RICE UNIVERSITY

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF JANE FAIRFAX:
A STUDY OF THE SHADOW NOVEL
IN JANE AUSTEN'S EMMA

by

SISTER JOAN MARKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

Robert L. Patten, Professor
Director

Susan Gillman, Assistant Professor

Janis P. Stout, Lecturer

Houston, Texas
May, 1984

3 1272 00289 0083
ABSTRACT

Jane Austen incorporates a novel within a novel in *Emma*. Jane Fairfax's romance shadows the main story. The two texts provide a double perspective, allowing Austen to include in her rational, socially sanctioned love story, a method of self-conscious comment. The double narrative shows the interplay in both texts between consciousness and convention. Austen uses the conventional romance form but presents the romance unconventionally. Jane Fairfax, the heroine of her own shadow novel, personifies the tension between the novel's "light" and "dark" landscapes. The solution of the shadow novel's mystery frees the characters from double-dealing and delusion, and effects the reconciliation, leading to the appropriate, happy ending.
Jane Austen posed the characters in her novels as precisely as any painter, collecting her people carefully, getting them exactly into such a framework as delighted her: "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village."¹ She is justly celebrated for the finely detailed prose with which she describes the interaction of these characters. Her "light, and bright, and sparkling"² wit shines even more effectively when viewed against a somewhat darker background, the "solicitues, alarms and vexations" with which she shades her pictures.³ Austen shaped her novels much like the prose romances with which she was familiar, but she revised and developed its traditional plots by incorporating her own special, realistic touches. She depicts her characters engaged in the serious business of working out the complex adjustments of human relationships. Thus, while we recognize in Austen's stories the familiar patterns of the love and marriage story, we note that they are complicated by moral and social concerns which transcend the expected wish-fulfillment of the conventional plot. The endings of Austen's novels conform to romance's expectations: the right men marry the right women. However, the main theme of each work is the tension between the marriages and their inherent unlikelihood.⁴ Sobering difficulties exist in tension with the romance ideal of the
marriage itself, and comment upon it.

Within the love story of Emma Woodhouse, Austen has given us a second love story, which is not simply a touch of shade, but a shadow novel complete in itself, recognized by the shadow it casts on Emma's story and by the perturbation it creates in Emma's world. The unfocused presence of Jane Fairfax's romance gives Austen the opportunity to comment ironically upon Emma's love story. The two texts provide a double perspective which allows Austen to embody in the story of Emma Woodhouse her own particular vision of a realistic love story. Austen thus incorporates within her rational, socially sanctioned love story of Emma and Mr. Knightley, a method for subverting that story, an opportunity for self-comment, self-reflection, self-consciousness. She uses the strategy of mystification both to conceal and to reveal the stories to us, employing a technique of doubling to encompass both the activities of the rational world, and the quirks of chance.

Thus, two novels coexist within the framework of the one novel, Emma. The first, the larger novel which takes our immediate attention, regards marriage as a connection sanctioned first by society, then realized in the emotional response of the lovers. The second begins with an emotional commitment made in secret. The action of the romance, Jane Fairfax's story, then acts itself out in the shadows of the larger novel, as the lovers trust to time and luck to provide them with an opportunity for society to certify their attachment. On this romance landscape, improbability rules;
chance and circumstance will determine the happiness or unhappiness of this story's outcome. At first reading, the shadow novel appears conspicuous by its absence, its duplicity and question marks. Only when a critical impasse has been reached, and unhappiness threatens all the lovers, does the tension created by the romance erupt into the main world. By a stroke of luck, the crisis brings good fortune, by freeing all the lovers from their masquerades and illusions, and clearing the way for the happy ending. The shadow novel has as its text Frank Churchill's confessional letter to Mrs. Weston, which explains much of the mystery surrounding the romance figures. This text enables us to reconstruct the progress of Jane's and Frank's romance. We first read the shadow novel in Emma to solve the mystery of Jane and Frank's concealed relationship. Subsequent readings of Emma allow us to read with Austen's own double narrative and ironic perspective, appreciating the irony in Emma Woodhouse's character as well as the irony in Jane Fairfax's situation.

The presence of the shadow novel enables Austen to use the expectations aroused by the conventional romance form, and to surprise us by the unconventional method she uses to present the marvelous story of Jane Fairfax. Within the shadow novel Jane Austen makes place for the operation of inequality, inconsistency, and incongruity, for the operation of chance and circumstance and their direction of the human fate. The larger novel examines the interaction between consciousness and convention, between an individual's private life and passions
and society's pressures and demands. Jane Fairfax, the shadow novel's heroine, personifies this tension, for she is set apart by her consciousness from the conventional romantic heroine. The shadow novel's pattern is one of concealment and revelation, requiring us to read for what is implied as well as for what is revealed. Austen expects us to read with a double perspective as we follow the stories of Jane Fairfax and Emma Woodhouse.

In Emma, Jane Austen has rung some interesting changes on the heroine's familiar story by interweaving the twin themes of romance. She employs what Northrop Frye calls the contrapuntal themes of romance, the complementary creative moods expressed by Milton's poems, L'Allegro and Il Penseroso. L'Allegro, episodic and realistic, operates on the horizontal plane. Il Penseroso, involving mystery and discovery, takes place on the vertical plane where there is a sense of timelessness and dream.

First, Austen sets up a contrast in her heroines. One has our full attention; one remains a mystery. The more prominent is Emma Woodhouse. The basic movement of her story is horizontal, from subjective illusion to the correct vision of the reality surrounding her. In one sense Emma is a realistic heroine who sets up for "understanding" her world. In another sense she is a true romanticist, an "imaginist" (335) as she calls herself, because her fancies lead her to create what she perceives, situations which are at variance with reality. The contrasting heroine is Jane Fairfax, the heroine of the romance novel which Jane Austen does not choose to develop fully. Her story is also a process of discovery; the movement in Jane's world, however,
is vertical, down into the dream world of suffering and up into
the world of wish fulfillment. She discovers her proper role in
a society which comes to appreciate her true worth.

Jane Fairfax has received little critical attention because
she is a heroine no one knows very well. While acknowledging
Jane Fairfax's important place in the novel, those who write
about her find, with Alstair Duckworth, that even after several
readings of the novel, Jane's character remains impenetrable.
Wayne Booth states that Jane Austen cannot let us know Jane
Fairfax, for this knowledge would endanger our sympathy for
Emma. Susan Morgan says that Jane's reticence arouses our
double curiosity. First, we would like to know her secret,
which we learn on the first reading. Secondly, and more
importantly, we would like to know her real thoughts, her
interpretation of events. This second curiosity remains
unsatisfied.\(^7\) The mystery of Jane Fairfax is just that touch
of "shade" which Jane Austen thought was needed to give *Pride
and Prejudice* more substance, and which gives this novel such
rich texture. Jane Fairfax stands in the novel as a
counterpoint to Emma. More in touch with the realities beneath
experience, Jane is the dark heroine who lives out a romance
which Emma only fancies.\(^8\) The two heroines, although they
never become close friends, have a dynamic and contrapuntal
relationship noticeable only when one looks closely at the
"wonderful story of Jane Fairfax" (408) as it relates to and is
independent of Emma's story.

Jane Austen gives us the first clue to understanding the
role of Jane Fairfax when she calls her a "fair heroine" (220). Jane is indeed the heroine of her own story, the romance that shadows the main plot. Jane's story corresponds to the archetypal romance plot that shadows the realistic, representational plot of Emma's novel. Northrop Frye's theory of the romance provides an appropriate outline for understanding the structure of the shadow novel and an appreciation of Jane Fairfax's character. The romance cycle describes the rising and falling movement of Jane Fairfax's fortunes, and the relationship of this story to the larger novel. Jane Fairfax's character is delineated by the double romance technique of concealment and revelation; she is concealed from us by her absences, silences, and blanks, and revealed to us by her reactions and her artistic expressions as well as by narrative exposition.

Frye's schema of the romance cycle provides a good outline of the shadow novel. The cycle describes a descent into a dark world of imprisonment, a rescue or release, and an ascent, a return to freedom, to the upper, light world. The action begins with a break in consciousness, a crisis that brings a great change to the heroine. The marriage of Miss Campbell precipitates such a change for Jane, who "sinks" (167) from her comfortable home with the Campbells back into the poverty of Mrs. Bates's household. Jane feels threatened by the spectre of going out as governess, a situation she regards as slavery. As a romance heroine, Jane has much to endure; at the core of her suffering is a confusion of identity. Jane moves through
Highbury with a double identity. On the surface she is the orphan Miss Fairfax; in secret she is Frank Churchill's fiancée. Her love for Frank works like an enchantment, making concealment a necessary tactic, and constraining her to be "suspiciously reserved" (169). In order to conceal the secret, Jane withdraws into her self, descending to a dark world of increasing tension. Frank contributes much to Jane's distress and emotional imprisonment by his gifts and letters and flirtations with both Jane and Emma. At the lowest stage of her romance cycle, Jane is imprisoned by her emotions. She is increasingly lonely and alienated. She is trapped in an emotional labyrinth from which she cannot rescue herself. Her freedom to act is limited by her circumstances; but she is, nevertheless, able to keep her secret; she does not betray "the least thing in the world" (346). At this stage of the cycle, life becomes so intolerable that Jane can hardly endure; her only escape seems to be the governess position at Mrs. Smallridge's.

Happily, the romance cycle has a comic movement; at the crucial moment, there is a sudden upward surge of good fortune. Mrs. Churchill, the blocking figure, dies, and Frank is freed to break through the labyrinth and rescue Jane from the "enchantment." Jane can now assume her true identity. The romance cycle's final movement is the recognition of that identity, which heralds the happy ending, Jane's restoration to health, prosperity, and happiness. In this phase, the action returns to the story's beginning to reinterpret events more accurately than previous accounts have done. The explanation
accomplished, Jane can assume her new identity as Frank Churchill's fiancée. Comedy and romance converge here. The celebration of the heroine's marriage to the hero certifies their unique love story and is part of the restoration of order to society, an order celebrated in Emma by the marriages with which the novel ends.¹⁰

One of the most notable features of the romance genre is the contrast established between "light" and "dark." In romance, there is a marked contrast between two worlds. The upper or light world is the place of ordinary experiences, the world associated with happiness, peace, and security. The action moves horizontally, that is, with a sense of logical continuity, from one expected place to the next. In the dark or lower world, the emphasis is on the "sensational" or adventurous. Separation, loneliness, humiliation, pain, and even death threaten the heroine. The movement is vertical, or more properly, cyclic. The action moves from episode to episode in a way that contrasts with the more logical progress of the action on the horizontal plane. The action in romance begins with a plunge downward and ends with a bounce upward. Because of the powerful polarizing movement between these two worlds, the story's action carries us from one level, one landscape, to the other.¹¹

Applying these general characteristics of romance to this novel, we can describe Emma and Jane as the light and dark heroines of the novel. Emma's story takes place in the upper world of Highbury which is, for her, a type of the idyllic world.¹² Secure in her place as "first in consequence" (7) in
Highbury, Emma lets her fancy work busily on the stuff of her world, creating what she wants to see, imagining heroes and villains, manipulating and changing the world she thinks she has at her command. Emma is certainly the heroine of the horizontal novel, which is told, for the most part, from her centered consciousness. Jane is the contrasting, the dark heroine. The movement of her story is vertical, descending from the apparently placid world Emma envisions into a world of suffering and loneliness. Jane's story is presented in discontinuous episodes which we, with Emma, must fit together in order to solve the "riddle" (285) of Jane's caution, her reserve. Both women share the heroine's quest to be recognized as unique and important; both are determined to find a proper place in society. Emma's progress is internal. She is "an imagist" (355) who must train that "very dear part of (herself), her fancy" (214). Emma learns to adjust her vision and correct her imaginative tendencies. She has some helpers: she can depend on Mr. Knightley as well as her own innate good sense, which only needs some salutary discipline. Jane's progress is external, for she is dependent on "time, chance, circumstance, slow effects, sudden bursts, perseverance and weariness, health and sickness" (437). Jane is much like the conventional heroine of romance who finds little help even from those who love her, and whose happiness is, to a great extent, at the mercy of chance.

Wayne Booth has observed that perhaps Jane Fairfax should be the acknowledged heroine of the novel because she is the one who fits the pattern of the true heroine. She is, like the
heroines of sentimental fiction, sensitive, withdrawn, and able
to prove the quality of her being by the depths of her response
to life. The structures of sentimental romance were designed to
test and illuminate the heroine's capacity to suffer. Suffering
itself was a mark of the quality of being. Jane Fairfax is in
many ways this typical heroine. She has lost both parents. She
is effectively "locked up" by her lack of fortune, by her sex,
by her class, and even by virtue of her talent which makes
restrictive circumstances so much harder for her to bear than
they are for her aunt. She is graceful, attractive, trained to
move in the best social circles. She is also a floater, a single
person looking for a place worthy of her talents and culture.
Moreover, she is in love with a man who is not permitted to
address her openly. Jane Austen presents this conventional
romance story in an unconventional way. She does not show us the
courtship game of Frank and Jane at Weymouth, where, presumably,
they were evenly matched. She gives us a much more interesting
scenario: a pair of handsome, clever lovers who have passed
beyond the scheming stage and have dared to hazard all by a
secret engagement, and thus are truly dependent on "time,
chance, weariness, health and sickness" (437). The tension
indicated in these terms is an accurate description of one of
the dramatic tensions in this novel, the play between
consciousness and convention.

Jane Fairfax's behavior is described not only by the word
"elegance," but also by "consciousness." While she "had always a
part to act" (459), the "blush of consciousness" is a "blush of
guilt" (220), because Jane is always aware of her wrong doing in agreeing to the secret engagement. But "consciousness" for Jane also indicates her finely developed sense of the fitness of things, her own "sense of right" (419). By consenting to the secret engagement, she has flaunted the convention, the standard of behavior established by society. The term "convention" can indicate a repressive stricture. For Austen's society, the term has also a positive meaning, that of a boundary which, like a charmed circle, is a barrier beyond which it is dangerous to go, but within which one is free to operate, to choose and reject, to do good or to do evil. In Jane's case, the secret engagement works as the mystery which surrounds the heroine. In order to keep the secret, Jane must live a double life. Jane Fairfax differs from the conventional romance heroine by being acutely conscious of her wrong. Brought up to have a perfectly developed sense of right, she has, nevertheless, let her "affections overpower her judgment" (419), and by consenting to the secret engagement and private correspondence, she has defied convention. Knowing that she has committed a serious deviation from the right, she is a woman with a secret which must be kept at all costs. The necessity for concealment forces her to lead a double life, and keeps her locked up in the prison of her own distressed conscience.

Conduct is, as F.C. Pinion says, one of the themes of Emma. Therefore, the maintenance of the correct social forms is an absolute necessity. The novel overtly espouses the values of restraint, reasonableness, neighborly duty. Mr. Knightley,
the arbiter of values, believes that a young woman "should adapt herself rationally to all the varieties of her situation in life" (39). Dramatic tensions are created as the characters manipulate the forms and manoeuvre to find "space" for themselves in society. We understand then why Jane, whom all consider the exemplar of elegance, that proper expression of the social graces, is so painfully conscious of the great discrepancy between what she seems and what she is. Emma is blissfully, and sometimes obtusely, unconscious of the discrepancy between what she imagines and the reality underlying appearances; Jane is fully conscious of "having done amiss" (288). In this formal society, proper conduct indicates moral virtue. A character's social behavior is for Austen the external manifestation of her internal moral and psychological condition. Conscious of her misconduct, Jane considers any successful upturn in her fortunes as undeserved rewards for her erroneous behavior. This consciousness makes it imperative that Jane ask forgiveness from Mrs. Weston and from Emma. Jane Austen is totally sympathetic toward Jane Fairfax. She does not let the rigid standards of Mr. Knightley and society judge Jane. Although the secret engagement has violated a significant social convention, Emma speaks for us all when she absolves Jane Fairfax. "If a woman can ever be excused for thinking only of herself, it is in a situation like Jane Fairfax's. Of such, one may almost say, that the world is not theirs, nor the world's law" (400).

Jane Austen makes Jane Fairfax's novel a shadow of the
larger novel that is uniquely Emma's. Austen wants us to judge Emma for her faults but also to forgive her, for Emma is basically good. At the same time, the omniscient narrator and the ironies that the plot unfolds reveal Emma's shortcomings, so that we are able to see her from a double perspective: an inside view of Emma's worth and an objective view of her serious faults.19 By choosing to reveal Emma in this way, Austen opts to conceal Jane, to keep her resolutely at a distance. Austen does not allow us to see into Jane's mind or even see her too much in company, as though she would be a distraction from Emma.

However, Jane is a distraction, a real rival. She has our attention and sympathy because she is so attractive, and seems so perfectly delineated to be a heroine. We approve of Emma's desire to "scheme" for her (168) in order to include her in the society of Highbury. The irony of Jane's situation is that while everyone admires her as a girl of steady character and good judgment (400), she knows she is a hypocrite. Jane has a painfully clear view of herself. It is her situation that is ironic, not her character.

Jane Austen uses a technique of "suggestive reticence" in her treatment of Jane Fairfax.20 Whereas the narrator carefully provides both explicit and implicit directions for our evaluations of Emma, because there is no irony in Jane's character, the narrator gives us information in less direct ways to help us solve her riddle. Austen uses a variety of viewpoints and a shifting narrative perspective21 to keep Jane a mystery. As narrator, Austen suggests answers and conceals facts,
providing information in bits and pieces, telling Jane's story in episodes which we must then connect. Austen uses an objective narrative to recount Jane's early life and her years with the Campbells. She employs the dramatic mode to present Jane in social situations. Moreover, Austen does not use extended conversation or interior disclosures for Jane as she does so effectively for Emma. Jane's character is hidden in shadows, and is revealed to Emma and us only by a careful observation of Jane's actions and reactions, and her manner of self expression. In addition, we must depend on other characters' reactions to and evaluation of Jane's actions.

Austen uses a narrative method that is flexible and indirect, providing a double perspective from which to view Jane's story in its episodic progress. This shifting perspective gives us a double view from which to decide our reader response not only to Jane and Emma but also to all the other characters in the novel. Thus we can follow the romance of Jane Fairfax as it proceeds in light and shadow along the landscape of Emma's idyllic Highbury, examining each scene for what is concealed and what is revealed about Jane Fairfax.

II.

At the beginning of Volume II, Jane returns from Weymouth to Highbury. At this point the narrator recounts the progress of Jane's first "double life," as the Campbell's other, dear daughter. This narrative section serves not only as background but also as perspective on Jane that is not filtered through Emma's consciousness. Jane is presented as perfect heroine
material. She is an orphan and poor, fated to be limited to Highbury society where her place will be among the "less worthy females" (214), Miss Bates and Harriet Smith. Fate has been kind, however. Jane has fallen into the good hands of Colonel Campbell, whose generosity has provided the education by which her heart and understanding have been correctly formed, making her a paragon. The narrator underlines Jane's qualities of goodness, amiability, and right mindedness. Perhaps the surest gauge of her graciousness is the narrator's recounting that "the affection of the entire Campbell family for Jane, and the warm friendship of Miss Campbell in particular, was the more honourable to each party from the circumstances of Jane's decided superiority both in beauty and acquirements" (164). For Jane has been living a double life all the time she has been with the Campbells, who rescued her from her first crisis, the threat of being limited to Highbury society. With the Campbells Jane enjoyed the pleasures of society as an equal. Hereafter she will know society as a subordinate, a hireling.

However, the attention of such a loving second family, not the usual lot of conventional heroines, has been a mixed blessing. Jane has been given an education that has elevated her above her station. Colonel Campbell has done her a dubious favor by providing this excellent education. It is true that "by giving her an education he hoped to be supplying the means of respectable subsistence hereafter" (164). However, Colonel Campbell has made Jane a victim of an economic system that says a talented young woman lacking a fortune can hardly be expected
to find a husband. What has happened is that Jane is caught between the ranks. By natural talent and education, Jane is on Emma's level, a sharer in all the rational pleasures of an elegant society (164). Yet, because of her deplorable lack of fortune, Jane's social situation is as precarious as that of Harriet Smith. As Emma tried to elevate Harriet above her station, nearly ruining her prospects with Robert Martin, so Colonel Campbell, in his well-meaning way, has nearly ruined Jane, for the only prospect open to her is the selling of herself into slavery as a governess. Therefore, Jane, like a poor relative, is acutely conscious of living a double life, knowing that she will not live happily ever after as the Campbells' other daughter. Miss Campbell's marriage "orphans" Jane again, and precipitates another descent in Jane's fortunes.

In addition, Jane has fallen in love with Frank Churchill, and agreed to a secret engagement and a clandestine correspondence. When Jane reenters Highbury after a two years' absence, she is burdened by two crises, one economic, one emotional. The emotional crisis forces her to act a part, and it is this role, this second double life, that is the plot of the shadow novel.

Through direct comment, the narrator notes that Jane's account to her aunt of her life with the Campbells "contained nothing but truth, though there might be some truths not told" (166). This hint at secrecy alerts us to read each scene with attention to what is implied as well as to what is revealed. In her first visit with Jane, Emma is impressed with Jane's elegance, a trait most important to Emma, who sees it as the
mark of a cultured person, one whose polished manner handles the minor rules of propriety with style. Emma admires Jane's elegance, but questions Jane's coldness and reserve, an attitude Emma considers anything but elegant. Emma is alert enough to recognize signs of self-consciousness, and imaginative enough to think it has something to do with a secret love affair. Emma's instincts are correct, but her conclusions are not. The crisis for Jane is much more than one of duty or even love, for, with patience and time, each of these threatening situations could be brought to a happy conclusion. Jane's distress of soul, her consciousness, comes from her clear insight that, while the engagement might end in marriage and she would be "saved," the end of the affair could be "fatal," and she could be consigned to the limbo of governess. "With the fortitude of a devoted noviciate, she had resolved at one and twenty to complete the sacrifice, and retire from all the pleasures of life, of rational intercourse, equal society, peace and hope, to penance and mortification for ever" (165). The narrator uses language with strong religious overtones to describe Jane's effacing herself, burying herself alive as a governess, condemning herself to live a solitary life of one caught between the ranks, shut out from the warm circle of society in which she has a place in a family and friends of her own.

This image of sacrifice and separation helps us to appreciate the ironic situation into which Austen immediately places Jane Fairfax. During her first visit with Jane, Emma looks at Jane with "twofold complacency; the sense of pleasure
and the sense of rendering justice" (167). It is a great
pleasure for Emma to consider Jane's distinction and merit, and
to view her elegance and beauty. However, part of Emma's
"pleasure" consists in imagining that Jane has "seduced" Mr.
Dixon's affections from his wife, and is, by her return to
Highbury, "dividing" herself from him and his connections from
the "purest of motives." Emma's "justice" consists in
"acquitting" Jane of her "seduction" and conferring on her
Emma's "compassion and respect" (168). The irony of the
situation is that Jane has indeed made an "attachment" and is
not at all "dividing herself effectually" from the person and
his connections by her return to Highbury. The love Jane has
committed herself to is not one sided and hopeless of success.
Frank returns her affection with great fervor. The dilemma for
Jane is complex, for in the society of Highbury, she must work
to keep hidden her ties with Frank, and work out her problems
within her own divided heart.

The world which Jane leaves is the world of Wevmouth and
London and Bath. In this larger society, Jane has been part of
a greater social picture. This world comprises more space than
Highbury, and also holds more adventure. The world to which she
comes is Emma's idyllic world, the Highbury society over which
Emma presides literally and imaginatively, into which she
absorbs people. Emma's world is a constricted one in which
no "sensational" things happen. In Jane's world there are
sensational things: a rescue from drowning, illicit flirtations,
secret engagements. Jane's world has more "dangerous pleasures"
than Emma's world, but because this world lies outside the limits of Emma's consciousness and experience, Austen has chosen to suppress an exploration of it.

Jane's return to Highbury from this other world is a descent into a dark world where she will be in quest of her identity. Such a quest is one of the important features of the romance. In Austen's context, identity means having a place in the society, being socially and economically secure. Jane has concluded one of her double lives, that pleasant one as the Campbells' other daughter. She must now seek a place as Miss Fairfax of Highbury, who has yet her bread to earn. The spectre of the governesship threatens Jane with a fall into limbo. In Austen's society, the governess was, by definition, a creature without a social position and without a future. She was "taboo" to a gentleman because she was not his social equal. But as a "lady" she neither wished to nor could fraternize with the male members of the servant class. Faced with such a prospect, Jane understandably chooses to gamble on the hope that, by accepting Frank's proposal, she has another option open to her, a place in society prepared for her, if time proves her a child of good fortune.

Their deception involves Jane and Frank in a lively concealment game both in private (his many visits to the Bateses' and his secret correspondence) and in public (in the social functions which are so important a source of entertainment and revelation in this novel). Both the lovers are playing for time, but playing within the greater scheme of
Because she is a "less worthy female" (214) and a real suffering heroine, Jane is caught up by the author in the whirl of the imaginists' schemes. Frank lets Emma's fancy elaborate a romance with Mr. Dixon. Mrs. Weston and the Coles would make a match between Jane and George Knightley. But the best game that Frank and Jane play is the one at the expense of everyone else in the novel. For this deception they will be severely judged by Mr. Knightley and Emma. Frank will receive the most severe censure because he uses the game to abuse other persons' sensibilities, especially Jane's delicate feelings. His flirtation becomes a persecution for Jane, a real wrong according to the novel's values, which require that a well-mannered person respect the feelings of others, especially the powerless. Mr. Knightley will remind Emma of this at Box Hill, when he tells her that Miss Bates's precarious position should secure Emma's "compassion" rather than her ridicule (375). Frank's repeated indiscretions show him as a self-serving person, careless of others, and therefore a threat to the healthy balance of the community.  

In three important scenes in the second volume, Jane is presented to particular advantage in social scenes. In the world of romance, social acts are of ritual importance. The outward form of the ritual describes the structure of the society; a character's participation in the ritual reveals a good deal of what goes on in his or her mind. In these dramatic scenes, we learn Jane Fairfax's sentiments and feelings from the clues she gives us as well as from the estimates of others present at
the social gatherings.

The first scene is the dinner party at the Coles'. Reading the scene for the first time, we are conscious of Frank's great attention to Emma and his lengthy conversation with her. Reading the scene attentive to the game of concealment Jane and Frank are playing, we are aware of their preoccupation with each other. The mysterious gift of the pianoforte is the main topic of conversation for the entire dinner party, as Jane is the subject of Frank's and Emma's conversation. Frank does speak to Jane, but we do not hear their conversation, nor do we see Jane, for Frank is effectively hiding her from Emma and from us. They do communicate, however, through Jane's special talent, music. The two sing "as it appeared they had sung together once or twice at Weymouth" (227). The "sweet sounds of the united voices" give a hint that the recital has its own double function: not only does it entertain the assembly, but also the duet provides an opportunity for Jane to receive Frank's attentions publicly, to use her music to "encourage" Frank.29

Jane is the object of much attention at this social event, but it takes contrasting forms. Mrs. Weston and Mr. Knightley are all consideration and respect, whereas Frank and Emma, in their private conversation, are careless of Jane's feelings. Mr. Knightley speaks well of Jane, appreciates her feelings, and admires her appearance and public performance. Mrs. Weston even makes a nice "scheme" for a suitor, imagining a match between Jane and Mr. Knightley, to Emma's great horror. Emma's attitude contrasts sharply with the solicitude of Mr. Knightley. Emma
does not consider it imprudent or unjust to consider an illicit liaison between Jane and Mr. Dixon, yet her "every feeling revolts" (225) at the imprudence of a match between Mr. Knightley and Jane. Emma even takes the occasion to make spiteful remarks about Jane, calling a possible connection with Mr. Knightley "shameful and degrading" to him, and to mock Miss Bates. Frank is the one who should be the most careful of Jane, and yet he is the one most careless of her feelings. His gift of the pianoforte has made her the object of much unwelcome speculation and conversation. At the dinner party, he makes her sing overlong, and, apparently, for his advantage. Although we are not allowed to know what Jane is thinking, we are aware of her "blush of consciousness," "blush of guilt" at the mention of the pianoforte. However much she may be uncomfortable in her conscience, she is still able to "look and move superior" (219) through this gathering, able to maintain her balance, not yet overwhelmed by the "dangerous pleasure" (219) of her game with Frank.

In the second social scene where Jane figures prominently, Frank has managed to have a few minutes alone with Jane when Miss Bates leaves to invite Emma and Mrs. Weston to "run across" (236) for a short visit. It is a credit to the way the lovers are playing the concealment game that they are able to carry off this scene in Mrs. Bates's parlor. The "tranquillity" of the sitting-room when Miss Bates and her visitors enter conceals the true state of Jane's and Frank's feelings. Jane is "intent on her pianoforte." Frank is "deedily occupied" about her
grandmother's spectacles (240). Jane's conscious reaction and smiles betray her confusion and suffering, as well as her evident pleasure in Frank's attention. Frank delights in the danger and doubleness of both situation and conversation. He enjoys the Weymouth songs and references and watches to see how his gift is appreciated. He even speaks plainly to Jane of the affection that prompted the gift of the pianoforte. For her part, Jane uses music, her special gift, to encourage Frank's attentions and to respond to them in a way which reveal both her delight in the remembrances of Weymouth and her scruples at the dangers of the present situation. Frank's actions place a real constraint on Jane. She cannot carry on a conversation with Emma; Frank effectively stands between them. For Jane, the pianoforte must be at once a joy and a pain, a gift of love and a constant reminder of her duplicity. The gift and Frank's words work like charms on Jane, "bewitching" her (419) and entrapping her in the web of Frank's game. 30 Once again Jane is caught by the conventions. Frank can manifest his affection by his attention and his gifts to Jane; he can even speak openly in front of the company to assure us that "true affection only could have prompted" the gift given "so thoroughly from the heart" (242). She cannot speak of her affection for Frank because of the presence of the others. However, as at the Coles', she can speak to his heart by means of her music. There is a definite sexual significance to Jane's artistry. She is not playing for Emma's approbation or to show her accomplishments, but to maintain her ties with Frank. Jane's secret smile reveals
her very deep feelings which, as Emma rightly assesses, are welcome but reprehensible.

The social event that concludes Volume II is the Hartfield dinner party. Frank's absence allows Jane to be more open and comparatively eloquent. In her exchanges with Mr. John Knightley and Mrs. Elton, Jane reveals much about her crisis of love and duty. Before dinner, Mr. John Knightley sets about the business of being agreeable by engaging Jane in conversation. They carry on a conversation about the value of friendship and letters. On one level the conversation conceals the recent letter she has had from Frank, a letter which has given her a particularly pleasing "glow both of complexion and spirits" (298), Emma notices. Jane's conversation reveals her diminishing hope that the secret engagement will have a happy ending. Jane replies to John Knightley's comments on friendship, "I am sure (you) understand the value of friendship as well as any body. I can easily believe letters are very little to you, ... the difference, ... is not age but situation. You have everybody dearest to you at hand, I probably never shall again; ..." (294). With businessman John Knightley, Jane uses business terms: value, reward, money, business and situation—to tell that she values letters because they are one of the rewards of friendship and proofs of affection. In this context, how ironic Mr. John Knightley's remark sounds to Jane. "Business, you know, may bring money, but friendship hardly ever does" (293). Having engaged her valuable self in a gamble for affection and security, one of the very things Jane does hope for is that her
"friendship" with Frank will reward her not only with affection but also with a stable situation. The secret correspondence is a second tie with Frank, a current of affection passing between them, but also a dangerous activity, for it puts Jane in an even more precarious position, since a private correspondence is an indication of an engagement and a serious breach of the conventions. Jane's words and actions indicate that the pressures of time and concealment are working a hardship on her good spirits and health. Her feelings are mixed. To John Knightley's gracious hope that she will have as many "concentrated objects" (294) of affection as he has, Jane responds with "a pleasant 'thank you' (which) seemed meant to laugh it off, but a blush, a quivering lip, a tear in the eye, shewed that it was felt beyond a laugh" (294). Jane experiences a sadness deep enough for tears, yet she shows "an air of greater happiness than usual—a glow both of complexion and spirits" (298) that Emma had not observed on previous occasions. Frank's absence seems to make Emma more sympathetic toward Jane. Emma extends to Jane the courtesies of silence and restraint, suppressing a remark about Ireland that would wound Jane's feelings. On a note of delicate courtesy, the two heroines enter the dining room "with an appearance of good-will highly becoming to the beauty and grace of each" (298).

Jane's after-dinner dialogue with Mrs. Elton is not quite so pleasant. Emma wonders how Jane can stand to be patronized by this vulgar, insensitive woman who has espoused Jane's cause. But Mrs. Elton, for all her officiousness, realizes her
obligation toward Jane, who is agonizingly dependent upon a woman of independent means to help her out of her difficulties. Pressed by her benefactress, who wishes to know if she has secured or searched for a position, Jane replies once again in money and trade images. Jane speaks of "Offices for the sale—not quite of human flesh—but of human intellect" (300). The brokenness of the lines of Jane's speech indicates her anguish of spirit. She employs much the same sacrificial imagery and the same tone of deserved suffering as that used the first time the narrator introduced Jane's crisis of duty. However, this time the terms are used by Jane herself rather than by the narrator, making Jane's anguish more poignant. "I did not mean, I was not thinking of the slave trade," Jane replies to Mrs. Elton. "Governess trade, I assure you, was all that I had in view; widely different certainly as to the guilt of those who carry it on; but as to the greater misery of the victims, I do not know where it lies" (300). Jane uses the terms "guilt," "misery," "victims," and "dispose of myself" to describe her situation on the horizontal level—the public social life of Highbury, and on the vertical level—the private world where she suffers the constraints of her double, secret life. The tone of her conversation and the images she uses reveal her dilemma. Jane is conscious of a great discrepancy between the good education which has given her a sense of her worth, and the situation of governess into which she must soon sell herself. On the horizontal level, Emma and the others understand Jane to refer to her crisis of duty. On the vertical level, Jane refers
to the moral censure to which she is subjecting herself, the
guilt which causes her to consider "disposing" of herself in the
"governess-trade," a fitting "mortification" for her guilt. Mrs.
Elton's very officiousness and insistence on helping Jane to
this most unwelcome state of penitence elicits Jane's pointed,
firm declaration that she will not be conquered in her
determination to delay the sacrifice as long as possible. "I am
obliged to anybody who feels for me at this moment, but I am
quite serious in wishing nothing to be done till the summer.
For two or three months longer I shall remain where I am, and as
I am" (301).

A great deal of information about the second plot is
conveyed at this dinner party. Because Frank is not there to
hold her attention, Emma can fix it on Jane and her
conversations with Mr. John Knightley and Mrs. Elton. Because
Miss Bates is not present, Mr. Weston can assume "the right of
principal talker" (303) and supply background information on the
Churchills which will be of interest to us as we watch the
progress of Frank's and Jane's romance. Mr. Weston shares with
Mrs. Elton his interpretation of Mrs. Churchill, the blocking
figure who stands as a threat to Jane and Frank, as she had been
a threat to Mr. Weston and Frank's mother. From Mr. Weston we
learn of Mrs. Churchill's unpretentious background, her
difficult character, her poor health in which Mr. Weston has so
little confidence, but upon which a happy resolution depends.
The conversation serves not only as a source of information, but
also as a means of bringing Frank back to the attention of all
the members of the party. We know Emma's spirits are agitated at the thought of Frank's return; from Jane's agitated manner, we surmise that she is thinking of the same thing, though in different terms.

The precarious balance of Volume II gives way to the agitation of the third volume, in which all the characters experience the crisis of romance. We have seen the gradually increasing distress of Jane. Frank himself returns to Randalls in great agitation of spirits (316, 317). There is indeed an anticipation of "something decisive" about to happen. Emma "felt as if the spring would not pass without bringing a crisis, an event, something to alter her present composed and tranquil state" (315). The placid world of Highbury in the winter and early spring gives place to the heated world of summer. The pressures of emotion and passion place unbearable burdens on hearts charged with great affection that cannot be acknowledged publicly (Frank's and Jane's), or recognized privately (Emma's feelings for Mr. Knightley, and his for her). The rising and falling prospects Emma considers for Harriet and for Jane well describe the progress of the relationships in Volume III.

The first part of the volume presents three social events which dramatize the increasing tension among the characters. The first of these social events is the ball at the Crown. Frank and Jane are not prominent at this event, although Frank is noticeable for paying Jane small courtesies. He fetches her and Miss Bates in the carriage; he escorts her into the room. However, we do notice that Austen carefully directs our
attention by including in the limpid confusion of Miss Bates's talk the information that Frank Churchill is often the subject of conversation in the Bates household.\textsuperscript{32} This is the social event at which the main love match takes center stage and our attention focuses on the social emergence of George Knightley. We do not know if Jane and Frank enjoyed the ball, or even if they danced together, for our usual observers are otherwise occupied. Mrs. Elton is receiving as though she had no doubts that the Westons "are giving this ball chiefly to do me honour" (324). Emma must submit to stand second to Mrs. Elton, though she had always considered the ball as particularly for her (325). Miss Bates is gone some of the time, and Mrs. Weston is busy overseeing the ball, so we are free to imagine what we will about Jane and Frank on this occasion.

The agitation, schemes, and connivances engaged in by Frank, Jane, and Emma have led them to a curious state of blindness (348) as Mr. Knightley notes. Emma is as caught up in the labyrinth of duplicity and double dealing as are Frank and Jane; therefore, since Emma cannot "see" and evaluate, however incorrectly, Jane Austen makes Mr. Knightley the guide of our observations and judgments for a short time. He can, the narrator remarks, "escape any of Emma's errors of imagination" (343). Mr. Knightley observes Jane trying valiantly to "defeat Mrs. Elton's activity" and "save herself" from Mrs. Elton's version of "a delightful situation" (343). Mr. Knightley observes Frank flirting with both Jane and Emma, who is, at the same time, engrossed in another "imaginist" fancy concerning
Harriet and Frank. As Mr. Knightley suspects Frank of "double dealing" in his pursuit of Emma, he begins to observe Frank's behavior closely. From the interaction between Frank and Jane at the Eltons' dinner party, Mr. Knightley suspects some kind of private understanding between Jane and Frank. Frank's unguarded looks at Jane during the Eltons' dinner party, his carelessness in letting slip information about Mr. Perry which he gained from Jane's letters, and his stinging letter game at Hartfield where he aligns Emma and himself against Jane: these three events lead Mr. Knightley to the correct conclusion that Frank is involved in "disingenousness and double dealing." Frank's actions are "but the vehicle for gallantry and trick, . . . chosen to conceal a deeper game" (348). Mr. Knightley realizes his growing dislike for Frank Churchill, and his blooming love for Emma. He tries to stop her from interfering with Jane and Frank as later he will upbraid her for her treatment of Jane's aunt, that insult which is Emma's own great deviation from the strict rule of right.

In the world of romance, the heroine is often described as trapped in a labyrinth. This is an accurate image to describe Jane's situation at the large outdoor parties, first at Donwell and especially at Box Hill where Jane's private labyrinth is figured in the actual mazes where "amorous couples could easily lose and divert themselves unseen."\(^{33}\) The freedom to move in a more congenial space is illusory. Frank encounters Jane, not in the safety of a large party where they might speak openly and he might again ask pardon for his tactless, careless actions, but
alone on the road, where her refusal to speak with him, her insistence that propriety not be offended, angers him into further offenses. Jane is at the lowest point of the romance cycle at the Donwell strawberry party. Her evident distress is but part of the dis-ease of the entire group. Mrs. Elton presses Jane for a commitment to a governess post. Emma wonders how Jane can bear it all, and indeed, Jane no longer can. She "escapes" from Donwell, after what we learn is a quarrel with Frank, returned unexpectedly to Highbury. He wished to walk with her even at the risk of exposing them to discovery and censure. Jane comes near to "exploding," "bursting." The "fatigue" of the deception is too much. Her words burst "from an overcharged heart," distressed by the continual endurance she must practice, "even toward some of those who love her best." She who feared solitude now seeks it. Frank and Jane's quarrel effectively separates them. When Emma chides him for being self-indulgent, he replies, "I am thwarted in everything material. I do not consider myself at all a fortunate person" (365). Frank does seem distressed and "crossed," but Emma does not sympathize with Frank's romantic ill humor. She realizes that she does not really care for him. Emma thus is free to confront her feelings for Mr. Knightley, as Jane is about to confront Frank and reveal for his ears alone, the jeopardy in which his anger and hurt feelings have put their relationship.

Nature provides "a very fine day for Box Hill, and all the other outward circumstances of arrangement, accommodation, and punctuality, were in favor of a pleasant party" (367). However,
the spirits of the participants are not attuned to the weather; "... in the general amount of the day there was deficiency" (367). The narrative comment alerts us to the discrepancy between the outward social forms observed by the party and the variety of bad feelings underlying the forms.35 "There was a langour, a want of spirits, a want of union that could not be got over" (367). Emma is flirtatious; Frank is gallant; Jane is constrained. The tone of the outing emphasizes the separation of individuals forced to be one great party. On such a day one cannot resist leveling insults. The agitation and crossness of the party comes to a head in two unpleasant incidents which follow close on one another. Emma is insolent to Miss Bates, mocking her in front of the entire group. Directly afterwards, Frank uses the occasion to confront Jane, although he seems to be addressing Emma. He comments on the bad luck of a man who commits himself on a short acquaintance, and rues it the rest of his life. Jane rises to her own defense. At this point in her romance, Jane, the heroine, has a vision of liberation. Those around her seem to be enveloped in a gigantic, blinding darkness.36 Jane speaks to Frank as one who shows her courage and her determination not to be a "weak, irresolute character who will suffer an unfortunate acquaintance to be an inconvenience, an oppression forever" (373). Her happiness may be at the mercy of chance, but she will not sacrifice herself to "penance and mortification forever" without some fight. Frank rejects Jane's indirect request for reconciliation. A poor listener to words, and no listener at all to silences,37 Frank
turns to Emma and asks her to fashion him a wife. In so doing, he really makes Jane "nothing." She retreats into deeper silence, a critical state of alienation and loneliness. She loses herself behind Miss Bates and Mrs. Elton so that she is only glimpsed for the rest of the day. Here there is such confusion between games and life that the operative system of "secrecy and concealment" (398) shows that a necessary and desirable contract between plain clear language and properly functioning society has been broken. Frank's insult to Jane and Emma's insult to Miss Bates have effectively upset the fragile social balance.

Jane's hidden life is about to destroy the life she lives in society. She has effectively broken the engagement to Frank, and, since he has not initiated a reconciliation, she accepts the post of governess. But luck is with her; Mrs. Churchill dies suddenly. Frank is free. However, Austen makes her fair heroine suffer much longer than necessary. There is a ten day delay between the death of Mrs. Churchill, which heralds Frank's freedom, and his return to Highbury to claim Jane. She suffers more than ever in this delay. Her health is "deranged," her appetite gone, her spirits irritated, her powers unequal to the task of maintaining her balance. Jane's illness provides Emma the opportunity to refine her feelings towards Jane, but Emma's gestures of friendship are rebuffed. The anguish of waiting nearly destroys Jane. Fortunately, she manages to hold out until, in the nick of time, she is rescued by Frank. At last, the lovers can unmask. Faithful to her technique of keeping
these lovers' happy encounters in the shadows, Austen does not allow us to witness their reconciliation. But the lovers' days of insignificance and evil are over. Their story will play itself out on a stage other than Highbury's.

Jane's perilous journey through the romance cycle is almost concluded; her story is drawing to a happy conclusion. The lovers are freed by the demise of Mrs. Churchill, which might seem like a coincidence, a contrivance. However, it is nothing new "for anything to be unequal, inconsistent, incongruous -- or for chance and circumstance (as second causes) to direct the human fate" (413). Coincidence is a favorite and useful convention of romance; it functions as a design element in comedy, where it is important that all the parts fit together, that the life described makes sense. Austen has prepared us for Mrs. Churchill's death by making her illnesses the first concern of those interested in her. Mr. Weston has formed our imaginative picture of Mrs. Churchill; we fancy her to be a woman with a "very extraordinary constitution" who pretends to be a "delicate lady" to assert control over those around her (306). With Mr. Weston we have judged her illnesses to be "imaginary," products of her "fancifulness." Her death has acquitted Mrs. Churchill "of all the fancifulness, and all the selfishness of imaginary complaints" (387). This event is another opportunity for us to learn, as Emma must, to curb our own imaginative fancies. The death of Mrs. Churchill is the coincidence needed to precipitate the novel's concluding action, the unmasking of the romance couple, and the ensuing revelations
which will bring happiness to all the right people.

The shadow novel operates in a romantic convention. Therefore, the happy ending is not dishonest; it is the ending that fits. Of course, it is fortunate that Jane's mental and physical health have survived long enough to allow her to complete the romance cycle. Jane can now emerge from the dark world of deception; she can unify her life. She can assume her identity. By virtue of being Mrs. Frank Churchill, she will be certified as the perfect, amiable Jane who has proved her worth by her suffering. She who is herself Frank's "reward" (426), will be rewarded with a place worthy of her. She will be well, happy, and prosperous.

III.

One of the final movements of the romance cycle is the recognition phase, in which the action returns to the beginning of the story and reinterprets it more truly than the previous account has done. Jane Austen devotes the last part of Volume III to a re-evaluation of the romance plot, to an explanation of the mystery surrounding Jane and Frank. The major text of the shadow novel is Frank Churchill's letter to Mrs. Weston, giving details of the secret romance, and enabling us to reinterpret and reevaluate events more accurately than we have thus far. In this section, Emma frees herself from her second and third great illusions, her fancies that Frank Churchill loves her, and that George Knightley loves Harriet Smith. The solution of the Frank and Jane riddle leads to Emma's enlightenment on other points, an illumination that fits her for her society, and leads to her
happy ending. The pattern of this last section is one of revelation, explanation, evaluation/judgment and forgiveness/reconciliation. As the romance plot has aroused our sympathy for Jane, so the unmasking and revelation allows us, with Emma, to understand Jane's reserve and to form judgments on Frank's and Jane's behavior.

In keeping with the technique of self effacement which she has used in plotting the shadow novel, Jane Austen makes Jane Fairfax dependent on others to speak for her, and to clarify and evaluate her position. The intermediary between the young lovers and Emma is Mrs. Weston, who as mother-in-law elect, receives the confidences of Jane as well as Frank's confession/letter, and informs Emma of the contents of each. The person who shapes the final judgments of both Frank and Jane is George Knightley, who, once he is assured of Emma's hand and heart, can prove a true friend and a largely impartial judge. After these revelations, the stage is set for the final encounter between Jane and Emma.

The Westons serve here as parental figures for both young people. In addition, Mrs. Weston functions as the enlightener, the one who reveals the secrets. Her first task is to share with Emma the news Frank has brought of his engagement to Jane Fairfax, to evaluate the situation and to reconcile Emma, Mr. Weston, and herself to it. The chief function of the scene is to enlighten Emma that, in an ironic way, her suspicions have proved true; Jane Fairfax was experiencing reprehensible feelings, but for Frank Churchill. Emma is indignant at this
serious breach of propriety because she thinks the chief "mischief" Frank was doing was causing herself to be in love with him, and this she finds "very wrong indeed." She is embarrassed by the revelation and quite conscious of the improper way she responded to the situation. Yet, having fallen "out of love" with Frank some time ago, she can say very rightly that Frank has shown very bad manners. "What right had he to come among us with affection and faith engaged, and with manners so very disengaged?" (396) Emma also condemns Jane for exhibiting "a degree of placidity, which I can neither comprehend or respect" (397). Emma condemns the two for being hypocrites and deceivers. She reveals how conscious she is of the very improper way she had spoken of Jane's fancied affair with Mr. Dixon. Mrs. Weston confirms the good opinion in which everyone insists that Jane be held. She admits that Jane has made a great deviation from the "strict rule of right," but works to reconcile both Emma and Mr. Weston to the engagement.

In spite of the good opinion in which she declares she holds Jane, Mrs. Weston expresses a negative criticism about her. We are not conscious that she has ever thought less of Jane because of her social position. Yet here she begs Emma to help her and Mr. Weston "make the best of it" since "it is not a connexion to gratify" (400). In the conventional idea of romance, the condition of a suitable match is equality of fortune. Mrs. Weston thought Jane a good enough match for George Knightley: "excepting inequality of fortune and perhaps a little disparity of age," she could see "nothing unsuitable"
However, she does not think Jane a good enough catch for Frank. This is an interesting judgment from a former governess fortunate in having married a man so congenial and attentive, a man who loved her enough to marry a woman even so portionless as she (16). Mr. Weston chose Miss Taylor for her qualities of heart and head, the very reasons for which Frank has fallen in love with Jane. But Mrs. Weston has reconciled herself to the match, for if disparity of fortune is not felt by Mr. Churchill, then it will not be felt by the Westons (400). Both Mrs. Weston and Emma speak eloquently enough to make Mr. Weston "perfectly reconciled" (401) to Frank's good fortune. We detect only the slightest hint that the two women are delighted for Jane, who has done the very best thing a romance heroine could do, disposing well of herself in marriage.

In keeping with her double perspective in dealing with the novel, Jane Austen presents the text of the shadow romance in two parts, an explanation from each of the romance figures. Jane's explanation prepares us for the full revelation which comes in Frank's letter. Both interpretations come filtered through another medium, Jane's confession recounted to Emma and us by Mrs. Weston, and Frank's explanation presented by letter. The indirect method keeps us at a remove from the romance figures, and leaves some intriguing shadows, some mysteries, even as the process of revelation unfolds. While the initial act of revelation came with Frank's acknowledgement of the engagement, the first long explanation comes from Jane Fairfax, in her conversation with Mrs. Weston, who becomes the romance
heroin's confidante. Jane unburdens her guilty conscience and stifled feelings in this scene. She reveals herself as one "bewitched" by Frank's charm and gaiety and playful spirits, his gallant deportment which enchanted Emma quite as much as Jane, and which led Jane to the secret engagement and to the correspondence. Jane does not blame anyone but herself; she says that she has been "acting contrary to all my sense of right; and the fortunate turn that everything has taken and the kindness I am now receiving, is what my conscience tells me ought not to be" (419). Emma and Mrs. Weston realize that Jane is "extremely attached" to Frank, so much so that "her affection . . . overpowered her judgment" (419). Sure now of Frank's love and the happy outcome of her story, marked as a child of good fortune, Jane is purged of her feelings of jealousy and resentment against Emma. In thanking Emma through Mrs. Weston, Jane asks Emma's forgiveness for her deception and her lack of good manners towards Emma. Truly, Jane's prospects are now opening, her good fortune is rising, while Emma's prospects seem to be closing.

It is significant that Jane's sincere revelation comes at the point in Emma's own novel when she is most sensible of the error of her own ways. Jane, as everyone in the novel, is there to reveal something to or about Emma. Jane is the one who aggressively pursued love; Emma had to wait for it to surprise her. Jane had to face the bleak prospect of a future exiled from rational society, a solitude where there was no one to care for her. She dared to risk all in one great gamble for love, and won
the gamble. Emma realizes that her imagination has overpowered her judgment. She has sinned by being unladylike. She must, therefore, suffer a period of contrition. Part of her penance is facing "the prospect before her now... threatened to a degree that could not be entirely dispelled—that might not be even partially brightened" (422). Emma's melancholy fancy visualizes a "Hartfield comparatively deserted" (422). She imagines the attentions she has come to value being taken away from her. Mrs. Weston will have her child; Jane and Frank will cease to belong to Highbury; Mr. Knightley will be lost to her; she will be left alone "to cheer her father with the spirits only of ruined happiness" (422). After the meeting with Mrs. Weston, Emma is, like Jane, quite conscious that the wretchedness that she experiences is the result of her own work. During an evening and morning of interior and exterior storm, Emma resolves to better her conduct so that in the future, she will have less to regret than at present. However, after the storm comes the afternoon's walk in the shrubbery with Mr. Knightley. Both Emma and Mr. Knightley begin the promenade woefully ignorant of the state of the other's heart. But the right words are said, and these lovers find that, like Frank and Jane, a half hour gives to each the same precious certainty of being beloved, clears from each the same degree of ignorance, jealousy, or distrust (432). Like Frank and Jane, they know the delight of letting eagerness conquer judgment. Emma's prospects, like Jane's, are definitely opening.

The revelation phase of the romance cycle gives us an
opportunity to see Frank Churchill clearly, and the unmasking reveals him as a man worse than we expected. In the romance cycle of Jane's story, he is expected to be the hero, if the story were following conventional lines. He has, however, a plum role; he is both hero and villain. "Villain" is perhaps too strong a word; however, in contrast with Mr. Knightley, Frank can only be seen as a flawed hero. He elicits our sympathy to some extent, for he has been, like Jane, dependent on the kindness of someone other than his parents for his education and the development of his social graces. However, Frank does not seem to be described by the word "gentleman" so much as the word "gallant." He is "a very good looking young man" whose "height, air, address, all were unexceptionable" (190). Emma is impressed, at their first meeting, with his lively spirits, his "quick and sensible" look (190). His playful disposition suits him to a fashionable society where he indulges in tricks and flirtations which will, in Highbury, turn into more sinister games of disingenuousness and double-dealing (348). Emma notes that Frank's gallantry stands in sharp contrast to Mr. Knightley, who is such a "humane man" he will do anything "good natured, useful, considerate, or benevolent" (223) to respect the good feelings of anyone in this novel. Frank gives his playful spirits full rein, even if the actions that follow violate the standards of good manners. Frank is not the conventional seducer—heroes cannot be seducers—but he leads both Emma and Jane a merry dance. He is quite thoughtless. Mr. Woodhouse judges him more truly than he realizes when he
remarks "That young man is not quite the thing. He causes drafts" (249). Whether causing drafts or arousing false expectations, Frank is indeed careless of the proper sense of action he should take to others in the society. At his best, Frank is a young man of unexceptionable height, air and address; he effuses lively spirits. At his worst, Frank is a trickster, a gallant, one who pressures Jane into a secret engagement by threats of madness, then delights in playing games with her feelings.

The letter Frank writes is his open confession to the world. It balances the confession Jane has made to Mrs. Weston, and provides more information to enable us to solve the riddle of the secret life of Jane and Frank. The style is just what we would imagine from Frank: effusive, flowery, full of romantic hyperbole and showy expressions. In asking for Mrs. Weston's pardon, he assumes he has already received it, since he has been "forgiven by one who had still more to resent. My courage rises while I write. It is very difficult for the prosperous to be humble" (437). He does not excuse himself, as Jane did not, but there is a notable difference in tone between Frank's letter and that of Jane's conversation with Mrs. Weston. Frank writes with Byronic enthusiasm of his experience of love; he uses imagery that reflects the cycles of moods, swings from the heights of love to the depths of despair, from happiness to madness. 42 He declares that he has the greatest respect for Jane's "consistent degree of discretion," but immediately forgives himself for not being able to "subdue my spirits to the level of what she deemed
proper" (440). The phrase strikes a note of discord between Jane and Frank that will worry anyone who listens to it; Frank's high spirits have been a real irritant to Jane's sense of propriety; will the discord resolve itself as their life progresses? The statement that rankles is his acknowledgement of the way he wanted to make Jane suffer because she had injured him by her "coldness." Throughout the letter, the focus is on Frank and his feelings. It is as though, in calling her an angel, Frank has relieved himself of the duty of respecting Jane as a sensitive person. It appears he will regard her only as someone who will make him look better. Mr. Knightley's hope that, in time, Jane's influence will give Frank's character some "steadiness and delicacy of principle," indicates that Frank may be on probation. He needs someone to correct his faults and support his endeavors, someone like Jane who really loves him, and whose society will do him good.

After the revelations and the explanations, how is Frank judged? The women in the novel judge him with both embarrassment and affection. Emma's hurt feelings elicit from her a harsh judgment of Frank's conduct. He had flattered her vanity and she had accepted his attentions; now she realizes how foolish she appeared to Frank and to Jane, to Mr. Knightly, and worst of all, to herself. Her first angry reaction is to say that she is glad to have "escaped" being bewitched by Frank's charms. Mrs. Weston censures Frank, but in the same breath is only too ready to forgive. Frank's enchantment of Jane has made her, for the second time in the novel, "unreasonable"; she takes all the
blame for the sufferings her irritation of spirits caused him! She says to Mrs. Weston, "I did not make the allowances which I ought to have done, for his temper and spirits, his delightful spirits, and that gaiety, that playfulness of disposition, which, under any other circumstances, would, I am sure, have been as constantly bewitching to me, as they were at first" (419). Frank's "charm" had subverted Jane's elegance with artificiality. His gallantry had undermined her internal tranquility and unbalanced her social poise. As her circumstances change for the better, Jane is freed from false constraints. She forgives Frank his improper conduct because she is mistress of her own elegant self, and mistress of Frank's heart as well.

The true evaluation of Frank's character comes from the real arbiter of values in the novel, George Knightley. Although no one in this novel is perfect, Mr. Knightley comes close. He is, to use one of Jane Austen's new-minted phrases, "à-la-mortel, finely chequered," subject to prejudices and moods as anyone else. He judges Frank more correctly than anyone else, not without rancor at first, for he also has been embarrassed and prejudiced by his young rival's attentions to Emma. Even the perfect, amiable, upright Mr. Knightley has been "bewitched," deceived by Frank's manners. Mr. Knightley's evaluation of the situation divides into two parts. His first discussion of the engagement occurs before he realizes that Emma does not love Frank. Thinking that Emma's heart is bruised, if not broken by Frank's choice of Jane over her, Mr. Knightley
gives an ironic summary of the romance cycle from the point of view of the "fortunate" Frank Churchill. Since Mr. Knightley thinks Frank has all the luck—the affection of the woman he loves—and that he, George Knightley, might not, it is interesting to read the envious description Mr. Knightley gives of the way Frank has been most eager to do everyone ill, and how everyone is most delighted to forgive him all the suffering and embarrassment he has caused. Before he realizes that Emma is in love with him, Mr. Knightley declares that Jane, that "sweet young woman" who "deserves a better fate" than Frank Churchill, "will be a miserable creature" (426). Once Mr. Knightley knows Emma belongs to him heart and hand, his good humor is restored; Frank is not such a desperate character after all, and perhaps, given Jane's good influence, Frank might have a chance to be a very good sort of fellow after all (433).

In his editorial comments on Frank's letter, Mr. Knightley judges Frank's actions "very bad though it might have been worse.—Playing a very dangerous game" (445). Mr. Knightley correctly declares Frank's actions to be "very bad" when he induced Jane to "place herself, for (Frank's) sake in a situation of extreme difficulty and uneasiness." We are ready to forgive Jane, as Mr. Knightley does, for her "one fault, . . . the wrong thing she had done in consenting to the engagement" (446). Like him, we admire Jane for her strong sensibilities, her excellent temper, and her disinterested love of Frank. We are a little less eager to forgive Frank, for we feel he should have suffered more for exercising his "playful spirits."
However, the key word is "reconciliation" (447), the theme central to this part of the novel. The sense of prosperity, abundance, overflowing love leads us, with George Knightley and Emma, to be generous in absolving Frank. Mr. Knightley declares, "I am very ready to believe his character will improve, and acquire from her's the steadiness and delicacy of principle that it wants" (448). In the whirl of her overwhelming happiness, Emma has already forgiven Frank. "Though it was impossible not to feel that he had been wrong, yet he had been less wrong than (Emma) had supposed—and he had suffered, and was very sorry—and he was so grateful to Mrs. Weston and so much in love with Miss Fairfax, and (Emma) was so happy herself that there was no being severe" (444). The society fragmented at Box Hill is now reintegrated because each single person has found a partner who provides a "space" where the rational and playful balance. We are ready to celebrate the marriages which certify the happiness of all the right people, together at last.

Before considering the final reconciliation of Jane and Emma, it would be well to study the basic contrast between the two heroines. Although it seemed "everyone" wanted them to be friends, Jane and Emma have never been comfortable with one another. Their friendship, which "everyone" thought would be a natural attraction, would have to be based on complementarity, not antipathy. Likeness in age and accomplishments and manners did not make them companions. Emma and Jane have not spent a great deal of time together, since Jane has lived for a long
time with the Campbells, in another world than that of Highbury. They do not have a great deal of social life in common, and the surface realities of their lives hide personal mysteries. Emma realizes, too late, how her envious feelings have stood between herself and a friendship with Jane. Jane, for her part, is invariably reticent, and puts Emma at a disadvantage. Emma's harsh judgment of Jane for her reserve, her coldness, her caution, reveals Emma's own complacency arising from her secure social and economic position in Highbury society. This complacency breeds a snobbishness in Emma. For all her imaginist activity, she cannot imagine—and Jane is careful to conceal—details of Jane's life outside the limits Emma herself imposes. For all the progress she has made in learning, Emma must become fully acquainted with her own heart. She cannot therefore be privy to the true feelings of Jane Fairfax, who has let her heart rule her head. Jane is Emma's superior in head and heart because she has moved intellectually and emotionally beyond the bounds of Highbury and its limitations, which Emma has set for herself. Jane has learned what it means to be swept away by her emotions. The experience makes Jane undergo a radical change in her point of view, and inspires her to risk all for love. This is a confrontation, a gamble, a challenge Emma is never forced to take and an experience Jane is not disposed to share with her. Jane's initial reserve with Emma on her return to Highbury indicates this lack of trust. It irritates and then alienates Emma, who does not know how to deal with such "suspicious reserve," such determined silence (169).
Not until late in the novel does Emma realize the extent of her own evils of interference. Humbled by the knowledge, Emma no longer condescends to Jane and makes sincere gestures of friendship. But by this time, Jane cannot cope with one she regards as a rival, not a friend. The missed opportunity for friendship is a mutual loss.

At no time in the novel have the two heroines been so similar as they are at the time of their final reconciliation. The similarity of their romantic prospects makes Emma eager to call on Jane and learn what she has to communicate. The emphasis is still on Emma's reception of Jane's confidences. However, no long confidential conversation is possible since Mrs. Elton now stands between Emma and Jane. Both Mrs. Elton and Emma have come to be reconciled with Jane, who receives Emma with a warmth and graciousness that becomes her more than her previous elegance. But people are still what they are; Jane remains a shadow figure, still unable to express herself freely, both because of Mrs. Elton's presence and because of her overflow of feelings.

"Miss Woodhouse, it is impossible for me to express—I hope you will believe—Excuse me for being so entirely without words"

(453). Their exchange is much in keeping with the pattern set throughout the novel. Escaping from Mrs. Elton's presence in the Bateses' sitting room, Jane and Emma are reconciled on more neutral ground. Jane, always conscious of her misconduct, asks for Emma's compassion. Emma, conscious of her rudeness, asks for Jane's pardon, while admitting she would like to know many details of Jane's plans, even at the risk of being "impertinent"
(459). Emma is still wanting to know all about others, though she does not volunteer any information to Jane about the happy state of her own heart. How are we to understand Emma's comment on liking things decided and open? Probably as an indication that, now, more than ever, she will be running things in Highbury and enjoying it.

The reconciliation between Frank and Emma at Randalls is not so pleasant as Emma had envisioned. Some consciousness of their misdeeds still bothers Emma, and seems to bother Frank, for a moment. Frank is sincere and gratified at Emma's forgiveness and good fortune, and the emphasis of the scene is upon the graceful inclusion of all members back into a society of friends. However, this scene looks much like the others in which Jane has been excluded from the society of Frank and Emma. Frank talks again about Jane as she appears to great advantage in society. After a moment of seriousness, his playful spirits rise again: he teases Jane as before. Jane is forced to smile and forced to upbraid him publicly. Neither Jane nor Emma joins him in another "game". Emma's feelings are with Jane this time. Emma has made peace with the couple; no longer is she jealous of Jane or enamored of Frank. She regards them as friends, but she is quite ready for them to move out of her orbit and into that other world which is their proper sphere, the world outside the comfortable circle of Emma and George Knightley.

Thus the romance comes full circle, not only for Frank and Jane but for all the characters, restored to themselves in the assured last chapter which allows no thought of an
alternative/unhappy ending. The dark and light worlds merge. Frank and Jane, freed from the constraints of the masquerade, assume their places as responsible members of the society. The reconciliation effected in this last part of the novel disperses the shadows threatening the lovers with bad luck, sickness, isolation, and unhappiness. Concealment gives way to revelation; double-dealing yields to openness; possibilities become realities. All the members of Highbury society join in the celebration of the happy ending, the conclusion toward which the action has been heading. The circle of society re-forms. The crowning rituals of the marriages, the two realized, the one projected, celebrate the happiness of all the right people, together at last. The floaters find a secure place by finding a partner to complement their virtues and their shortcomings. Jane is saved from the governess trade; Harriet is saved from penury; Emma is saved from idleness; Frank is saved from foolishness; George Knightley is saved from solitude. Each has found a place where once each was alone.

More than one right man has gotten married to the right woman in this novel. There are several marriages presented as models for the three couples who marry at the novel's conclusion. Frank's and Jane's parents married for love rather than money. Both marriages ended in the sadness of early death, and left the burden of an only child to be supported. The Dixons and the Eltons married for both love and money; both heiresses, we may assume, will be happy with their choices. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Weston (in his second marriage) chose a portionless
woman. For Mr. Weston, the choice of Miss Taylor made him a happy man. For Mr. Churchill, married life seems to have been much more difficult, although, as a widower, he hopes Frank "might find as much happiness in the marriage state as he had done." Frank feels his happiness "will be of a different sort" (443). The John Knightleys seem temperamentally ill-suited for each other. Isabella is a woman of "such an affectionate, doating disposition" while John is a man of reserved manners, "capable of being sometimes out of humour" (92). "The extreme sweetness of her temper" must sometimes have clashed with his. But John Knightley has learned to adjust his temper to society's demands, and "Isabella, passing her life with those she doated on, full of their merits, blind to their faults, and always innocently busy, might have been a model of right feminine happiness" (140). Jane Austen's imperfect characters learn to adjust themselves to society, and in the process, they reshape, reform the world they live in. The cycle of romance in Jane Austen's hands takes a spiral form. Each marriage story has a satisfactory conclusion, with the right man marrying the right woman. There is, at the same time, a sense of new beginnings, other possibilities, the commencement of another domestic story. The closing ceremonies celebrate the great happiness we experience when the right people get together. And in Jane Austen's novels, they always do.

Given the disparity of their temperaments, can Frank and Jane find happiness? Is marriage to Frank a desirable fate for Jane? Is Frank a successful hero? Does he deserve Jane? Is it a
connexion to gratify Jane? Will she be well, prosperous, and happy? Is this a union in which a man will be redeemed by the love of a good woman? Yes. Frank may not yet be perfectly sensible, but he is agreeable. Jane's external behavior proclaims her interior joy; she has gotten what she wanted, a place in society. The romance conventions assures us of the happiness of both Jane and Harriet. Both these women follow the conventional heroine's path and move into their husbands' orbits. Harriet is drawn into the welcoming Martin family. Jane, who has made a virtue out of waiting, is secure with the beloved Campbells, knowing that November will be the month that will assure her of wealth and happiness. Both these heroines move to their proper place, out of the spotlight, leaving center stage for Emma.

The joy we hope for Harriet and Jane we find fully confirmed for Emma. The narrator assures us that our "wishes" for her joy "were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union" (484). The sentimental couple (Harriet Smith and Robert Martin) and the romance couple (Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill) bracket the sensible couple (Emma Woodhouse and George Knightley). True to the Augustan spirit, the final marriages reconcile the requirements of the soul, of the heart, of the conscience, and of worldly ambition in the celebration of a perfectly happy ending. The great comic movement of romance is realized: the social balance is regained; a new world is created, more interesting than that which we first discovered. The thrilling dangers of a journey through the
world of romance are past; everything and everyone is now safe at last.
ENDNOTES


2. Letters, p. 299.


12. Lionel Trilling describes Highbury as "the world of the idyll," ("Emma," Encounter 8:45 (June, 1957):57) Trilling states that Austen had the pastoral idyll explicitly in mind, with its emphasis on the dream of man's life in nature and simplicity. Trilling says that Austen mocks the sentimental view of the idyll by associating it with Mrs. Elton's remarks at the Denwell strawberry party. He notes, however, that at the same party, the narrator describes the English countryside as "sweet to the eye and the mind," indicating Austen's perception of "England—if but for the moment—as an idyll" (57). In his discussion of the confined nature of Emma's Highbury, Raymond Hillyard ("Emma:Dancing Without Space To Turn In" in Probability, Time and Space in Eighteenth-Century Literature. ed. Paula R.

13 Booth, p. 249.


17 Hilliard, p. 289.


19 Booth, p. 249.


21 In his book, Jane Austen's Novels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961) Andrew Wright identifies six characteristic and complex points of view Austen employs in managing her stories and keeping the distance necessary for both dramatic and ironic effect. The first viewpoint is the objective account in which Austen is sometimes historian, sometimes neutral observer, sometimes judge. The second viewpoint is indirect comment when, with a word, a phrase, a personal note of qualification, Austen discloses a view which is not that of her character but not necessarily her own. Direct comment is the third point of view. Fourth, Austen uses maxims of her own creating to underscore ironic situations. The fifth viewpoint is the dramatic mode by which Austen sets up so many of her "scenes." In these dramatic scenes, much of the irony proceeds from the sense of incongruity experienced by the spectators when they see a character acting in ignorance of his condition. In this dramatic format, Austen uses both direct and indirect discourse to move the story forward and to reveal character. The most self revelatory technique Austen uses for her characters is interior disclosure whereby she allows us to see into the minds of her heroines, as well as her other characters. Of these six viewpoints discussed by Wright, Jane Austen uses the two which keep Jane at the most distant: the objective account and the dramatic mode.

22 Nardin, p. 116.
Alistair Duckworth sees Austen at a crossroads between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theological and moral questions. He argues for an almost Christian substructure to Austen's novels. "Jane Austen's is intermediate, and in no way more importantly so than in her attitude to the problems of individual identity and morality. ...She may be seen as situated between two texts, 'Therefore that ye shall rise, the Lord sends down,' and 'Gott ist tot.' The Improvement of the Estate, pp. 24, 25.


Morgan, p. 31.

Siefert, p. 101.


Frye, p. 57.


Frye, p. 129.


Duckworth, p. 176.

Lascelles, p. 390.

Nardin, p. 123.

Frye, p. 139.

Lascelles, p. 390.


Frye, p. 47.

Frye, p. 135.

Beer, p. 72.
42 Lascelles, p. 390.


44 Pinton, p. 119.

45 Hillyard, p. 289.


47 Morgan, p. 34.

Bibliography

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


