A Comparison of Jane Austen's Early and Late Characterization

Janet R. Moore

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsrepository.llu.edu/etd

Part of the Fiction Commons, and the Literature in English, British Isles Commons

Recommended Citation

https://scholarsrepository.llu.edu/etd/1072

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TheScholarsRepository@LLU: Digital Archive of Research, Scholarship & Creative Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Loma Linda University Electronic Theses, Dissertations & Projects by an authorized administrator of TheScholarsRepository@LLU: Digital Archive of Research, Scholarship & Creative Works. For more information, please contact scholarsrepository@llu.edu.
LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
Graduate School

A COMPARISON OF JANE AUSTEN'S EARLY
AND LATE CHARACTERIZATION

by
Janet R. Moore

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in the Field of English

August 1973
Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this thesis in his opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree Master of Arts.

Delmer I. Davis, Associate Professor of English

J. Paul Stauffer, Professor of English

Robert P. Dunn, Associate Professor of English
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Although when once published, Jane Austen almost immediately was enjoyed by discerning readers and critics and has continued to enjoy wide praise, she had difficulty getting her writings printed. Luckily Jane Austen's family, many of them writers themselves, were an appreciatively critical audience. Her father thought enough of her writing to send *First Impressions*, later *Pride and Prejudice*, to a publisher. It was refused, however, and she had written three books before one was finally published. Editors hesitated to publish her novels because they were satires on sentimental fiction.¹ She was not wildly acclaimed by the masses because in her time the common reader was used to sentimental and Gothic novels and did not know how to relate to the realistic characters that she presented. Her readers were used to types such as Prince Charming, the rake, and the virtuous maiden.² Austen, however, is often considered the first novelist to present round living characters rather than the flat character or type.³ It is Austen's ability with characterization rather than her


²A type, according to E. M. Forster, is a flat character or a caricature. It never changes and its reactions are predictable. A round character is one that surprises the reader even though a description has been given and the reader seems to know the character intimately. "People," *An Introduction to Literary Criticism*, ed. by Marlies K. Danziger and W. Stacy Johnson (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1961), p. 198.

³Danziger, pp. 196-97.
popularity with the common reader which makes her important in the history of the novel.

Critics and writers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have suggested that Austen's works of fiction approach perfection in their portrayal of characters. A brief review of critical comment arranged chronologically, clearly establishes a continuing pattern among novelists in relation to Austen's talent with characterization.

As early as March, 1816, Sir Walter Scott writes in the Quarterly Review: "We, therefore, bestow no mean compliment upon the author of Emma, when we say that, keeping close to common incidents, and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality, that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events. . . ." He compares her to the Flemish painters who paint common, middle-class people precisely and truly to nature.

An unsigned notice in British Critic, March, 1818, discusses Austen's use of commonplace incidents and characters and her ability to observe and record all the follies and feelings of people. "This is the result of that good sense which seems ever to keep complete possession over all the other qualities of the mind of our authoress: she sees everything just as it is; even her want of imagination (which is the principal defect of her writings) is useful to her in this respect. . . ."

---

4Southam, p. 63. 5Southam, p. 67.

6Southam, p. 81.
Julia Kavanagh in *English Women of Letters* published in 1862 thinks that the ability to see truly is an important characteristic of writers: "... never has character been displayed in such delicate variety as in her tales: never have commonplace men and women been invested with so much reality. She cannot be said to have created or invented; Jane Austen had an infinitely rarer gift--she saw."  

Andrew Lang in *Letters to Dead Authors*, 1886, suggests: "Ah, madam, what a relief it is to come back to your witty volumes, and forget the follies of today in those of Mr. Collins and of Mrs. Bennet. How fine, nay, how noble is your art in its delicate reserve, never insisting, never forcing the note, never pushing the sketch into the caricature. You worked without thinking of it, in the spirit of Greece, on a labour happily limited, and exquisitely organized..."  

Mrs. Oliphant writes that Jane Austen does not judge her characters, nor does she manipulate their actions. She presents all aspects of them and allows them to act independently.  

As can be seen in the preceding nineteenth century critical evaluations, even the earliest critics consistently mention the importance of character development in Jane Austen's novels. In the twentieth century, praise of Austen's talent for characterization has continued.  

Virginia Woolf in "Jane Austen" discusses our author's ability to  

---  


portray human values and human nature. Austen seems to understand people, and, with a sure touch, she can turn a flat character like Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice* into a real person.\(^{10}\) She recognizes that human nature is best illustrated in the common everyday activities. She knows her own powers and can not be tempted to deal with events and issues of a broader nature.\(^{11}\)

Mary McCarthy says in her article "Characters in Fiction" that good characterization is the ability to see the limitations of character.\(^{12}\) Jane Austen is able to show the frailties in all her characters.

E. M. Forster uses Jane Austen as an example of good character writing: "All Jane Austen characters are ready for an extended life, for a life which the scheme of her books seldom requires them to lead and that is why they lead their actual lives so satisfactorily."\(^{13}\) He believes that not only her main round characters are well drawn, but her seemingly flat characters are really bordering on round. These characters are able to "give new pleasure" every time they appear.\(^{14}\) Forster believes that in Jane Austen's books the characters are all interdependent. It is impossible to take one of her characters out without feeling the loss.\(^{15}\) Mrs. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* serves

---


\(^{11}\) Watt, p. 21.


\(^{13}\) Danziger, p. 197.

\(^{14}\) Danziger, p. 196.

\(^{15}\) Danziger, pp. 191-92.
to emphasize Elizabeth's prejudice and at the same time she is a foil to Mr. Darcy. Her prejudices change swiftly and meaninglessly while his are cautious and lasting.  

All three critics just cited are of course themselves important writers of fiction in the twentieth century. Since 1930 the growth of academic criticism has included renewed emphasis on Austen's ability to create convincing characters.

D. W. Harding in "Regulated Hatred," using a Freudian approach to Jane Austen, believes that her characters are modeled on real people: "The implication of her caricatures as criticism of real people in real society is brought out in the way they dovetail into their social setting. The decent stodgy Charlotte puts up cheerfully with Mr. Collins as a husband. . . ."  

Charlotte knows that she is lucky to get an establishment because she is not attractive and has no fortune. The social status of the single female is dependent entirely on the good heartedness of her brothers and married sisters. Mary McCarthy adds to Harding's statement: "a sustained power of mimicry is the secret of all creation of character."  

Mary Lascelles in "Jane Austen's Style" points out that Jane Austen uses dialog to show the social status and education of the character. She allows each character to be true to his own idiom whether he is writing or talking. For example, Miss Bates in Emma

---

17 Watt, p. 171.  
18 Kumar, p. 86.
19 O'Neill, p. 40.
reveals much of the story of Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill. She gives these facts all mixed up with comments on visitors and her mother's glasses and all the while talking in her own style. Earlier, less adept authors would have inserted the phrase "he told what happened" and told it themselves.²⁰

A very useful approach to character development is suggested by David Daiches. According to him, there are two methods of revealing character. The first involves giving the physical description of a character and allowing him to reveal his personality by his actions and words and by others' reactions to him. No judgment of the character is given by the author. The second method involves giving the physical appearance, a description of habits, personality, mind, career, plus his present attitudes and nature. The character's actions and words only illustrate what has already been given. Jane Austen, says Daiches, combines these two methods by giving a fairly adequate sketch of personality and circumstances and allowing the character to be completed by how he shapes and reacts to situations. Emma in *Emma* is almost fully explained, but we learn a lot about her through her actions, conversation, and thoughts.²¹

In spite of this attention to character in recent academic

²⁰ O'Neill, p. 35.

²¹ James L. Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver, ed., *Perspectives on Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 346. Actually, however, Jane Austen uses all three of these methods not just the third, plus the method of telling absolutely nothing and allowing the character to be shown completely by conversation, actions, and other's reactions as with Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice*. Her fifth method is revealing the character through the thought processes as with Anne in *Persuasion*, as noted in Chapter 3.
criticism of Austen there has been no detailed comparison of one of
the first well developed and most popular heroines, Elizabeth Bennet
in *Pride and Prejudice*, and the later heroine, Anne Elliot of *Persua-
sion*, in order to discover if Jane Austen changed in her handling of
character.

The purpose of this thesis is to compare Elizabeth and Anne,
showing how they are similar and different in order to discover if
Austen consistently chose to portray the same types of heroines and to
see if Austen developed, regressed, or stayed the same in her tech-
niques of characterization. In the second chapter of this thesis I
will compare the characters of Elizabeth and Anne, showing the dif-
fferences and similarities between them with a suggestion as to how such
are tied to Austen's continuing system of values. In the third chapter
I will analyze the techniques of characterization Jane Austen used in
creating these heroines and how and why her techniques changed.\(^22\)

\(^{22}\)The separation of character and the techniques used to develop
color is an artificial device used here to facilitate organization and
evaluation.
Chapter 2

Pride and Prejudice has been the most widely read and enjoyed of Jane Austen's books, and some people are not aware that she wrote any other novels. Elizabeth, the main character of the novel, is the most popular heroine created by Austen. Elizabeth is one of Jane Austen's first well-developed heroines and as such illustrates the author's early attitude toward character and characterization.

Less well known than Pride and Prejudice is Austen's last published novel, Persuasion. As with all the Austen novels, so in Persuasion, the action centers around a young girl, Anne. A close analysis of the characters of Elizabeth and Anne, the former one of the first well-developed, and the latter one of the last well-developed heroines of Austen's novels, suggests what kinds of character traits Austen valued in her creations and whether her values changed during her writing career.

In this chapter I will suggest how the characters of Anne and Elizabeth are alike; how Elizabeth developed characteristics that Anne had from the start of the novel; and, finally, how they are different from each other. But first it is necessary to briefly summarize the central action of both novels so that later statements about character will have a contextual basis in plot development.

At the beginning of Pride and Prejudice, Elizabeth is a witty, well-read, but inexperienced young character. Her inexperience leads her to a prejudiced judgment of the two young men she meets at the beginning of the novel. As she begins to see these young men in their
true light, she develops understanding, tolerance, knowledge of her own weaknesses, and, most of all, experience.

Mr. Bingley, a wealthy young bachelor, moves into the neighborhood where Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and their five daughters live. He brings his two sisters, a brother-in-law, and a friend, Mr. Darcy. Mrs. Bennet, anxious to have her daughters married, is delighted and plans on Bingley for Jane. She ignores Darcy when it is decided that he is proud and haughty because he would not dance with anyone he did not know and Elizabeth overheard him rejecting the suggestion to dance with her. Because of this slight she joins in the general prejudice against him, and no matter how civil he is she attributes his actions and words to some negative purpose. In her prejudice she listens sympathetically to George Wickham's complaints about Darcy's supposed mistreatment of him. After she rejects Darcy's proposal of marriage and he writes a letter of explanation to her, her character develops and she begins to value him correctly and to acknowledge that Wickham had been presumptuous in telling such private business to a perfect stranger. Darcy's help of Lydia after her elopement with Wickham, shows his love is still active, and Elizabeth and Darcy are married.

In *Persuasion*, Anne, the heroine, in contrast to the character of Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, remains the same throughout the book. She knows her own mind and is honest about herself. She is the standard by which we judge the rest of the characters in the book. She uses good sense and is able to evaluate correctly the people she meets. She correctly evaluates Captain Wentworth in his youth and her evaluation is vindicated by his later success.

Before the action which takes place in *Persuasion*, when Anne was
nineteen years old, she broke her engagement to Frederick Wentworth because Lady Russell, her confidant, and her family thought it would be an imprudent match. At twenty-seven, when Persuasion begins, she still loves the same man but has no hope of meeting again or marrying him. The Elliot family, because of mismanagement financially, rent their house to Admiral and Mrs. Croft. It is later discovered that Wentworth, now a Captain in the navy, is Mrs. Croft's brother. The Crofts become friendly with the Musgroves, her sister's husband's family, who live in a neighboring village. They have two daughters and Captain Wentworth soon seems to be attached to Louisa. This is emotionally upsetting to Anne who is staying with her sister and is consequently in Wentworth's company often. He thinks she has lost her beauty and that he does not love her any more until the young people make a trip to Lyme. Louisa stubbornly insists on her own way, getting severely injured. Anne, unchanging throughout the book, is the only one who keeps her wits. Wentworth realizes anew her superiority and marries her.

Elizabeth, who belongs to the landed gentry, and Anne, a member of the aristocracy, have many characteristics in common. Both characters are intelligent, sensible, and quite independent. These characteristics cause them to be lonely. They are shown to honor the standards of polite society, to be good conversationalists, and to have confidence in their own worth. They are sensitive girls and capable of deep affection. Both of them are sometimes impetuous. However, while Anne is shown to be consistently perceptive, responsible, reasonable, fair-minded, and emotional throughout Persuasion, Elizabeth shows a development in these characteristics as Pride and Prejudice progresses.
Nonetheless, there are basic contrasting personality traits which remain the same for both young women. Elizabeth has wit and likes to show off while Anne is painted as humble and quiet. Anne is also considerate and kindhearted.

As characters, both Anne and Elizabeth are similar in that they are intelligent, educated young women. However, Anne was sent away to school, and Elizabeth got her education at home doing independent study under her father's guidance.

Both girls are shown able to face a crisis with common sense when all around them are in turmoil. It is Anne's sensible actions at Lyme that cause Captain Wentworth, her former fiance to notice her again. She is able to handle her nephews better than their own mother and often is asked for advice by her brother-in-law's family. When Lydia elopes, Elizabeth's common sense is needed at home to deal with her mother's neurotic collapse and the problems of running the household.

The society in which Anne and Elizabeth live demands polite actions at all times. Politeness decrees that Anne turn her attention to Miss Catarat when she would rather be talking to Captain Wentworth. Elizabeth has promised herself and her mother that she will never dance with Darcy, but he catches her unaware and she inadvertently accepts and is too polite to refuse. In this way both Elizabeth and Anne are conservative. They honor the customs of society. At the same time they are independent and liberal. Anne and Elizabeth both refuse to marry just for money or position. They both feel there must be affection between marriage partners. They refuse to be limited by social class. Elizabeth feels scorn for people such as Miss Bingley who honor social class and wealth more than personal worth. This belief is
strongly illustrated by Elizabeth's reaction when Charlotte accepts Mr. Collins. Elizabeth knows there can be no affection and is shocked that Charlotte would even think of marrying him.

Austen shows both young women to be able conversationalists. Although Darcy thinks Elizabeth plain at first, he becomes interested in her as he listens to her conversation and sees her interacting with her friends. This interest deepens while Elizabeth is at Netherfield nursing Jane. Darcy and Elizabeth often engage in verbal duels, much to Miss Bingley's distaste. James Benwick talks to Anne most of the first evening in Lyme. Through her able handling of the conversation, she helps him to forget his sorrow on losing his fiancee. Mr. Elliot also loves to talk with Anne. Thus, in their social contacts, both young women show great self-confidence.

Although a good conversationalist, Elizabeth is shown to be reserved. She tells intimate things to no one but Jane and is not completely candid even with Jane. She does not tell Jane about her changing feelings toward Darcy, so Jane is completely surprised when Elizabeth tells her she is engaged to Darcy.

Anne also is not drawn as one who expresses herself freely to others. This is partly because her family does not value her nor listen to her. She does not tell Lady Russell, her closest friend, about her feelings for Wentworth, nor does she confide her fears when everyone thinks he will marry Louisa. She tells no one of her suspicions of Mr. Elliot's sincerity.

Both characters are sensitive to the feelings of others as well as to their surroundings. Both appreciate the fine arts and have taste in dress, landscaping, and decorating. Elizabeth is able to perceive
Darcy's character in the furnishings and landscaping of Pemberly, his home. As with other girls of their social standing, both young women play the piano. Jane Austen observes that Anne plays with sensitivity and taste. Anne, more sensitive to nature than Elizabeth, loves to walk in the fall foliage and enjoys being at the seashore.

Austen shows both Anne and Elizabeth to be capable of deep affection. Elizabeth loves Jane and the Gardners and has moderate affection for the rest of her family. Anne loves her family in spite of their neglect. She loves especially her mother's friend, Lady Russell.

Both young women, as projected by Austen, do impetuous things occasionally, although Anne is more likely to do them than Elizabeth. Anne often speaks impetuously at an emotional moment. When Captain Wentworth questions her about whether she still does not like card-playing, saying that time changes people, Anne cries, "'I am not yet so much changed,'... and stopped, fearing she hardly knew what misconstruction." She is afraid to seem to be referring to the past too much. Here again we see her self-restraint. Elizabeth regrets her impetuous revelation to Darcy of Lydia's elopement.

Certain character traits that Anne shows consistently throughout Persuasion are traits that Elizabeth develops during the course of Pride and Prejudice. It is this development in character that most clearly distinguishes Elizabeth from Anne, for Anne remains the same throughout Persuasion. Anne's perceptions of character and her

---


24 Development of character could, perhaps, be seen as one of the
judgment of people have been proven by time to be true. When she is only nineteen she falls in love and becomes engaged to Captain Wentworth. Lady Russell persuades her to break the engagement because he has no concrete prospects and is too impetuous. She gives in out of respect for a mature judgment. But her own judgment of Wentworth is vindicated in the end, and she marries him. He becomes successful, his enthusiasm being channeled in the right direction. Anne is perceptive but is also cautious about making decisions regarding people. When William Elliot, Anne's cousin and the heir to the family home, begins coming to call on the Elliot family in Bath, he tries to recommend himself to them although he had ignored them before. Everyone accepts him at face value except Anne. But she is willing to wait and to allow him to reveal himself.

Elizabeth, as first delineated by Austen, is perceptive and able to judge correctly the simple characters with whom she comes in contact. Mr. Collins, the heir to the Bennet estate, sends a letter announcing his wish to visit the Bennets and to repair the disagreement that existed between his father and Mr. Bennet. She tells her father that Mr. Collins can not be a sensible man and when the reader meets him he discovers her judgment to be correct. She perceives Mr. Bingley as being easily led and very amiable. When he allows himself to be kept from Netherfield by his sisters and Mr. Darcy, the reader can see that this was a correct judgment.

However, at the beginning of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth is not techniques of characterization handled in Chapter Three. However, I have chosen to analyze this as a revelation of Austen's attitude.
able to evaluate correctly more complex characters. She completely reverses Darcy and Wickham, attributing the character traits of one to the other. This is partially due to the grudge she carried against Darcy for not dancing with her, but it is also because these two men, being complex characters, could not be easily known the first time they are met. Wickham appeared to be honest and open when in reality he was unscrupulous and sly, going so far as to try to seduce Darcy's sister to force Darcy to give him money to which he had no right. Darcy appeared to be unscrupulous, cold, and sly, but in reality he is conscientious and fair-minded, going out of his way to force Wickham to marry Lydia and to save her reputation.

Although Elizabeth first thinks of herself as a reasonable fair-minded person and trusts her own perception of others, it is not until she reads and thinks about Darcy's letter that she begins to understand how prejudiced and closed-minded she has been. She recognizes her own vanity in her ability to perceive character and is able to assess herself honestly and begin to change her opinions.

Anne is shown to accept the responsibility of belonging to a family. She is tactful in dealing with the weaknesses and hypochondria of her sister Mary. She always tries to build up Mary, guiding her to more sensible actions. Elizabeth can not be bothered with her silly sisters. Only Jane receives any attention from her, and there are times when Elizabeth facetiously ridicules Jane's over-amiableness, just as Mr. Bennet ridicules Mrs. Bennet.

As Austen has Elizabeth developed, however, she begins to feel more responsibility. After she returns from Rosings, she tries to persuade her father to keep Lydia from going to Brighton. She rightly
perceives that this trip will ruin Lydia. After her marriage she shares with Jane the responsibility of Kitty's education.

Anne's emotions are the most important source of information in *Persuasion*. The reader is shown exactly how Anne feels when Wentworth removes the child from her back. She is presented as an emotionally mature person, completely unashamed of her natural reactions to the things around her. She can talk about her emotions and face them more than any other of Jane Austen's heroines. Although she is emotional, she is able to control herself and be in company with Wentworth often without showing visibly the effects of her emotion.

Elizabeth is also painted as an emotional person, but most of her acquaintances do not realize it any more than Elizabeth herself. Almost everything she does is based on feeling, such as her ready acceptance on appearance of Mr. Wickham and her equally facile rejection of Mr. Darcy. It isn't until she reads and thinks about the truths in Mr. Darcy's letter that she begins to see the part that feelings play in her actions and words. From that time on the reader can see her coming to terms with her own emotions and being able to accept them. The most emotional scene occurs when, upon discovering Lydia's elopement, Elizabeth feels remorse for not revealing Wickham's character. It is in this scene that Elizabeth impetuously tells Darcy about the elopement.

Besides being independent in action, Austen has Anne insist on being an independent thinker. Anne reserves the right to think what she pleases about people and things. However, Elizabeth must discover the danger of thinking she is an independent thinker when in reality she is just following the crowd. Everyone hates Mr. Darcy, and so does she.
Everyone dotes on Wickham, and so does she. Anne's traits of independence go far beyond those given to Elizabeth: in her conversation with Captain Harville, Anne pleads for women to be thought of as more than elegant females kept more as pets than as human beings. She says that women suffer more than men when disappointed in love because they have nothing to do. N. Auerbach writes that Anne will probably be liberated after her marriage and go to sea with her husband, resisting being treated like a hothouse plant. 25

On the other hand, Elizabeth is made to be chauvinistic when she feels it is all right for Wickham to marry for money, but can not reconcile herself to Charlotte's marriage with Mr. Collins. As Austen develops Elizabeth, however, she shows her growing independence of thought by her refusal to be intimidated by Lady Catherine, Darcy's aunt. She has Elizabeth refuse to be bullied into saying what she does not want to say. She shows her refusing to tell Lady Catherine what her course of action would be if Darcy proposes. Also she is made to realize her mistake in condoning Wickham's intentions of marrying for money. As can be seen, by the end of Pride and Prejudice, Elizabeth has been so developed that she is much like Anne.

Certain character traits of Elizabeth do remain constant, however, and these traits show striking differences in personality development from Austen's portrayal of Anne. Elizabeth is always shown as a witty young woman who delights in laughing at the ridiculous in others as she tells Darcy at Netherfield. Elizabeth likes to show off with her wit. She challenges Darcy constantly. At a ball when she catches him

listening to her and Charlotte's and Colonel Forster's conversation, she asks him if she had not argued her case well in persuading Colonel Forster to give a ball. Anne, however, is developed by Austen as quiet and humble. She never tries to attract attention to herself. Although she is aware of her mental and spiritual superiority, she never pushes herself forward or demands her rights. Although Elizabeth, her sister, takes Mrs. Clay to Bath and treats her as a member of the family but completely ignores Anne, Anne never reproaches Mrs. Clay or is nasty to her. She recognizes that she is appreciated by people with discernment, such as Admiral and Mrs. Croft. Anne is shown to be much more kind-hearted than Elizabeth. She pays more attention to children than any other heroine of Jane Austen. As was mentioned earlier, she is the only one who is able to handle Mary's children besides their father.

Moral and spiritual values such as fair-mindedness, perception, and sensibility, values that Austen has Anne exhibit throughout *Persuasion* and that Elizabeth is made to develop during *Pride and Prejudice*, are characteristics that Jane Austen herself valued. All of her heroines exhibit many or all of these spiritual and moral qualities in varying degrees. Austen has Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility*, use good sense, consideration for others, caution and perception. Emma is shown to develop these characteristics tempered with feeling. Fanny in *Mansfield Park* has these characteristics in a more humble, shrinking-violet way than the other heroines, and yet no one is able to persuade her to do what she does not believe is right. Catherine Tilney in *Northanger Abbey* is the only Austen heroine that does not strikingly fit this description, but even she is developed by the end of the novel
into a mature young woman.

Often caricatures in Jane Austen are used to show the effects of the lack of one or more of these moral and spiritual qualities. For example, Mrs. Bennet, in *Pride and Prejudice*, lacks sense and intelligence. The fact that both Anne and Elizabeth, finally developed, are much the same in character and mostly different in personality could indicate that Austen's idea of moral and spiritual rightness had not changed by the end of her writing experience. The differences in personality can be partially attributed to the difference in age and experience of the writer when both books were written. Margaret Kennedy points out that after the move to Bath by the Austens, Jane Austen's outlook changed.

The pre-Bath letters were written by a girl with an enormous capacity for enjoying life. Her high spirits dance through every line. She can cry with joy at a sailor brother's promotion. She prefers that people should not be too agreeable, as it saves her the trouble of liking them very much in a world which is full of things to like. . . Even disagreeable things are funny. The horrid hot weather "keeps one in a continual state of inelegance."\(^{26}\)

The early Jane Austen has little mercy on tiresome people. This is reflected in Elizabeth Bennet who is witty and lively, and loves to dance. Elizabeth just barely puts up with Mr. Collins or any other tiresome person, even after her development at the end of the book.

Margaret Kennedy says, however, that the post-Bath letters show the same woman but more subdued and much more tolerant and understanding of those around her. Anne is a product of this changed viewpoint. She is considerate and forbearing to even the most silly of the people around her and never derides them even in her own thoughts much less verbally as does Elizabeth. Extracts from two letters emphasize this change in Jane Austen's outlook between 21 and 41.

1796. From Steventon. -- We had an exceedingly good ball last night. We were so terrible good as to take James in our carriage though there were three of us before; but indeed he deserves encouragement for the very great improvement which has lately taken place in his dancing. I am almost afraid to tell you how my Irish friend and I behaved. Imagine to yourself everything most profligate and shocking in the way of dancing and sitting down together. I can expose myself, however, only once more, because he leaves the country soon after next Friday, on which day we are to have a dance at Ashe after all.

1813. From Godmersham. -- We did not go to the ball. I was very glad to be spared the trouble of dressing and going, and being weary before it was half over, so my gown and my cap are still unworn. It will

---

27 Kennedy, p. 43.

28 Kennedy, p. 24.
appear at last, perhaps, that I might have done without either.29

Another reason for the difference in character portrayal is noted by A. Walton Litz, who attributed the difference in style of Pride and Prejudice and Persuasion and the personalities of Elizabeth and Anne to the changes in society between 1796 and 1816. Indeed the fact that Elizabeth must develop characteristics Anne always has can be explained by noting Litz's argument. He considers the theme of all her books to be "the perils of a free spirit in search of identity."30

Indeed England between 1795 and 1817 underwent great changes influenced by the industrial revolution, organization of labor, and the Napoleonic wars. There was a growing isolation and lack of communication between classes during this time but there was also an increasing mobility because of the wealth gained by factory owners.31 In Pride and Prejudice, Elizabeth is able to search with the support of a loving if not always understanding family, and she does it within the framework of her society. Anne, however, is almost outside society and is outside her family. "The social world of Persuasion seems cruelly unhelpful, and one must conclude that Jane Austen is expressing in the novel her alarm at contemporary changes in English manners. . . Persuasion looks forward to a society where the burdens of personality


must be borne without a compensating 'feeling of oneness and commun-
ity.'

Elizabeth is a developing person in a static society while
Anne is a static character in a changing society.

Comparison shows that in the final analysis the characters of Anne
and Elizabeth are much the same with only a few differences. The major
difference is Anne's static character and Elizabeth's developing
character. Such a difference should not be attributed to any artistic
regression on Austen's part. Presumably she could still convincingly
portray a developing character when she wrote Persuasion. Rather
this difference can be attributed to a different purpose in each novel.
This also shows the difference in the theme of the two books. In Pride
and Prejudice she is showing how a young person can develop those
characteristics that Jane Austen admired in a relatively sympathetic
environment. In Persuasion she is showing how a young person with
these ideal qualities copes with an unsympathetic world.

Litz, p. 155.

Development is not necessarily a sign of roundness in a charac-
ter. E. M. Forster says: "The test of a round character is whether it
is capable of surprising in a convincing way." Danziger, p. 198. More-
over, Wentworth in Persuasion is a developing character and changes
considerably in the novel.
Chapter 3

Jane Austen uses several different techniques to develop the characters of her heroines in her novels. The technique used depends on the personality of the heroine and on her development or lack of it. She uses dialog by the character and about the character, other characters who exhibit a trait found in the heroine but in an exaggerated form, thought processes of the heroine, and direct exposition by the author. In this chapter I will show how she uses these with Elizabeth, how she uses them with Anne, and finally show the difference in emphasis.

Dialog is the most important device used in the development of Elizabeth. Dialog is used in Elizabeth's words about herself, and to and about others, and in other characters' words in conversation with her and about her. A few examples of each will clarify Austen's emphasis on this technique as a method of characterization.

Once in a while Elizabeth will describe herself to someone else. At Netherfield, during Jane's illness she says to Mr. Darcy, "I dearly love to laugh. . . . Follies and nonsense, whims, and inconsistencies do divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can." Elizabeth inadvertently reveals her pride in making what she means to

---

34 Since action is such an all-inclusive aspect of the novels, any attempt to treat action in this chapter would be repetitive of Chapter 2.

be a witty statement about Mr. Darcy's pride. "I could easily forgive his pride if he had not mortified mine." After she has read Darcy's letter and begins changing her opinions about Darcy and Wickham, Elizabeth admits to Jane: "And yet I meant to be uncommonly clever in taking so decided a dislike to him without any reason," and a little later: "... no Jane to comfort me and say I had not been so very weak and vain and nonsensical as I knew I had." In her conversation with Charlotte about Jane's courtship with Bingley, hints are given about Elizabeth's inability to see the truth about people. Charlotte warns her that Jane might lose Bingley if Jane does not show her true feelings more openly. She refuses to accept this and thinks she is basing her claims on sense when in reality her feelings dominate in her love for Jane and her wish that things will go well. Later Mr. Darcy proves Charlotte's theory when he tells Elizabeth he advised Bingley against Jane because Darcy could not see that Jane like Bingley better than any other man.

Another example of Elizabeth's inability to see truth about others occurs in the conversation in which Charlotte presents her practical, unromantic, materialistic attitude toward marriage. She believes that the less known about the marriage partner the better because success in marriage is based on chance. Elizabeth says: "You make me laugh Charlotte; but it is not sound. You know it is not sound, and that you would never act in this way yourself." But Elizabeth does not know her friend because Charlotte acts in this way. She marries Mr. Collins

---

36 Pride and Prejudice, p. 20.  
37 Pride and Prejudice, p. 225.  
38 Pride and Prejudice, p. 226.  
39 Pride and Prejudice, p. 23.
not because she likes him but because she needs a comfortable establishment.

One of the best passages that reveals the wit and intelligence of both Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth occurs at Netherfield. This passage also shows Elizabeth's tendency for showing off. Mrs. Bennet has just been talking about one of Jane's suitors who had written poetry to her. Elizabeth was embarrassed.

"And so ended his affection," said Elizabeth impatiently. "There has been many a one, I fancy, overcome in the same way. I wonder who first discovered the efficacy of poetry in driving away love!"

"I have been used to consider poetry as the food of love," said Darcy.

"Of a fine, stout, healthy love it may. Every thing nourishes what is strong already. But if it be only a slight, thin sort of inclination, I am convinced that one good sonnet will starve it entirely away."

Darcy only smiled.40

It is especially in the dialogs between Darcy and Elizabeth that her prejudice is revealed. Because of her prejudice she misunderstands everything he says. At the party in the Lucas home, Darcy asks Elizabeth to dance, but she is still smarting from the conversation she overheard between him and Bingley at the assembly when they first met and Darcy refused to dance with her. She says, "Mr. Darcy is all

---

40 *Pride and Prejudice*, pp. 44-45.
politeness," but her manner says that Mr. Darcy has no social knowl-
edge.

At Netherfield where Elizabeth has gone to nurse Jane, Darcy shows
his true colors in conversation and action, but Elizabeth goes out of
her way to stubbornly misread his motives. For example, she catches
him looking at her. She thinks he is being nasty when he asks her to
dance to the accompaniment of Miss Bingley at the piano. Early one
evening Miss Bingley greets Elizabeth with a nasty comment about what
a great reader Elizabeth is. Later Miss Bingley begins talking about
the qualities of a truly accomplished woman. All these accomplish-
ments could be very superficial, but Mr. Darcy adds "well-read,"
which, when applied to these accomplishments, would make them genuine.
But Elizabeth refuses to accept this as a compliment to herself and
says, "I am no longer surprised at your knowing only six accomplished
women. I rather wonder now at your knowing any."\(^{41}\)

While they are dancing at Netherfield, Darcy tries to communicate
with her, but she refuses to hear what he is really saying. When, at
the end of the conversation, he warns her that it will compliment
neither of them if she decides on his character at that moment, she
tells him she may never get another chance, and he gives up telling
her that he would not like to ruin her pleasure.

When they meet again, Elizabeth in talking to Colonel Fitzwilliam
accuses Darcy of being proud and above his company. He defends himself
by saying he is really shy and is not at ease among people he does not
know, but Elizabeth will not accept this explanation. She keeps

\(^{41}\)Pride and Prejudice, p. 39.
getting more and more specific, saying that it is lack of civility and desire on his part that makes him antisocial.

In their final conversation the reader can see how much Elizabeth has changed. She is listening to his words, not to her prejudiced interpretation of them.

"What made you so shy of me, when you first called, and afterwards dined here? Why especially when you called, did you look as if you did not care about me?"

"Because you were grave and silent, and gave me no encouragement."

"But I was embarrassed."

"And so was I."

"You might have talked to me more when you came to dinner."

"A man who had felt less, might."

"How unlucky that you should have a reasonable answer to give, and that I should be so reasonable as to admit it!" 42

In Elizabeth's conversations with Jane, Elizabeth reveals her ability to show real affection, but even here she cannot resist the urge to be witty. Jane can not think anyone is purposely cruel or dishonest. They have been discussing what Wickham has told them about Darcy's supposed mistreatment of him. "And now, my dear Jane, what have you got to say in behalf of the interested people who have probably

42 *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 381.
been concerned in the business?--Do clear them too, or we shall be obliged to think ill of somebody."\(^4^3\)

However, in the conversations between Elizabeth and her father we see her development of control in the use of wit. When they receive Mr. Collins' letter, Elizabeth says: "Can he be a sensible man, sir?" Her father answers: "No, my dear; I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse. There is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter, which promises well. I am impatient to see him."\(^4^4\) After her visit to Rosings, she tries to persuade her father not to allow Lydia to go to Brighton for Lydia's salvation and to preserve the family reputation. Mr. Bennet says: "What, has she frightened away some of your lovers? Poor little Lizzy!"\(^4^5\) But Elizabeth keeps her serious attitude and does not answer facetiously. Later she has to force herself to react wittily when her father confronts her with Mr. Collins' letter about her supposed marriage to Darcy and teases her. She does not want to reveal to him her changed feelings about Darcy. Elizabeth is still capable of wit as can be seen in her conversation with Jane about her engagement, but she tempers her discussion with reason and affection.

We also gain an insight into Elizabeth's character from what others say about her. Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst agree that Elizabeth's manners are a mixture of impertinence and pride.\(^4^6\) Although we dislike these two ladies because of their pride and haughty attitude to those they think are beneath them socially, such as Mrs. Bennet, the

\(^{4^3}\)Pride and Prejudice, p. 85.  \(^{4^4}\)Pride and Prejudice, p. 64.

\(^{4^5}\)Pride and Prejudice, p. 231.  \(^{4^6}\)Pride and Prejudice, p. 35.
discriminating reader can see the truth of these statements. Elizabeth is proud of her wit, and parades it whenever she has a chance. She is often impertinent in her wit, especially with Mr. Darcy.47

Jane discovers that Bingley will not be coming back to Netherfield, and Elizabeth has decided on the strength of this and Charlotte's marriage that the world is going the way of fools. Jane says to her, "my dear Lizzy, do not give way to such feelings as these."48 Although Jane is too amiable to usually speak truth, Jane Austen uses her in this instance. Elizabeth does not realize that her thinking is based on feelings rather than sense. Miss Austen uses this technique again when she has Mrs. Bennet, who has come to Netherfield to see how Jane is, rebuke Elizabeth for talking too much. Although Mrs. Bennet is silly and never talks sense, and Elizabeth is talking so her mother can not talk and embarrass her, Miss Austen uses her in this instance to throw light on Elizabeth's tendency to show off.

Another example of this technique occurs at the Netherfield ball when Mr. Collins, Elizabeth's cousin, discovers that Mr. Darcy, his patroness' nephew is present. Mr. Collins, a silly, pompous man, is determined to speak to Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth tries to talk him out of it but he insists, saying that she can not know what is best because she lacks experience. Such a statement may not be true of her in this particular instance but it is true generally. It is lack of experience that causes her to misjudge Mr. Darcy and accept Wickham's

47This is illustrated in all the scenes while she is at Netherfield nursing Jane.

48Pride and Prejudice, p. 135.
preposterous story.

To each minor character Jane Austen gives one character trait of the main character in order to emphasize that particular trait in the main character. An example of this is Mrs. Bennet's strong unreasonable prejudice against Mr. Darcy. In this Elizabeth is exactly like her mother. Mr. Bennet, a morally slothful man, laughs at the silliness of his wife and daughters, but does not try to guide or limit them. The reader can see this trait in Elizabeth throughout most of the book, though with her growing involvement with her family this trait is minimized.49

Mary, Elizabeth's sister, is constantly studying and gathering moral maxims from her books. After the first ball at which Darcy snubs Elizabeth she says "I could easily forgive his pride if he had not mortified mine."50 Mary immediately presents her ideas, which are practically a direct quote from Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, a popular book on morality in the eighteenth century: "Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us."51 While Mary's statement is almost a quote, Elizabeth's is an application of the idea to her own situation. Austen is using Mary as a sharp contrast to show Elizabeth's intellectual ability.52

49Schorer, pp. 72-91. 50Pride and Prejudice, p. 20.
51Pride and Prejudice, p. 20.
Jane Austen rarely uses Elizabeth's thought processes as a revelation of her character until her visit to Charlotte in Hunsford.

Before this anything that could not be said publicly was said to Jane, her main confidant. While she is at Hunsford, she has no one with who to confide her most personal thoughts about Mr. Bingley and Jane, about Mr. Darcy's proposal, and about her changing attitude toward Mr. Darcy. Even after she arrives home and is able to confide in Jane, there is a reserve, and Austen must make use of Elizabeth's thought processes to inform us of the advancement of the plot. She uses the thought processes to show the emotions Elizabeth feels on discovering Darcy is responsible for Bingley's leaving Netherfield and to show her feelings upon discovering Lydia's elopement.

Although Jane Austen uses direct exposition or author comment to reveal her characters, she seldom uses this device alone to reveal the character of Elizabeth Bennet. The first author comment is found in Chapter 3, "For she had a lively, playful disposition which delighted in anything ridiculous." But this author comment is supported later by Elizabeth's own words to Mr. Darcy. "I dearly love to laugh... Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies to divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can." Elizabeth thought she had made Darcy mad by something she said while at Netherfield nursing Jane, but Austen tells us "there was a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner which made it difficult for her to affront anybody." This author comment also is later supported, but by the actions of Darcy who

---


55 *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 52.
can not forget Elizabeth.

Dialog is a less important device in revealing the character of Anne than it is in revealing Elizabeth. But it is used strikingly whenever Anne meets someone who can appreciate her quiet good taste. When the Dalrymples come to town, her father and sister court their acquaintance and approval because they have high social rank. In reality they are not superior in manners or understanding. Anne is disgusted and says to Mr. Elliot: "My idea of good company, Mr. Elliot, is the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation; that is what I call good company." She would rather be with the Crofts, whom she admires as kind-hearted, frank, intelligent people, even though they have no rank. In this same conversation she says it is her pride also that makes her dislike Sir Walter and Elizabeth's running after the Dalrymples because the Dalrymples could not care less about the Elliots. This pride is discriminating rather than pushy as was shown in Chapter 2.

The conversation between Anne and Captain Harville about whether men or women are affected more by love reveals many things about Anne, and supports others that we already know. Captain Harville is arguing from feeling, being disappointed about Benwick's engagement so soon after his fiancee's death. In this conversation Anne takes the position that women suffer more than men when disappointed in love because they do not have business to attend to nor many outside interests. She goes on to say that although she would not disparage the love of a man for his wife, women love longer when their object is gone or at least

---

56Persuasion, p. 150.
unavailable. In this conversation, although she is using her own experience, observations, and emotions, she is able to advance her argument in a logical manner. Captain Harville says:

I believe in a true analogy between our bodily frames and our mental; and that as our bodies are the strongest, so are our feelings; capable of bearing most rough usage, and riding out the heaviest weather.\(^57\)

Anne answers:

Your feelings may be the strongest, . . . but the same spirit of analogy will authorise me to assert that ours are the most tender. Man is more robust than woman, but he is not longer-lived; which exactly explains my view of the nature of their attachments. Nay it would be too hard upon you, if it were otherwise. You have difficulties, and privations, and dangers enough to struggle with.\(^58\)

Austen has Anne use such words as "justice" and "fair-minded" to show her willingness to listen and give credit to others' feelings.

To reveal Anne, Austen uses the comments of other characters as revelation of Anne. Louisa Musgrove, for example, tells Captain Wentworth that the whole family would have been happy if Charles had married Anne instead of Mary, because of Anne's sweet, friendly nature. Henrietta Musgrove tells Anne that she wishes Mary were as little

\(^57\)Persuasion, p. 233.

\(^58\)Persuasion, p. 233.
concerned about position and rank as Anne is. As can be seen from these two instances other characters are often not really talking about Anne but about some other character such as Mary. Austen uses these oblique statements to reveal Anne's character.

Mr. Elliot speaks to Anne of her taste and discrimination, her humility, and her intelligence. However, we suspect his motives because Anne suspects his motives, and even though we know he is right, we tend to accept his statements with reservations. Lady Russell tells Anne that Anne is just like her mother was. This is high praise from Lady Russell who loved Anne's mother.

Austen also uses the personality of other characters to emphasize Anne's good qualities. For example Captain Wentworth tells Louisa he likes women who are strong-minded, able to hold firmly to their convictions and Louisa is proud of her own supposed strong mind. Actually she is stubborn and willful, which causes her to insist that he catch her at the bottom of the stairs at Lyme; when he lost his hold, she fell and injured herself. In contrast Anne uses common sense and does not stick stubbornly to a course when it has been pointed out to be dangerous. She is strong-minded in that she has control of herself in a crisis as at Lyme and is able to act sensibly. Elizabeth, her sister, is also used as a contrast. She is the oldest and in charge of the house and servants. She gets all the consideration and privileges from their father. But, when she appears in Bath, Anne receives all the attention from Mr. Elliot and is privately considered to be the prettier and nicer.

Ann met Mrs. Smith, an old school fellow in Bath. The Smith's experience with Mr. Elliot is used as a contrast to Anne's experience
with Captain Wentworth. The Smiths knew Elliot when they were all young and rather heedless. They lived for enjoyment. Mr. Elliot was an intimate of the family, and Mr. Smith often helped him financially. In their heedlessness they often overspent, and when Elliot became rich, he kept encouraging the spending instead of helping them, and they were ruined. Anne met Wentworth when he was young and impetuous. He had no fortune but was confident of making one. In fact he had been successful so far in his profession, but had spent freely so had nothing but a future. Austen is showing that if Anne had not followed reason she could have ended up as did Mrs. Smith, a widow, penniless with no friends or family because Sir Walter Elliot would have disowned her for marrying Wentworth. 59

Jane Austen uses Anne's consciousness more than any other device to reveal Anne's personality and character. A lot of what we see and hear comes through Anne's consciousness. For example, Captain Wentworth tells Louisa that Anne is so altered, he would not have recognized her. But we know of it only as Louisa tells it to Anne and Anne reacts to it. Anne accidently overhears a conversation between Wentworth and Louisa which shows us through Anne, Wentworth's state of mind in relation to Anne. Austen uses this method because she has made Anne such a lonely individual. Her family ignores her except when she can do something for them to make their lives more comfortable. She is important only to Lady Russell, who was her mother's best friend. Lady Russell, however, dislikes Wentworth so Anne is completely isolated

---

from the one person to whom she is able to confide her true feelings. Therefore because Anne confides in no one, the only way the author can reveal her feelings is by revealing Anne's thought processes. She also does not confide in Lady Russell her suspicions about Mr. Elliot. Lady Russell's lack in the perception of character and her regard for rank have blinded her to the fact that everything about him is too studied and she approves of him—even suggests that Anne should marry him so that she could be Lady Elliot in Kellynch Hall.

In describing Anne's emotion Austen reveals the depth and lasting quality of Anne's love for Wentworth. When she hears that Mrs. Croft is Frederick's sister, she takes a walk in the park alone to calm herself. When she first meets Wentworth again, she is unable to recall anything that was said, so great is her emotion. Again when Captain Wentworth removes her stubborn nephew from her back, her emotion is high. She cannot even think of words to thank him.

Besides revealing her emotions, a concentration on Anne's thought processes is used to show her common sense. We learn from her thoughts that she is called on to mediate between Mary and Mary's in-laws. We learn that she tries to keep peace but at the same time tries to give Mary hints for improvement. She never argues with Mary, but we can see through her thought processes that she does not approve of many of Mary's actions.

Direct exposition by the author about the heroine is limited in Persuasion as in Pride and Prejudice. However, Austen does give some direct exposition on Anne, especially in introducing her to the reader. She uses this technique to tell us the story of Anne's engagement to Captain Wentworth when she was only nineteen. Austen also tells us of
the way her family ignores her and how Lady Russell values her above her two sisters.

The techniques discussed in the preceding paragraphs are used by Austen somewhat differently in *Pride and Prejudice* than in *Persuasion*. Author comment is used extensively in both books for other characters besides the heroines. It is not used often to reveal Elizabeth, somewhat more often for Anne. Although both books are third person omniscient Austen avoids using an extensive author exposition with her heroines, depending more on dialog, other characters, and the thought-processes of the heroine. This is, perhaps, one reason she has been more admired in the twentieth century than any other nineteenth century author because of her willingness to let the action, dialog, and thoughts of her main characters speak for themselves. The use of other characters to reveal the main character is used in both books with success. In *Pride and Prejudice* these characters are almost—if not quite—caricatures tending to emphasize the undesirable traits in the heroine. In *Persuasion* this type of character is more like a real person and reveals Anne's worth by comparison rather than by exaggeration of a character trait.

In *Pride and Prejudice* more than in *Persuasion* Jane Austen uses dialog to reveal the character of her heroine. The characterization of Elizabeth in the entire first half of the book is done mostly by dialog. As was shown in the evaluation of dialog in *Pride and Prejudice* Austen was able to construct the dialog so that a single question and answer seems often to reveal more about those two people than a paragraph of author exposition. In *Persuasion* dialog is more scattered and has some importance, but it seems less of a dominating artistic force than in
Pride and Prejudice.

The thought processes of Elizabeth are shown a little in the first part of Pride and Prejudice, but it is not until she visits Charlotte in Hunsford that Austen uses her thought processes extensively to show her development. It is at this time that Elizabeth has no one in whom she can confide so there is no way that Austen can show the intimate things that cannot be said in mixed company except through Elizabeth's thought processes. In Persuasion, however, Anne's thought processes are the most important source of information about Anne, partly because no one is completely in Anne's confidence, not even her best friend Lady Russell. The use of thought processes as character revelation in Pride and Prejudice could be dependent on the development of character traits Jane Austen trusts and values. When Elizabeth begins to develop what Anne has all through Persuasion, the author uses the same character-revelation technique she uses consistently with Anne. She seemingly trusts heroines who have the characteristics of perception, fairness, sense, and sensitivity, and so feels safe in using their thought processes—how they see and feel about the things around them—as a method of showing the progression of plot.60

The main difference then between these two characters still is their personality or the manner which Austen has them react to the people and world around them.

---

60 This is illustrated also by Elinor in Sense and Sensibility and by Emma.
Chapter 4

As was shown in Chapter 1, Jane Austen has been recognized as a master at creating real characters, characters that talk and act like real people, from the time her books were published. Even into the twentieth century her skill with character portrayal has been admired, and twentieth century critics have written scholarly, evaluative criticism as well as praise.

Jane Austen uses several different techniques to reveal her characters. Some of these techniques are dialog, action, other characters who exhibit a trait of the heroine in an exaggerated form, thought processes, and direct author comment. She uses different combinations of these techniques for different characters. For example, with Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice* she relies most heavily on dialog and action and during the last half of the book adds thought processes. With Anne Elliot in *Persuasion* she relies mostly upon Anne's thought processes with some use of dialog and author comment.

Some of the reasons for these differences are: the different purposes of the books, the differences in the heroine, the change in Jane Austen's society, and the change in Jane Austen herself.

As was shown in Chapter 2, society was fairly static at the time *Pride and Prejudice* was written, and people moved up and down society's ladder in an established way. Manners and personal worth were valued by members of all classes in members of all classes. Therefore, Elizabeth is able to find worthwhile relationships within her society. When Austen wrote *Persuasion* her society was changing. Affected by the
Napoleonic wars and the industrial revolution, the relationships between the classes were changing. Therefore we have a heroine in *Persuasion* who values personal worth wherever she finds it, while being ignored by her family intent on bettering their position in their aristocratic circle.

This change in society has a bearing on the different purposes of the books. *Pride and Prejudice* shows the growth to maturity of a young woman in a static society. *Persuasion* shows how a mature young woman copes with a changing society.

Also in Chapter 2 it was shown that Jane Austen changed from a rather critical, fun-loving young woman to a more quiet, understanding woman. Anne and Elizabeth reflect this change. Elizabeth is critical, lively, and a show-off; Anne is quiet, humble, and understanding.

As was shown in Chapter 3, the methods used to reveal the two young women are dependent upon their growth or lack of growth in the books and on their character. For example, Elizabeth, as Austen shows her development in characteristics Anne has consistently, begins to be portrayed as Anne is, by thought processes. The method used is also dependent on the social situation in which the author places the heroine. Anne has no one to confide in, so the author uses her thought processes to let us know what she is thinking. When Elizabeth goes to Hunsford and has no one to confide in the author uses her thought processes to show her development.

Because of the different purposes of the two books, it cannot be said that the lack of development in Anne's character is a regression in style on Austen's part. It takes a great deal of skill to present a static character in a convincing manner and keep the interest of the
reader. This is what Austen has done with Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*.
Bibliography

Auerbach, N. "O Brave New World: Evolution and Revolution in Persua-
sion." *Journal of English Literary History*, 39 (March 1972),
112-28.

Austen, Jane. *The Novels of Jane Austen*, in 5 Vols., based on early
Press, 1933.

Babb, Howard S. *Jane Austen's Novels: The Fabric of Dialogue*. Ohio:

Calderwood, James L., and Harold E. Toliver, eds. *Perspectives on

Craik, W. W. *Jane Austen: The Six Novels*. New York: Barnes and Noble,


Danziger, Marlies, and W. Stacy Johnson. *An Introduction to Literary

Dorley, D. J. "Pride, Prejudice, and Vanity in Elizabeth Bennet."

*Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 20 (1965), 185-188.

Duffy, Joseph M. "Structure and Idea in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*."

*Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 8 (1953), 272-289.

Gomme, Andor. "On Not Being Persuaded." *Essays In Criticism*, 16
(1966), 170-84.

Gornall, J. F. G. "Marriage, Property, and Penance in Jane Austen's


A COMPARISON OF JANE AUSTEN'S EARLY
AND LATE CHARACTERIZATION

by

Janet R. Moore

An Abstract of a Thesis in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts
in the Field of English

August 1973
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to compare an early well-developed heroine, Elizabeth Bennet in Pride and Prejudice, with a late well-developed heroine, Anne Elliot in Persuasion, in Jane Austen's novels to see if there are any changes in characterization and techniques of characterization and to evaluate these techniques.

In Chapter One I have shown that throughout the nineteenth century from the time of publication, critics commented on Jane Austen's ability to create realistic characters. Not until the twentieth century, however, was Jane Austen's work evaluated critically. Twentieth century critics agree that she was a master at character portrayal.

In Chapter Two I have shown how Anne and Elizabeth are the same, how Elizabeth develops characteristics that Jane Austen gives Anne throughout Persuasion, and how the two heroines are shown to be different. The differences between Anne and Elizabeth are mainly differences in personality rather than differences in values or mental ability.

In Chapter Three I have shown that Jane Austen uses dialog, action, other characters, author exposition, and thought processes to reveal her characters. My comparison of an early well-developed heroine, Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice, with a later well-developed heroine, Anne in Persuasion, shows that Austen uses these same methods with both heroines but with different emphasis for each. For example, Austen reveals Elizabeth mostly through dialog in the first half of Pride and Prejudice and with thought processes and some dialog in the last half. Anne, however, is revealed almost entirely by thought processes with
some reliance on dialog and author exposition. One reason for this change to the use of thought processes is that Austen has Elizabeth, who is a dynamic character, begin to develop in the last part of *Pride and Prejudice* the characteristics that Austen shows Anne to have throughout *Persuasion* and that Austen values. When the thought processes are used, the heroines have no one in whom they can confide their thoughts so the only way the author can show the progress of the plot is through the thought processes.

In Chapter Four I have summarized Chapters One, Two, and Three.