlier in the same letter he compares falling in love with the sudden starting of the sun from the horizon at dawn:

"between the brightest Hues of the Dawn and the first Rim of the Sun itself there is a chasm - all before were Differences of Degrees, passing & dissolving into each other - but this is a difference of Kind - a chasm of Kind in a continuity of Time." (4)

1. Letters, iii, p. 305

2. For Mandeville, see Fable of Bees, i, p. 142; for Hume, see Human Nature, p. 394

3. Letters, iii, p. 305

4. iii, p. 304

The association of love with the dawn is explicit in Charlotte Brontë, as I shall show, but even in Jane Austen there is a difference in kind between love and other emotions. Not perhaps for Coleridge's reasons, but because for her everything is what it is and not another thing.

The experience of falling in love is defined most clearly in Pride and Prejudice.

Towards the end of this novel Jane asks Elizabeth to tell her when she fell in love. Elizabeth replies:

"It has been coming on so gradually, that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley." (1)

In spite of the immediately following sentence - it begins

"Another intreaty that she would be serious" - Scott took this for the truth. He was only wrong, however, in identifying her motive as prudence. This is the moment when Elizabeth begins to fall in love (and the beauty of Pemberley is one of the influences upon her change of heart.) The moment represents both Jane Austen's most explicit treatment of the emotion and

1. p. 373. (Ch. 59)

(it would seem to follow) the clearest expression of her idea of what it was.

When Elizabeth is shown Darcy's picture by his house-keeper, having heard her praise his thoughtfulness and generosity, she feels "a more gentle sensation towards the original, than she had ever felt in the height of their acquaintance."¹ What has happened is that his proposal to her is seen in a new light in Pemberley: learning of his good qualities (and seeing evidence for some of them at first hand) turns Elizabeth's indignation into a new feeling already difficult to define (though it involves gratitude for his love). His civility when they meet unexpectedly a moment later sharpens this new feeling, and gives her other sensations (shame, curiosity) on which to feed it.

It is suggested that by the next day the feeling has considerably deepened; when Darcy brings his sister to the inn to meet her, Elizabeth "was quite amazed at her own discomposure."² A momentary alienation from one's own feelings seems to be a necessary condition of love (Darcy, at the end of the novel, says of his falling in love, "I was in the middle before I knew that I had begun"³) but here it is only momentary: in the evening, lying

1. p. 250

2. p. 260

3. p. 380

awake in bed "two whole hours", Elizabeth deliberately sets herself to discover whether she is in love.

The account of the progress of her feelings is immediately preceded by a reference to the changing feelings of the Gardiners: until now they have been scornful of Mrs. Reynolds' praise of Darcy; suddenly they become aware "that the authority of a servant who had known him since he was four years old, and whose own manners indicated respectability, was not to be hastily rejected."¹ This gives a kind of ironic placing to the analysis of Elizabeth's change of heart which follows.

Jane Austen's notion of love becomes quite explicit at the climax of the analysis:

"She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him, she felt a real interest in his welfare; and she only wanted to know how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself, and how far it would be for the happiness of both that she should employ the power, which her fancy told her she still possessed, of bringing on the renewal of his addresses." (2)

Love, in other words, is something beyond respect, admiration, gratitude, and even concern for another's welfare: all these are conceded, but Elizabeth still needs to know "how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself" and how far her own happiness

1. p. 264

2. p. 266. (Ch. 25)

is at stake. Love is what it is, and not another thing.

Coleridge's point about the "affinity" of love, its "long & finely graduated Scale of elective attractions" is also important. Love as Jane Austen presents it differs from person to person - because of the other emotions with which it is connected in a person's particular situation. Even if the same word does for these other emotions it is not necessarily a similar feeling: Catherine Morland's admiration for Henry Tilney is quite unlike Emma's for Mr. Knightley.

Charlotte Brontë perhaps writes more in Coleridge's spirit, but there is less difference between one person's love and another. She seems reluctant to separate love from the pleasure of alternately obeying and disobeying a demanding master: this is the emotion for which love, in her novels, has a special affinity.

It seems to be widely assumed that this has something to do with Charlotte Brontë's own love for M. Héger. But this need not be so. The demanding master figure had a hold on her imagination, as a young girl, before she went to Brussels or met M. Héger: characteristics which are shared by both Rochester and Paul Emanuel, such as moodiness (Eugène Forcade noticed how "la passion de Rochester éclate bientôt avec de fiévreuses alternatives de tendresse et d'inquiétude"¹), bursts of cruelty,

1. 'Jane Eyre', p. 491

demandingness, alternate concern and indifference, are all present in Zamorna - the dream-hero of her juvenilia. The note sounded in 'Mina Laury':

"His cold lip pressed to her forehead and his colder hand clapping hers brought the sensation which it was her custom of weeks and months to wait for, and to consider, when attained, as the ample recompense for all delay, all toil, all suffering" (1)

can be heard beneath her later attempts on "the real". How like M. Héger Paul Emanuel was is, as a result, of little importance to an understanding of the novels.² What is important is his basis in fantasy, since it is in this light that he reveals Charlotte Brontë's sense of the nature and significance of love.

Fantasy, here, it should be clear, is not (simply) a matter of compensation: it is a way of getting at the reality of feelings. And it harmonizes without much strain with Charlotte Brontë's 'metaphysical' conception of love.

Here, the naturalness of love, as a part of life, is what she first emphasises. This leads, as in the St. John Rivers proposal scene, to an association of love with flowers and other growing things, and also with dawn and the sun as life-giving.

1. Angria, p. 200

2. Cf. Fannie Elizabeth Ratchford: The Brontës' Web of Childhood, (New York, 1941), pp. 189-240

Crimsworth says of Frances Henri, in The Professor:

"When I first saw her, her countenance was sunless ... now the cloud had passed from her mien, leaving space for the dawn of hope and interest, and there feelings rose like a clear morning, animating what had been depressed, tinting what had been pale. Her eyes... now, lit by a ray of the sunshine that cheered her heart, revealed irids of bright hazel... and pupils instinct with fire." (1)

This perception leads to a more profound one: that love is life most itself; it is set over against death, as its antithesis. This is the effect of the brilliantly conceived account of Crimsworth's "hypochondria" which follows immediately upon his proposal to Frances.² The conception is not matched by equal brilliance of execution, but the resonance of the account is of a kind which stilted language and melodramatic illustration cannot muffle.

Life can be seen, therefore, as a struggle between love and death; and this is a view developed in each of her novels. In The Professor, as well as in the hypochondria sequence, it is implicit in the scene in which Crimsworth finds Frances, after having searched for her for weeks, in a cemetery, "the house appointed for all living."³ In Jane Eyre and Shirley it comes out in the association of the state of not being loved with a

1. p. 207. (Ch. 18)

2. pp. 320-3. (Ch. 23)

3. p. 233

dangerous loss of vitality: Jane's "stagnation" before she meets Rochester, Caroline's almost mortal illness.

In Villette it is explicit in the "deadlier paralysis" of Lucy Snowe in the long vacation, and the terror of the "visitation from eternity":

"Motive there was none why I should try to recover or wish to live; and yet quite unendurable was the pitiless and haughty voice in which Death challenged me to engage his unknown terrors." (1)

This leads to the night in which the white beds turn into spectres and each coronal into a death's head, and Lucy is driven out into the town, finds a kind of release in going to confession in a Catholic Church, and finally faints in the middle of the street.²

Because of this link with life itself, love survives the emotions on which it grew. There is, in Charlotte Brontë as in Jane Austen, an affinity between love and approbation. It is emphasised that some basic form of respect is a necessary element of falling in love. But love survives loss of full approval - Caroline Helstone's love for Robert Moore is no less

1. i, p. 265. (Ch.15)

2. i, pp. 266-72

deep for his proposal to Shirley, shabby though this is felt to be - because it is an integral part of a person's own "being" once it has grown.

This 'metaphysical' conception of love owes nothing to Isaac Watts. What he says about the emotion is not of much account: that its object is what appears to us good, and that it implies approbation.¹ But once in her letters, and again in Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë contrasts loving "Creatures" with loving the "Creator", and suggests that to do the second better is to control the first.² This is a point made by Watts, and these are also his terms: if the love of God is the supreme love, he says, it will moderate "excessive Love to Creatures".³

What her conception of love might owe something to is the philosophy of Emerson. On the other hand she had written her first two novels and half Shirley before reading anything by him, and the closeness of his conception of love to hers must stand as a final testimony to the social character of thought - to the existence of particular communities of ideas, in which individuals participate but are transcended.

1. Doctrine of Passions, pp. 20-2

2. Correspondence, i, p. 153; JE, ii, p. 59

3. Doctrine of Passions, pp. 111-14

W.S. Williams first mentioned Emerson to Charlotte Brontë in 1848; writing back in July she says that she has not read anything by him, but was interested in Williams' remarks.¹ In February 1849 she was sent his Essays (the first series had been published in 1841 and the second in 1844.) And on the publication of his Representative Men in 1850 she was sent a copy - in the same parcel that brought Emma and (as I have argued in Chapter 1) at least one other Jane Austen novel.²

There were two features of Emerson's thought that she disliked: his optimism, and (especially) his advocacy of a religion "without forms".³ This is why she writes of his essays:

"I read with much interest and often with admiration, but they are of mixed gold and clay - deep and invigorating truth - dreary and depressing fallacy seem to me combined therein." (4)

Her sympathy with his basic idealism - the "gold" - was profound; and in a letter of June 1849 she mentions that it was one of his essays that she was reading to Emily the night before she died.⁵

1. Correspondence, ii, pp. 242-3

2. iii, p. 88

3. ii, p. 267

4. ii, pp. 306-7

5. ii, p. 350

His essay on love is one that Charlotte Brontë was bound, in one mood, to feel sympathy with. The love he is concerned with is, specifically, love between the sexes; and yet he can say "Love is our highest word, and the synonym of God."¹ And it is this kind of love which he sees as radiating out through the Universe, binding men to each other and the world in invisible bonds. In Charlotte Brontë, of course, this sense of deep interconnection between people and the world they live in was already profound.

She would have sympathised again with his emphasis upon love as a principle of self-realisation: Love, says Emerson, "unites [a man] to his race... carries him with new sympathy into nature, enhances the power of the senses, opens the imagination".² It involves fulfilment rather than happiness (Coleridge's "largest sum of easy & pleasurable sensations".)

Remembering love, one remembers

"days when happiness was not happy enough, but must be drugged with the relish of pain and fear; for he touched the secret of the matter who said of love,

³"All other pleasures are not worth its pains:". (3)

1. Essays, with Preface by Thomas Carlyle, (London, 1841), p. 169

2. p. 170

3. p. 176

This is one of the principles that govern the account given of love's development in Charlotte Brontë. It is Ginevra Fanshaw and de Hamal who in *Villette* are 'The Happy Pair'. (And Ginevra, like Lucy Steele in *Sense and Sensibility*, is dismissed from the narrative with a reflection on the slightness of the suffering her selfishness and greediness bring her.¹)

These principles can be seen most clearly in *Villette*, and especially in comparison with the different principles which govern the account given by Jane Austen in *Persuasion*.

Both these novels are more concerned with love than their author's previous works, as Whately noticed in the case of *Persuasion*, and Harriet Martineau in the case of *Villette*. The emphasis, however, is, naturally enough, not of the same kind. The way the novels open, the episodes emphasised, and the nature of the climaxes, in each case reveal a different sense of what is worth recording.

In Jane Austen there is a social context for love: the wider context of society itself (maintained through marriage), and the more limited context of "the neighbourhood" with its natural interest in talking about other people's loves and marriages and prospects. *Persuasion* opens on this context: the love of Anne Elliot for Captain Wentworth is approached through a

1. ii, p. 377

series of allusions to previous loves - her mother's "youthful infatuation"¹ with her father, the imagined love which the neighbourhood assumed would follow her mother's death (her father and Lady Russell), her father's "very unreasonable applications"² to other women, and her sister Elizabeth's disappointment in William Walter Elliot. The first hint of Anne's past history comes in Lady Russell's reflection on Anne's dislike of Bath - "her happening to be not in perfectly good spirits the only winter which she had afterwards spent there with herself."³ (The mystery of this is not cleared up until the fourth chapter.) Captain Wentworth is only finally introduced into the novel through a conversation between Sir Walter and Mr. Shepherd in which Anne is forced to remind them of the name. She then

"left the room, to seek the comfort of cool air for her flushed cheeks; and as she walked along a favourite grove, said, with a gentle sigh, 'a few months more, and he, perhaps, may be walking here.'" (4)

This 'contextual' approach to the love-story is not (only) a matter of subtle plot-exposition; it is a way of placing love, of indicating the kind of reality it has. Reality, in Jane Austen,

1. p. 4

2. p. 5

3. p. 14 (Ch. 3)

4. p. 25

is socially constructed; it is what in principle is publicly available. Love is not exempt from this; other people can be aware of one's attachments (in principle, again, that is). But it has a private face: it is, as it were, a private valuation - a valuation which, while it can be observed, cannot be shared. (At least, not completely.) Persuasion gradually closes in upon this private awareness: Anne's solitary walk in the grove.

The play of private awareness against public continues through the novel, and the effect is to make love something at once substantial and personal: to grant it, that is, the kind of reality which is appropriate to it.

Jane Austen could have learnt something of this from Richardson: in Clarissa, for instance, love is seen constantly from the two points of view (self and others); and the diminishment of love's reality in Evelina, Jane Austen could also have noticed, stems in part from the fact that Evelina writes nearly all the letters herself. Unlike Miss Howe, Miss Mirvan never replies; and Mr. Villars' letters are almost entirely composed of general moral advice.

In Villette love has a different kind of social context. Where Jane Austen balances feelings nurtured in solitude (Anne's seeking the favourite grove) against the demands of social life, with its continuous impingement upon the private life of feeling (the Musgroves' discussion of Captain Wentworth) Charlotte Brontë focuses on the first.

Society is established as a presence at the opening of Villette (life at Bretton) only so that Lucy Snowe's exile from it will be felt as what it is, when after the (I take it) metaphorical storm in which her "kindred" die, "there remained no possibility of dependence on others; to myself alone could I look".¹ But other than this, Lucy Snowe has no social relationships; her kindred are not defined, or the nature of her relationship to them given; Mrs. Bretton is only her godmother. When, while they are dressing before going to dinner with de Bassompierre, Ginevra Fanshawe asks her "Who are you, Miss Snowe?",² the question turns from an inquiry into social position into something much more mysterious, something which resonates in a very odd part of the mind. And it forces itself upon the reader again at the end of the book, when Lucy's curt summary of the fates of Madame Beck, Père Silas, and Madame Walravens leaves the question of her fate hanging in the air.

Love and identity are mutually dependent concepts, and the mystery about Lucy Snowe's identity implies a notion of love close to one touched on in Emerson's essay:

1. i, p. 52

2. ii, p. 92

"Hence arose the saying, 'If I love you, what is that to you?' We say so, because we feel that what we love is not in your will, but above it. It is the radiance of you, and not you. It is that which you know not in yourself, and can never know." (1)

The principles which can be seen in operation in the openings of the two novels also determine choice of episodes, and the nature of the sequence they form. In Persuasion this is the familiar comic sequence of multiplied misunderstandings and misapprehensions followed by a gradual disentangling; there is a simultaneous movement from autumn through winter into spring.

Anne is pleased to stay at Uppercross because to go to Bath would be "to forego all the influence so sweet and so sad of the autumnal months in the country".² The low-point of her fortunes, when she is forced to overhear Wentworth's praise of Louisa's unpersuadability, is the moment of the walk to Winthrop through "tawny leaves and withered hedges",³ and her reflections on the "apt analogy of the declining year, with declining happiness, and the images of youth and hope, and spring, all gone together".⁴ But this is pathos within comedy, and another note is struck before they reach Winthrop - "the fresh-made path spoke the farmer, counteracting

1. Essays, p. 181

2. p. 33

3. p. 84

4. p. 85

the sweets of poetical despondence, and meaning to have spring again";¹ Anne goes to Bath after Christmas, and in February Wentworth arrives; in the new spring he proposes.

The role played by the seasonal cycle in Persuasion, however, is, precisely, "apt analogy"; there is no suggestion, as there is in Charlotte Brontë, of a deep reciprocity between self and world. The revival of Wentworth's love for Anne, and her gradual discovery of his feelings are both presented as contingent: dependent upon personalities (their own and other people's), decisions, chance.

After Anne has become aware that he still loves her (or has come to love her again) it is a matter of time before the comedy reaches its climax; in the revised version this is appropriately complicated by the lovers' not being able to be alone together, and Wentworth's need to write; the moment of solitude comes when Charles leaves Anne in Wentworth's care - "There could be only a most proper alacrity, a most obliging compliance for public view; and smiles reined in, and spirits dancing in private rapture."² The privacy of rapture and the necessary otherness (at this point) of society are re-emphasised at the climax,

"as they slowly paced the gradual ascent, heedless of every group around them, seeing neither sauntering politicians, bustling house-keepers, flirting girls, nor nursery-maids and children". (3)

1. p. 85

2. p. 240

3. p. 241. (Ch. 23)

But marriage re-integrates lovers in society, and Persuasion ends with the account of Wentworth's usefulness to Mrs. Smith and a reminder of the "national importance" of his profession.¹ There is no similar sense in Villette of the dependence of society upon love and marriage: the book ends, in Charlotte Brontë's own pessimistic version, with a kind of muted liebestod: Paul Emanuel's death by storm and Lucy Snowe's disappearance from the narrative.

The key to the account of love given here is Emerson's "Every promise of the soul has innumerable fulfilments; each of its joys ripens into a new want."² Lucy Snowe moves from initial contentment and remoteness from life (the well-ordered house at Bretton and her position as observer) deeper and deeper into the current; she undergoes a series of trials, each of which opens new places in her soul; she experiences a series of fulfilments (as an observer, as a companion, as a solitary traveller in a strange country, as a teacher, as a woman in love) each of which implicates her more in life. The climax of this progression, naturally enough, receives the most emphasis: the wearying, exciting, explosive relationship with Paul Emanuel: "A game of permutation and combination of all possible positions of the parties, to extort all the resources of each, and acquaint each with the whole strength and weakness of the other."³ (Here Emerson's

1. p. 252

2. Essays, p. 169

3. Emerson: Essays, pp. 186 - 7

account of the typical love affair is so appropriate it could be taken as a particular comment on Villette.)

At the climax of the novel Lucy returns to her beginning: if Bretton was a well-ordered sanctuary, so is the garden of Eden:

"I was full of faults; he took them and ~~was~~ all home. ... We walked back to the Rue Fossette by moonlight - such moonlight as fell on Eden - shining through the shades of the Great Garden, and haply gilding a path glorious for a step divine - a Presence nameless. Once in their lives some men and women go back to these first fresh days of our great Sire and Mother - taste that grand morning's dew - bathe in its sunrise." (1)

She had invoked these associations before, in Jane Eyre, explicitly in the scene of Rochester's proposal - in the "Eden-like" orchard at Thornfield,² with the nightingale singing, and the honeydew falling, and the moon just risen - and more subtly in Ferndean, enclosed in the woods.³ Here she underlines their significance; but this is not necessarily heavy-handed: the moment needs emphasis because Lucy is in fact to go beyond it. This is the point of fulfilment, but mysterious life flows on.

1. ii, p. 399 (Ch. 41)

2. ii, p. 14 (Ch. 23)

3. ii, pp. 333-4 (Ch. 37)

Chapter Eight

Summary and Conclusion

I have argued that the reading public, although small by present standards in Charlotte Brontë's lifetime, and even smaller in Jane Austen's, was already fragmented. It already makes sense to speak, as James Mill does, not of a single public, but of distinct 'publics'. 'Publics' may be identified on many different criteria: allegiance to a particular political or religious viewpoint is one; social class (allowing for more than the usual 'three classes') is another; level of taste is a third. The criterion most relevant here proved to be the line taken on the novels. Three groups can thus be identified: those who objected to the form as such; those who saw in the form new possibilities as a pastime; those who saw in the form the possibility of a closer rendering than hitherto of personal experience. I christened these groups 'hidebound', 'omnivorous', and 'discriminating'. It might be possibly to identify all three groups independently of the line taken on the novel. There is evidence, for example, to connect opposition to the novel with particular political and religious affiliations. But to do this job properly lay beyond the scope of an already crowded investigation.

Each of the three groups identified, made particular demands on the novelist in the matter of treating emotions. These led even

the most ambitious of the predecessors and contemporaries of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë to present personal experience in something less than its full complexity. Psychological insight gave way before decorum; a repertoire of conventional 'tokens' of emotion drove out observation and experience. Differences in aptitude ought perhaps also to be allowed for. I have not explored this possibility; but important differences between Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë on the one hand and their contemporaries on the other can be made sense of without it.

Because there existed a group of readers who were prepared to take the novel seriously, Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë were able to share their explorations of personal experience. (They did not write for money or fame; if the impulse to share experience is not posited, their efforts to get their novels published do not make sense.)

The impulse to share, however, is a secondary aspect of the impulse to explore. I have argued that both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë wrote to dramatise a predicament: Jane Austen a personal predicament close to her own, Charlotte Brontë the more general predicament of those whom a powerful imagination has led away from the world, but who find themselves in the world, and search for a reconciliation with it.

In order to dramatise the predicament validly, both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë had to develop techniques for the

presentation of personal experience in its actual complexity.

The techniques they developed differ, however. The two novelists derived a different sort of pleasure from writing; they had other temperamental differences; discriminating readers of each time differed in their expectations; and the novelists found themselves at home in two hardly compatible 'orders of ideas'. Jane Austen may be identified as an empiricist, working (however distantly) in the categorical framework of Locke and Hume; Charlotte Brontë found herself at home in the half-German, half-English transcendentalism which was fashionable among (some) discriminating readers in her lifetime.

These conditions, personal, social, and intellectual, can be further detected at work in the two novelists' styles. When it came to the actual idiom of interpretation and appraisal, however, both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë found their situation as novelists problematic. The terms which lay to hand would have damaged authenticity almost as much as the use of tokens for emotions. To explain and evaluate particular feelings, therefore, each established a personal range of idiom. Jane Austen's reconciles Johnson and the 'sensibility' ethos: Charlotte Brontë's is more determinedly scientific and religious.

All this, I have argued, stems from their initial concern to dramatise a predicament. To explore such a predicament proved to be to explore a particular range of emotions, and to explore certain

general (but connected) issues of morality, happiness and fulfilment.

One emotion which both novelists emphasise is love. In this they proved to be in no way idiosyncratic. But their vindication of love, and of the capacities of women as a sex, can be seen to be more serious - more a matter of the real world - than their contemporaries'. To the extent that the treatment of love in each differs from that of the other, conditions already identified may be seen at work.

In the process of investigating I have made some miscellaneous discoveries. A case is made for Charlotte Brontë's having read more Jane Austen than she is supposed to have. Charlotte Brontë's juvenile work 'The Green Dwarf' has been shown to be heavily indebted to Mrs. Radcliffe. Jane Austen has been shown to be less indebted to Dr. Johnson than she is supposed to be. A source has been found for Charlotte Brontë's opposition of 'love of creatures' to 'love of the Creator'.

But it is not by these miscellaneous discoveries that the investigation seems to me to stand or fall. It depends rather on the degree to which credence is given to my picture of early nineteenth-century English society as deeply divided - and of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë as working within it to find a personal modus operandi.

Much remains to be clarified. The relationship between the novel and the reading public in this period needs to be more exhaustively analysed and documented, taking into account more fully than I have been able to the fragmentation of the reading public. On the larger issues of the implication of literature in society even more remains to be done: I have done little more than point in what I hope is the right direction.

More work needs to be done too, in investigating the contents of the novelist's tool bag. I have presented, I think for the first time, the range of options open to novelists in the presentation of emotions. This is only one of the issues a working novelist has to concern himself with.

I hope when this work is done that I will at least be found to have identified correctly some of the sources of the achievement of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë, and explained correctly some of the hitherto unsolved mysteries of their development as novelists.

If my investigation has proved to have a general moral for literary study, it is that the still fashionable presentation of the novel in terms of verbal structures, fictive worlds, and literary conventions will not allow us to get at important differences between a Jane Austen and her contemporaries. These terms in fact apply much more aptly to the period pieces which few except historians read,

than to permanent classics such as Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë. My notion of 'conjectural history', my criterion of 'authenticity of presentation', seem to work better.

There is no more immediate moral to be discovered. In particular no final evaluative comparison of Jane Austen's work with Charlotte Brontë's can be undertaken. They are, in the last analysis, too different.

I have explained as much as I can of the difference between them in the main body of the investigation. A single important difference remains, which has less to do with their time or their social predicament than with the very nature of their greatness as literary artists.

In his poem on God's grandeur Hopkins distinguishes two opposed kinds of grandeur: one which "will flame out, like shining from shook foil," and one which "gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil/Crushed." Charlotte Brontë's is the first kind, a matter of startlingly resonant sequences emerging from a jumble of prose styles; Jane Austen's is the second (the difficulty of catching her at 'the moment of greatness' being notorious), a matter of pace, proportion and sustained energy.

Appendix A

The Concept of Emotion

In attempting to isolate a novelist's treatment of emotion for discussion we are confronted with this difficulty: that 'emotion' is a concept of uncertain application. Obviously, the difficulty must be met if the scope and limits of investigation are to be defined with any exactness; and, as I shall argue, the application established must have some general validity if the investigation is to have any point. This is so in spite of the fact that this is a controversial area of enquiry, and that as a result any conclusions reached may be taken as provisional.

The most obvious way of overcoming the difficulty - recourse to a dictionary - is of little use. The Concise Oxford, for example, defines emotion as: "Agitation of mind, feeling; excited mental state." and this, as it stands, is clearly inadequate. Not all emotion involves agitation or excitement - not if we include loneliness, or reverence, or depression, or boredom, among emotions - nor is it clear what is to count as a 'mental state' or 'feeling': not surprisingly, the definition of 'feeling' - in the only sense which concerns us - turns out to be "emotion".

More technical dictionaries are only slightly more useful. For example, the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology defines emotion as

"a complex state of the organism, involving bodily changes of a widespread character - in breathing, pulse, gland secretion, etc. - and, on the mental side, a state of excitement or perturbation, marked by strong feeling, and usually an impulse towards a definite form of behaviour. If the emotion is intense there is some disturbance of the intellectual functions..." (1)

This definition at least isolates some of the typical features of emotion - physical reactions, impulses to behaviour - which I shall return to. But the detail of the definition is again unsatisfactory: 'feeling' needs some explanation (and why "strong feeling"?) especially since once again this word turns out to be defined in terms of "emotion" and "affect" (and affect is defined as "feeling or emotion"); the reference to "excitement or perturbation" again needs qualification; and it is far from clear how intense enthusiasm, for instance, or exhilaration, or a more general joie de vivre disturb intellectual functions. More to the point is the fact that the entire description is at least equally appropriate to a state of fever, and perhaps rather more appropriate, since it gives the emphasis of priority to "bodily changes".

The type of definition of emotion given in standard psychological textbooks turns out to be even less satisfactory: our difficulty is not met at all. Robert Plutchik lists twenty-four

1. Revised ed., (Harmondsworth, 1964)

"definitions of emotion" as an appendix to his work on the subject; they range from William James' of 1884 to Plutchik's own of 1962 and encompass a variety of psychological schools.¹ Each of these 'definitions' proves to be an explanation, and an explanation in terms of the psychologist's own preferred theory of psychological phenomena. No attempt is made to meet our first problem (which, on the face of it, should also be theirs): that a principle of demarcation needs to be established before investigation begins. Moreover, 'emotion' is a concept used outside technical discussions; it ought therefore to be possible to establish the role it plays in our thinking about the world without reference to any particular psychological theory. (The psychologist may then argue that our concept is of no use in his further investigations; this step is always open to him.)

At this point it may be objected that the difficulty we are trying to meet is of our own making; that we do not need to analyse the concept in general terms. All we need do, it may be said, is to discuss the specific emotions that novelists mention. Novelists, however, do not always name the emotions that their characters are supposed to be feeling; concerned as they naturally

1. The Emotions: Facts, Theories and a New Model, (New York, 1962), pp. 173 - 6

are not simply to report experiences but to convey something of their feel and texture, they often prefer to say 'the time seemed to pass slowly' rather than state explicitly that a character is feeling impatient. And sometimes, again naturally enough, they describe feelings for which we have no name, at least in English (see, for example, the conclusion of Chapter 5 of The Professor).¹

Nor is it possible to deal with emotion in novels simply as a literary convention, a rhetorical function of the novel's verbal structure: fictitious emotion (feelings attributed to imaginary characters) is of exactly the same order, logically, as actual emotion (feelings attributed to historical characters). We may make special demands upon a novelist's treatment of emotion, looking for significant pattern, for instance, as well as psychological insight; but whatever idea we form of emotion in novels (that is, 'characters' emotion' - see Chapter 1) will be parasitic upon our idea of emotion in life.

Where then, in life, is the concept in order? Clearly, 'emotion' is not a primary concept, basic to our thought about the world; rather, in order to identify its application we have to be able to identify the application of two logically (or ontologically) prior concepts: 'experience' and 'consciousness'.

These notions are as hard to analyse satisfactorily as 'emotion'; but they are easy enough to pin down for our limited purposes. Consciousness, here, is the mode of existence we attribute to humans, animals, birds, fishes, and insects; when these lose this consciousness (the primary form) they cease to exist as humans, animals, or whatever (we speak of corpses.) It is a mode of existence we do not attribute to germs or plant life (with the possible exception of sea-anemones) although we think of them as 'living'. Whether we should attribute consciousness to them is, of course, irrelevant; the point to be taken is that to attribute emotion to something we need logically to attribute consciousness. If flowers feel, then they are conscious (in this first sense).¹

Experience is the activity of consciousness: this is not to say that experience may not be itself passive; it is to make the point that, in our conceptual scheme, experience is consciousness at work, through time. We think of experience, in turn, as having distinct aspects, such as perception (and its different forms), or sensation, or emotion.

It is because 'experience' is a concept that experimental

1. It is important to note that 'consciousness' is not being used here of an entity, but of a mode of existence; and there may be concepts whose application we have to determine before we can identify consciousness (cf. P. F. Strawson: Individuals, (London, 1959), pp. 15-134 (Part I)). Nor are the other senses of the word 'consciousness' (yet) relevant.

psychologists find somehow unhappy that they have difficulties in defining emotion; and it is natural enough that extreme behaviourists, who do not recognize experience as a valid category (in science), should wish to deny the concept of emotion any application.¹

It is important to note here that it is not only human experience that is in question. The application of 'emotion' may be identified without reference to the kind of complex reflective consciousness that we normally only attribute to humans; there are some emotions which imply reflective consciousness, such as nostalgia, admiration, or humility, but emotion itself does not. When we speak of birds as frightened or dogs as miserable we are not speaking figuratively, or in any way oddly.

What conditions have to be further satisfied, then, for us to attribute emotion to conscious beings? Confronted with this question, and the vast range of what we think of as emotion, we might take the line that "emotions have no essence",² or that there is no paradigm case of emotion,³ but although these formulations remind us usefully that to attribute emotion is to ascribe love as well as surprise, disillusion as well as fear, wonder as well as envy, there may still

1. See, e.g., the articles by E. Duffy and D.O. Hebb in Magda B. Arnold (ed.): The Nature of Emotion, (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 129 - 54
2. C.A. Mace: 'Emotions and the Category of Passivity', Proceedings Aristotelian Soc., n.s., lxii (1961-2), pp. 135 - 42
3. William P. Alston: 'Emotion and Feeling' in Paul Edwards (ed.): Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (New York & London, 1967)

be some common denominator.

This seems to be in their character of 'intentionality' - a notion developed by Brentano and Husserl and invoked by Sartre.¹

'Intentional' experiences are those which have objects, which involve apprehension of the world. The concepts 'object' and 'the world' may seem vague (and other difficulties involved in their use will soon emerge), but at the moment their vagueness is their strength.

Emotion, then, is a specific manner of apprehending the world (Sartre); to feel emotion is to see things in a certain light.²

To feel disgust is to find something disgusting; to feel anger is to find something infuriating; and so on. Similarly, when in

Villette Lucy Snowe reports

"I had just extinguished my candle and lain down, when a deep, low, mighty tone swung through the night. At first I knew it not; but it was uttered twelve times, and at the twelfth colossal hum and trembling knell, I said - 'I lie in the shadow of St. Paul's.'" (3)

We can identify this as a description of emotion (and the emotion as awe) even though no specific reference to Lucy Snowe's feelings is made: something (namely the bells of St. Paul's) has been found awe-inspiring.

1. Jean-Paul Sartre: Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions, trans. Philip Mairet, (London, 1962). Its picture of emotion as essentially the 'behaviour of defeat' is seriously wrong; otherwise the best book on the topic. Cf., following Wittgenstein rather than the phenomenologists, Anthony Kenny: Action, Emotion and Will, (London, 1963)
2. Cf. John Benson: 'Emotion and Expression', Philosophical Rev., lxxvi (1967), pp. 335 - 357
3. i, p. 71. (Ch. 5)

This account of emotion is, so far, inadequate. But even at this point it encounters two objections: one to the notion of 'apprehension', the other to the notion of 'objects'.

What is wrong with speaking of apprehension in this context, it may be said, is that it implies 'conscious apprehension': what about the fears we feel when asleep? what about the angry or resentful man who does not recognize his emotion? what about the depressed or excited man who cannot tell why he is feeling that way? The objection can be countered by pointing out that it rests upon the ambiguity of the word 'conscious'; in the sense which we gave the word originally there is nothing odd about sleeping men (or dogs) feeling fear, because both are still conscious in that sense, while unconscious in another. What the sleeping man and dog find frightening is something in their nightmares; it qualifies as fear all the same, just as the relief a man feels at seeing what is in fact a mirage is none the less relief because the oasis he sees does not exist. Again, 'apprehension' need not imply 'awareness of apprehension'; just as I can see something without noticing (or realising) that I have seen it, so I can find something infuriating without noticing (or realising) that I have done so. This accounts both for the depressed man who cannot tell why (he is not aware of what is depressing him, while he knows something is) and the angry man who does not realise his state (he knows what it is that he has found infuriating without being aware

that he has found it so: for example because he is too concerned with dealing with the infuriating person or thing to notice). Besides, knowing that one is undergoing a particular emotion is dependent upon one's having learnt its nature: dogs and babies necessarily experience fury without knowing that that is what is happening.

This account of emotion is thus compatible with the further fact that people who are aware that they are feeling something sometimes identify their emotions incorrectly (mistaking envy, for example, for moral indignation). Awareness of precisely what one is feeling is not a necessary condition of feeling something.

A more fundamental objection is that to the notion of 'object'. It may be said either that there are some emotions which have no object, or that no criteria exist by which we could establish what is to count as an object at all.¹ These two points must be dealt with separately.

In the first instance it is conceded that fear is fear of something, pity is for something, surprise at something, - but how can our account of what we think of as emotion explain the existence of vague depressions, indefinite anxieties, nameless fears, and so on? And can one not say, quite legitimately, 'I feel happy, but I'm not happy about anything in particular'?² There are three

1. J.C. Gosling: 'Emotion and Object', Philosophical Rev., lxxiv (1965), pp. 486-503

2. Cf. Roger Trigg: Pain and Emotion, (Oxford, 1970), pp. 5-1

points to be made here. Firstly, it is clear that to speak, as one must, of vague depression, indefinite anxiety, is, ipso facto, to concede that depression is normally at something, anxiety about something: unless it is assumed that these emotions typically have objects the qualification is unnecessary. Secondly, as pointed out above, awareness of the object of one's feeling is not a necessary condition of one's feeling a particular emotion: this means that it is quite possible that if we should discover, or remember, or in some other way realise what the object of our feeling is (or was), depression would become precise, anxiety definite. (Indeed, Gosling, who questions the necessary 'intentionality' of emotion, admits that this process of illumination can occur.) Thirdly, we do not think of our emotional life as constituted entirely of emotions; we take account also of moods, dispositions, attitudes and other liabilities to emotion.¹ (I shall say more about this below.) A mood, for example, such as 'feeling irritable', is not itself an emotion and need have no object; each time the mood crystallises into a particular moment of irritation, however, it crystallizes precisely to the extent that there is something to get irritated about.

The onus, therefore, is on the objector. Until such time as an emotion is instanced that cannot in fact be classified either as

1. Cf. Gilbert Ryle: The Concept of Mind, (London, 1949), pp. 83 - 153. (Ch. 4 - 5)

objectless only to the point that awareness of the object is lacking, or as some form of liability to emotion rather than an emotion in itself (and, in terms of our conceptual scheme, this does seem like asking for a square circle) this first part of his objection must be taken as groundless.

A further point needs to be made. Just as objects need not be in existence at all for them to be objects - it is the unreal oasis I feel relief at, not the real image on my retina; the behaviour of characters in novels I feel indignant about, not (necessarily) the book itself - so they can also be vague. The man who is happy about nothing in particular, for instance, is happy about 'things in general' - and this way of putting it is both logically in order and compatible with ordinary usage. Again, objects can be comprehensive: to feel depressed or horrified at the entire universe and everything that happens in it is, to some people, a familiar experience.

This may seem a way of countering the objection in its second form. It is precisely because anything and everything can be the object of emotion (as it can be of thought), we may say, that it is difficult to suggest individuating facts. 'Objects', however, are not entities of a particular kind: it is a matter, rather, of defining the conditions any entity has to satisfy for it to count as the object of an emotion. For example, my depression may be the result of my having drunk too much the previous evening, but

what depresses me is the pointlessness of my life. What enables us to say that the drunkenness is the cause of my depression, but that the state of my life is its object?

This is one of the most difficult questions we have to answer, since it involves considerations of a particularly general kind. We can begin by saying that to speak of emotions as having objects is to place them with thoughts, perceptions and desires - experiences (activities of consciousness) which we can only identify where we can refer to something beyond, or other than, an experiencing consciousness. An object of emotion, that is, is of the same logical order as an object of desire or perception, and, except insofar as it seems paradoxical to say that we can think about something without being aware of it, of the same order as an object of thought. Within our conceptual scheme, then, the notion of object plays the role of the other half of an experience of which the first half is an experiencing consciousness. 'Hearing' is a concept we cannot grasp unless we grasp the notion 'sound' - 'something to be heard'. Similarly, 'fear' demands 'the frightening' - 'something to be afraid of'. In some cases the 'other half' is a matter of the same consciousness that experiences: the object of one's anger may be one's fear; peace of mind, to the extent that it is a feeling and not a mood, is the apprehension of one's mind as free - free, especially, from disagreeable emotions; similarly the object of

one's though may be one's thinking, and what the well-fed glutton desires is to desire. There is nothing logically peculiar about this: although the experiencing consciousness and the experienced consciousness are not the kind of entity which can be distinguished by any other activity than that of thought, nevertheless they, and their many activities, play distinct roles in our conceptual scheme.

It may be granted then that apprehension of something in a certain light (the kind of light being defined by the kind of emotion) is a necessary condition of emotion. It is possible also to describe the light in which things must be seen for one to be feeling a particular emotion without using the emotion word or a derivative of it; to feel fear is typically to find one's situation dangerous, or to apprehend something as a threat; to feel grateful is to take someone to have been generous to one; and so on.

However, this apprehension does not seem to be a sufficient condition of emotion. No logical error is involved in saying 'I realised I was in a dangerous situation, but I felt no fear', nor in Coleridge's "I see, not feel, how beautiful they are." It is necessary, in other words, not only that one should apprehend things in a certain light, but that one should be affected by the apprehension.

What we mean by 'being affected' is fairly clear: it is the feature of emotion that has received most stress. Typically, it takes the forms mentioned in the dictionary of psychology quoted from: physical reactions, and impulses to behaviour. These are, as we have seen, inadequate on their own to isolate emotion from other features of experience; but seen as complements of apprehension they make up what we think of as covered by the term. To say, for instance, 'I realised I was in a dangerous situation; I broke out in a cold sweat; I felt a strong impulse to run away; but I felt no fear' is simply to show that one has not mastered the concept 'fear'. To undergo the experience described is to feel fear. (Fear can be controlled or disregarded; but the reactions mentioned establish its presence no matter how cool one's subsequent behaviour; and courage of course properly implies that fear has been overcome rather than absent altogether.) Again, it is not possible to say 'I saw them as beautiful; I caught my breath; I could not tear myself away' and still maintain 'I could not feel their beauty' - not without intending to be paradoxical.

It may be objected here that this account is now too full; that it makes no allowance for mild emotions. What physical reactions or impulses to behaviour are present in such states as

slight boredom, mild sympathy, and so on? The answer would seem to be: to the extent that physical reactions and impulses to behaviour are absent from an emotion, to that extent we call it mild (to do so is implicitly to accept our account). Further, the words we use to refer to emotions often cover a range of experience from detached appraisal to overpowering emotion; and appraisal becomes emotional at the point where one is affected. Sympathy, for example, from being simple recognition of others' suffering, becomes an emotional experience when one comes close to tears, feels an impulse to help, and so on. To call sympathy mild is to point out that this particular form of it is near the less affected end of the continuum.

Are there, however, experiences which answer to our account of emotion without our normally thinking of them as such? We can disregard the case in which I drink a glass of something which I find unpleasant and which, unknown to me, is mildly poisonous; even though I may shiver and sweat and feel a strong impulse to lie down, what affects me is clearly the poison and not my apprehension of the liquid as unpleasant: here apprehension and affect are distinct reactions to the same physical stimulus, and not complementary parts of a single experience. But what about the case of lethargy? I find everything tiring; my body is heavy; all I want to do is sit and do nothing. Here we have to ask

ourselves about the nature of the apprehension involved, and whether it is in fact the primary element. If the apprehension involves a strong sense of one's own condition as intolerable, or of the uses of the world as weary, flat, stale and unprofitable, and if this either seems to bring on, or intensify, one's bodily heaviness, then clearly we would call this state an emotion. However, we are unlikely to call this state 'lethargy' - rather 'despair' or (in its weakest form) 'boredom'. We normally reserve the word 'lethargy' for the bodily condition itself; and this clearly has no claim to be considered as an emotion in its own right.

These points, and those made in the previous paragraph, can be re-stated in a more decisive way. What we look for when we are uncertain whether to call a certain condition an emotion, as in the cases described, is precisely the elements here taken to be essential: the presence of both apprehension and affect (the state of being affected); and the primacy of apprehension. Is a certain man's admiration for another an emotion? The apprehension of admirable qualities is given: what we look for is signs of affect. If the first man is excited, if he keeps telling other people about the second man's exploits, our problem is solved. Again, is a particular state of nausea that we experience an emotion? If our physical reactions are brought on

by our apprehension of something as unpleasant or disgusting we make up our mind one way; if they seem to be produced directly by the disgusting thing, another.

The necessary primacy of apprehension is an important condition; it is brought out sharply in the facts of self-control. Emotions are (in principle) controllable. In a state of anger, for instance, we may take deep breaths, which stop the heart from beating so fast, or we may refuse to contemplate giving in to our impulse to cause pain in return; but acting on our affect is clearly not as efficient as acting on our apprehension - to see the infuriating person as merely pitiful, for instance, or the infuriating circumstances as a trial of our strength. Again, to increase our remorse it is of little use to try to intensify our discomfort directly; rather we will picture the harm we have done in an ever more lurid light.

In insisting upon the primacy of apprehension it is important to guard against two dangers. One is that of assuming that it is necessarily awareness of the way things seem to us that reveals to us what we are feeling. It would seem to be at least as common for us to realise what emotions we are experiencing as a result of noticing our bodily reactions (our tightly clenched^h fists, our urge to burst into tears) or even our behaviour (we find that we are doing everything very slowly). In fact, in cases of grief or acute

disappointment, when we are particularly aware of the state of our apprehension, we tend to 'feel nothing' - until this awareness subsides. Since our bodily reactions and behaviour are, in many cases, observable by other people, they are often in as good a position to know what we are feeling as we are. (I develop this point further in Appendix B). And the fact that our emotions frequently make themselves known to us in this way may account for the notorious theory of William James: that 'emotion' is simply our consciousness of bodily change.

The second danger to be guarded against is that of assuming that we distinguish emotions in the light of the different kinds of apprehension involved. As Errol Bedford has pointed out, "Emotion concepts... are not purely psychological."¹ Statements which refer to emotions serve other functions than that of reporting feelings, the most important of which is to make human actions intelligible by drawing attention to the complex circumstances in which they take place. Bedford's point that the terminology of emotion is not a kind of mirror held up to the facts of emotional experience is well taken; but he does not go far enough in enumerating the actual grounds of distinction we employ. This leads him into the opposite error to the one we are guarding against: that of supposing that we never use emotion words to distinguish kinds of feeling.

1. 'Emotions', Proceedings Aristotelian Soc., lvii (1956-7), pp. 281 - 304.

As a matter of fact emotion words cannot be grouped in a single system of classification; rather, we distinguish emotions from each other in a variety of ways. For example, we distinguish levels of feeling (fury from irritation), kinds of feeling (elation from depression), kinds of object (despair from disillusion), durations of experience (affection from tenderness), circumstances of arousal (resentment from indignation), kinds of accompanying behaviour (fear from panic); we also use different words according to whether we approve or disapprove of the emotion (contentment versus self-satisfaction). There is no one system of classification because our language in this area has to serve a variety of functions. This in turn explains the fact that new words for emotions come into existence, or are borrowed from other languages, and old words cease to be used. Nor is it surprising that our experience does not always seem to be adequately marked out by common emotional terms.¹

When we turn now to novels we find that our consort of conditions not only establishes the principle of demaraction we were looking for, but that the usage of novelists when emotions are identified by name clearly reflects our model. On occasion all three elements are combined: the irony of the following passage from Northanger Abbey in no way mitigates its value as evidence:

1. This is the answer to Mary Warnock: 'The Justification of Emotions', Aristotelian Soc., Supplementary Vol., xxxi (1957), pp. 43 - 58; cf. also Benson: 'Emotion and Expression', pp. 335 - 9

"The progress of Catherine's unhappiness from the events of the evening, was as follows. It appeared first in a general dissatisfaction with every body about her, while she remained in the rooms, which speedily brought on considerable weariness and a violent desire to go home. This, on arriving in Pulteney-street, took the direction of extraordinary hunger, and when that was appeased, changed into an earnest longing to be in bed; such^{was} the extreme point of her distress; for when there she immediately fell into a sound sleep which lasted nine hours, and from which she awoke perfectly revived, in excellent spirits, with fresh hopes and fresh schemes." (1)

Generally speaking, however, one element of the consort is sufficient indication of the feeling ascribed, and sometimes emotions are named; of these elements the novelist's happiest resort is to apprehension: to report how things seem to a character is to give the clearest sense of a particular feeling. This technique can take the relatively straightforward form of referring to the summer day.

"whose long, bright, noiseless, breezeless, cloudless hours (how many they seemed since sunrise!) had been to her as desolate as if they had gone over her head in the shadowless and trackless wastes of Zahara". (2)

Or the more subtle form of:

"He had found her agitated and low. - Frank Churchill was a villain. - He heard her declare that she had never loved him. Frank Churchill's character was not desperate. - She was his own Emma, by hand and word, when they returned into the house; and if he could have thought of Frank Churchill then, he might have deemed him a very good sort of fellow." (3)

1. NA, p. 60. (Ch. 9)

2. Sh, ii, p. 111. (Ch. 23)

3. E, p. 433. (Ch. 49)

Here the progress of Mr. Knightley's feelings is described - without any attempt to name them - by reference to his changing apprehension of a person only marginally involved in them: the characterisation, all the same, is as definite as it is amusing.

A final small point. Investigation of a novelist's treatment of emotion will not only concern itself with emotional episodes. As has already been mentioned, we think of people's emotional lives as made up also of moods, attitudes, dispositions, and other forms of liability to emotion. It will be necessary, evidently, to distinguish emotional dispositions from other kinds. Here it is not enough simply to specify that these must be the occasion of emotions. It is part of our notion of generosity, for instance, to assume that generous people will feel pleasure at giving, sadness at being unable to give, and so on. Rather the disposition must either be to feel specific emotions - as irritability is the disposition to feel irritated (specifically) whenever opportunity arises - or it must involve apprehension of the kind we have already isolated. Love, for example, is normally taken to be a disposition (when the word is not being used of an episode): although it entails the love-episode ('feeling loving') it entails other emotions besides. But while not of the same order therefore an irritability, it is also of a different order from generosity: to speak of a man's generosity is not, ipso facto,

to assume that he apprehends anything in the world in a particular light; to speak of a man's love is. While moods are generally of the first sort of liability, attitudes such as resentment or gratitude (where the words are not being used of states), are of the second.

Appendix B

Emotions and the Omniscient Narrator

It is sometimes said that an element of artifice enters the novel whenever a narrator gives an account of what characters are feeling. Wayne C. Booth, for example, begins The Rhetoric of Fiction:

"One of the most obviously artificial devices of the storyteller is the trick of going beneath the surface of the action to obtain a reliable view of a character's mind and heart. Whatever our ideas may be about the natural way to tell a story, artifice is unmistakably present whenever the author tells us what no one in so-called real life could possibly know. In life we never know anyone but ourselves by thoroughly reliable internal signs, and most of us achieve an all too partial view even of ourselves." (1)

Booth hedges his bets with the notion of 'reliability', but the passage makes sense without the notion, as it does not if the notion is itself taken to bear most of the weight. Vivienne Mylne is less circumspect, but hers is the point Booth must also wish to be taken:

"the now-familiar personage of the omniscient narrator, who can penetrate the thoughts and feelings of all the characters, is of course impossible in a true narrative of real-life events." (2)

If this is true, if there is something necessarily artificial about ascribing emotions to characters, then it would seem misguided

1. (Chicago, 1961), p.3

2. 'Illusion and the Novel', British J Aesthetics, vi (1966), p. 145

to treat the novel as a kind of history. Artifice of this kind, if not a disfigurement, must be a convention. If there is convention here, the novel may be more aptly treated as a 'fiction'. No reference need be made from its world to the real world, the world we share and cannot wish away.

However, there is no necessary artifice simply in ascribing emotions to characters. In fact it is not immediately clear how the notion of artificiality could ever have arisen in this context, since it is at odds both with the fact that, in life, we quite frequently discuss other people's feelings, and with the way we discuss them. And if we look at a passage from a novel we find that it may very closely resemble the ascriptions of everyday conversation. For example,

"He was too angry to say another word; her manner too decided to invite supplication; and in this state of swelling resentment, and mutually deep mortification, they had to continue together a few minutes longer". (1)

To ascribe the emotions of anger and resentment to Emma and Mr. Elton at this point and in this way is not to do anything in the least extraordinary. Why then is it held to be artificial?

This is not an exclusively literary question, of course. What is in fact at issue here is the philosophical problem of 'other minds'. Raised in this context the issue does not need to be gone

1. E, p. 132. (Ch. 15)

into very deeply, even if there were space to do so; but some fairly straightforward points can be made.

Two aspects of the problem are relevant: the question of privacy, and the question of authority. The first concerns the narrator's right to report other people's feelings at all; the second concerns the reliability of such reports.

The 'privacy' of feelings is the more fundamental question. Is it not true that I am the only person who can know my own feelings? that my emotional life is a secret life, which I cannot reveal to other people? And are not other people's emotional lives equally a secret to me?

What is behind this extraordinary notion of the life of feeling (which we often assert but infrequently, or never, act upon) is a particular picture of the mind. The picture is defined by P.L.Gardiner, discussing the practice of historians in this area (historians also report feelings), as "a locked chamber to which only one person has direct access - 'the owner'".¹ It is a picture which is assumed in Booth's "going beneath the surface of the action" and Vivienne Mylne's "narrator, who can penetrate ... thoughts and feelings". It is brought into the open in critical comments like Percy Lubbock's: "Somewhere the author must break into the privacy of his characters and open their minds to us."²

1. Patrick Gardiner: The Nature of Historical Explanation, (Oxford, 1952), p. 126

2. The Craft of Fiction, (London, 1921), p. 74

Is it a true picture? It is important to take account first of the obvious fact that it is a metaphorical picture, an analogue, and that all the phrases quoted are similarly metaphorical. The strength of the metaphor lies in its graphic representation of a particular form of privacy - but this privacy does not generally obtain for the life of feeling, and the few occasions when it does (such as the occasions of 'pretence') prove to be evidence against its generally obtaining.

To make these points clear we have to begin by distinguishing the different forms which privacy may take. Each form is a way of 'not being public', and the kind of privacy which obtains in any particular case will depend on the kind of 'publicity' being excluded. The most important distinction is between privacy of ownership and privacy of observation. A sub-division of the first is what may be called 'logical ownership'; the second may also sub-divide into necessary and contingent forms.¹

What the first class excludes is 'public ownership'; for something to be privately owned it must belong to an individual (my house, your access to the sea). 'Logical' ownership is more narrow still; only things which cannot, by definition, belong to any other individual than the specified owner (my work on fossils, your retirement,

1. For a different but related classification of kinds of privacy see Don Locke: Myself and Others, (Oxford, 1968), pp. 5 - 7

Ireland's history) belong in this sub-division. What the second class excludes is 'public observation'; for something to take place in private it must not be generally observable. What is most relevant to our purposes is the 'privacy of the individual', and the public to be excluded is simply 'other people'. Here we distinguish contingent from necessary privacy; examples of the first kind are easy to muster - my bathing (which a Peeping Tom might observe), your blood-pressure (slight changes in which might be noted by a lie-detector) - but it is not clear if anything is in fact to be included under the heading of 'necessary privacy' (leaving emotions at present out of account).

Which of these kinds of privacy are appropriate to the life of feeling? It would seem that, for the charge of artificiality to stick, it must be supposed to fall into the final category - necessary privacy of observation. Only this, it would seem, would justify Booth's "what no one in so-called real life could possibly know" and Vivienne Mylne's "impossible in a true narrative of real-life events" (my italics).

And yet we do often seem to know what other people are feeling, even when they have not informed us themselves. In fact, we sometimes contradict the information people give us - maintaining, for instance, that a man is furious even when he claims he is not. If feelings were necessarily private this would be an extraordinary way of behaving.

To justify our right to behave in this way we sometimes say that we assume other people are undergoing certain emotions because we have noticed connections between these emotions and our own behaviour and infer that these connections hold for other people, where their behaviour can be observed. This is the 'argument from analogy'; it is still popular among literary critics but is generally considered by philosophers to be "inadequate, if not radically unsound and unremediably defective".¹

It is not difficult to see why. The argument from analogy takes for granted the picture of the mind as a locked chamber and attempts to account for the contradiction between this picture and our behaviour when the issue is raised in a practical form. But what is really at fault is the picture itself. The life of the mind is simply not private in the sense it suggests.

How private is it, then? Clearly, a person's experiences are privately owned; and it may be conceded to the defenders of the 'locked chamber' view that they are necessarily privately owned by particular individuals - we speak of two people being struck by the same thought, and of people sharing someone's feelings, but it may be that in so doing we are speaking less than literally. And it may be because I feel that no one else can 'have my feelings'

1. J.M.Shorter: 'Other minds', in Encyclopedia of Philosophy;
Cf. Norman Malcolm: 'Knowledge of Other Minds', J Philosophy,
lv (1958), pp. 969 - 78

in this sense that I am led to believe that no one can know what they are.

But to concede this may still be to take issue on the main charge. What has to be proved, it would seem, by those who wish to maintain that it is artificial to ascribe feelings to other people is that the life of the mind is necessarily privately observable.

On the other hand, how necessary is 'necessary' here? It is possible to distinguish two kinds of impossibility - contingent impossibility, and necessary impossibility. There is that which we happen not to be able to do, and that which it is inconceivable we should be able to do. Which kind of impossibility obtains here?

I have suggested so far that it is the second that defenders of the 'locked chamber' view seem to need to assume. But for this kind of impossibility to obtain it would have to be the case that every time a narrator ascribed an emotion to a character he was doing something that simply did not make sense. If the life of feeling were necessarily privately observable, no evidence of any kind could count in favour of ascriptions. It would not be possible to distinguish between correct and incorrect ascriptions, let alone informed and uninformed ascriptions, since all ascriptions would be meaningless.

Is it then only contingent impossibility that is in question?

On this view, the life of feeling would have to satisfy two conditions. It would need not only to be completely undetectable by other people, however well they knew one, however observant they were, and however sensitive apparatus they enlisted. It would need also to be incommunicable by oneself. One would need to know that one was frightened, for example, but be unable to indicate one's fear, by any means whatsoever, to other people. It is not likely that anyone would maintain that these conditions are satisfied either.

It may however be asserted that although the notion of impossibility is, strictly speaking, out of place here, all the same we do often use the word 'impossible' as a synonym for 'extraordinarily difficult', and that this is all that is really being maintained when we say that the life of the mind is impossible to observe.

This objection, however, cannot stand. On the one hand, nothing less than strict impossibility can substantiate the charge of artificiality brought against the novelist. On the other hand, it is not even true that the life of the mind is difficult to observe (in principle).

We think of the life of the mind being unobservable, to the extent that we think of it as quite distinct from its public manifestations. But to think of it this way, to conceive it as what is left over when all public manifestations have been

discounted, is either to reduce it to involving only daydreams and reverie, or to be guilty of inconsistency every time we use the words 'thought' and 'emotion'. For both these concepts demand, for their valid application, that certain public conditions should be satisfied. In the case of emotion, as we have discovered (see Appendix A), physical reactions and impulses to behaviour are necessary features; if we discount them we cannot talk of emotion at all.

It is because the life of feeling has this public aspect that we are confident, in practice, of our right to know what other people are feeling as well as, or on occasion better than, they do themselves. As A.J. Ayer concedes, in a lecture defending the privacy of the life of the mind, the notion of a person's knowing his own mind best is unapt when either motives or emotions are in question: "In all such cases, some outsider may prove to be a better judge of the facts."¹

Not only are emotions not necessarily private, then; they are in fact necessarily public - in the sense that they are, in principle, observable by other people. When we see someone upset, or bored, or excited, or angry, we do not infer his emotions from what we see; we see (an aspect of) the emotions. The immediate objection to this - that people sometimes hide their feelings from us - is in fact further evidence for the point. If feelings had no identifiable public aspect it would not be necessary to hide anything.

1. 'Privacy', Proceedings British Academy, xlv (1959), p. 55

The same applies to the objection that people sometimes pretend to be feeling a particular emotion when they are not. It is only because feelings have their identifiable public aspect that they can be simulated, successfully or otherwise.

However, the fact that deception and pretence are possible in this area, while itself being evidence against the notion that the life of the mind is inescapably private, raises the question of authority. In life, it may be said, we may well be able to see what others are supposed to be feeling, but we can never be sure that they really are feeling what they are supposed to be. The narrator's claim to be issuing reliable reports is as a result invalidated.

Deception, however, is only possible against a general background of non-deception. Only in situations where it is logically in order to expect not to be deceived can we in fact be deceived at all. This means that the objection cannot immediately re-open the charge of artifice. What it points to are certain contingent (practical) difficulties. Novels, however, are normally written in the past tense. There is therefore no necessary artifice in the narrator's (implicitly) claiming to have overcome these difficulties.

It is worth while pointing out, moreover, that difficulties may be encountered by the person who is undergoing emotions. Whether cases of successful self-deception are more or less common than cases of successful deception of others is a question for investigation

rather than discussion, but it is worth noting that there are no such things as "thoroughly reliable internal signs" (Booth). Indeed, the admission that "most of us achieve an all too partial view even of ourselves" is a complete argument against their existence. We find out about our emotions, generally, in much the same way as other people; and the privilege of having more information at our disposal is offset by certain liabilities: our partiality to ourselves, our proneness to wish-fulfilment or fear-fulfilment, and so on.

This is enough to establish the propriety of considering novels as conjectural histories. But some might still think the enterprise foolish. Is there not some artifice in the actual practice of novelists here?

Three areas of (possible) artifice suggest themselves: authoritative interpretation; range of observation; and manner of presentation. I shall deal with the last first.

It may be said that there is artifice in a narrator presenting so much of the 'feel' of feelings. The names of emotions may be shared, someone may argue, but it is impossible for anyone to understand or appreciate the quality, the actual texture, of someone else's experience. This it is impossible to communicate; it is necessarily private. It therefore satisfies the conditions necessary to maintain a 'locked chamber' view of the mind.

A moment's reflection will show that this will not do. If one cannot convey the 'feel' of feelings to others, a narrator cannot convey them to readers. There is necessarily a perfect match (in this respect) between what one can communicate of one's feelings to others and what a narrator can (without artifice) report. If he therefore reports more of the quality or texture of particular experiences than an individual feels he ought to be able to, it is the individual's sense of possibility that must be called into question.

But for how many people can a narrator do this? And under what circumstances? This is the second problem-area.

In both this area and the third, it has to be conceded that artifice may enter. A novelist may ascribe to his narrator observations which (on his own terms) are impossible. This may be true of such an observation as "Had Elizabeth been able to encounter his eye, she might have seen how well the expression of heart-felt delight, diffused over his face, became him."¹ (Who did see this, then?) But it is important to note that this is up to the novelist, that there is no theoretical limit whatsoever to the observations a narrator may make, and that novelists concerned to engage readers in a dialogue about the real world do not commonly fall into this artifice. (In their novels, it would be a mistake.)

Authoritative interpretation can also be a source of artifice. Not so much when narrators speak of the 'real evils' or 'what she was

1. P&P, p. 366

really feeling'. There is no necessary artifice here, even if the narrator does not at this point explain how he is able to discount appearances. Artifice occurs not when a narrator fails to present his evidence, but when no possible evidence can count. (This may redeem Jane Austen from the charge of artifice in the observation instanced in the last paragraph.)

It occurs most often, therefore, in comparisons of the feelings of different characters. This is not in itself artificial, since such things as the duration of emotion and the behaviour associated with it may be taken into account. But the problems of measurement (how intense? how deep?) - bearing in mind especially the problems of measuring degrees of control, of suppression, of sublimation - are insuperable. And necessarily insuperable: it is not that we do not have the means (only), it is that we do not have, and could not work out, the criteria. Comparisons therefore need to be handled with extreme caution.

An example of such a cautious comparison is Jane Austen's "Mrs. Weston was exceedingly disappointed - much more disappointed, in fact, than her husband".¹ It is not only clear how this judgement could be verified, but Jane Austen gives us the necessary information. Mr. Weston's disappointment only lasts half an hour, and he then begins to look on the news as a piece of good luck.

1. E, p. 144

The artificial form of comparison is likely to be present whenever the world-view of a novel involves a radical division between people on the grounds of sensitivity and imagination. This division is present in an unsophisticated form in the novels of the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century cult of sensibility, and in a more sophisticated and intelligent form in the novelists of what might be called the 'visionary' tradition - extending from Emily Brontë to D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. Unfortunately the presence of artifice of this kind means that they cannot substantiate their segregations for the real world.

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