

**Jane Austen's Novels from the Perspective of the
Theories and Practices of Modern-Day Psychotherapy**

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**This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same
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For My Mother

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ABSTRACT

This thesis demonstrates the strong similarities between the subtle aspects of Austen's complex characterisations and the perceptions and understandings of human psychology that are encompassed within twentieth-century models of psychotherapy. In this context, I show how the theoretical frameworks and principles that underpin different twentieth-century psychotherapeutic approaches facilitate the identification and definition of Austen's frequently acknowledged insights into human nature. While the psychotherapeutic terms used in this exploration of Austen's work have emerged in the post-Austen era, there is no suggestion in this discussion that Austen had some prescience of future models of psychotherapy. My intent is to highlight the resonances between Austen's insights and modern-day psychotherapeutic formulations, and to show how these resonances illuminate Austen's extraordinary psychological perspicuity. The analysis of Austen's novels from this perspective leads to interpretations of Austen's characters that at times differ substantially from existing perceptions and at others reinforce or enhance previous readings. The question of whether Austen took a didactic moral position in her novels is a central issue within this thesis. I explore the differing opinions expressed in existing critiques of her novels in this regard, and challenge the view that Austen intended to direct her readers towards a fixed moral code. I argue that Austen's attitude to her craft suggests instead an intention on the author's part to bring about enhanced self-awareness and a movement towards greater self-directed autonomy in her readers.

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INTRODUCTION

“Sir,” he said, “there is nothing too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying the little things that we attain the greatest knowledge of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible” (Johnson to Boswell)¹

In this thesis, I explore Jane Austen’s novels from a modern-day psychotherapeutic perspective. My reading of the novels is informed by my knowledge of the theories and techniques that have influenced psychotherapeutic approaches since the early twentieth century, and which have underpinned my own work as a practising psychotherapist. From this background, I have been struck by the extent to which certain features of Austen’s portrayal of her characters, and the interactions that take place between them, resonate strongly with the views that modern-day Western psychotherapists have of the psychology of the individual, and of the ways in which the psychological condition of an individual might affect the nature of their interactions with other people.

Austen’s detailed attention to, and keen insight into, human nature and psychology is a quality that commentators have frequently noted since the earliest days of the publication of her novels. In 1815 Walter Scott commended Austen’s movement away from the popular Gothic and thrilling adventure tales of the time towards the portrayal of situations and characters that were more true to life:

That young lady had a talent for describing the involvement and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big Bow-Wow strain I can do myself like any now going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and

¹ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 2 vols (New York: George Dearborn, 1833), I, p. 196.

characters interesting from the truth of the description and sentiment is denied to me.²

This view was reinforced and expanded upon by the contemporary writer and reviewer, Richard Whately. In an 1821 article introduced by Brian Southam in his *Critical Heritage* as 'the most important early nineteenth-century statement on Jane Austen', Whately reflected appreciatively upon fiction which

by leaving out those accidental irregularities, and exceptions to the rules, which constitute the many improbabilities of real narrative, present us with a clear and *abstracted* view of the general rules themselves; and thus concentrate, as it were, into a small compass, the net result of wide experience.³ (Whately's italics)

Whately continued of Austen in particular, 'Among the authors of this school there is no one superior, if equal, to the lady whose last production is now before us', and concluded that readers of Austen's novels 'who delight in the study of human nature, may improve in the knowledge of it, and in the profitable application of that knowledge'.⁴

In retrospect, the views of Scott and Whately on Austen may be seen as departure points for later commentaries. Reginald Brimley Johnson reinforces Scott's view of Austen's attention to the commonplace. Comparing Scott with Austen, Brimley Johnson writes:

While he was doing the "big bow-wow strain" [...] she was writing on her "little bits of ivory" [...] her love of truth, one of the strongest elements of her nature, was to be revealed in the careful reality of human nature in every character and conversation.⁵

² Walter Scott, "Journal' 14 March 1826', in *Journal of Walter Scott, 1825-26* ed. by J.G Tait (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1939), p. 135.

³ See 'Whately on Austen' in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage: Vol. 1: 1811-1870*, ed. by Brian C. Southam (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 87-105 (pp. 87 and 93).

⁴ See Southam, *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage: Vol. 1: 1811-1870*, p. 105.

⁵ R. Brimley Johnson, *Jane Austen: Her Life, Her Work, Her Family, and Her Critics* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1930), p.57. Johnson's allusion to "her little bits of ivory" is of course a reference to Austen's own description of her writing in her letter to her nephew, James; 'What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited Sketches, full of Variety and Glow? – How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect

Mary Waldron concurs with Whately that Austen's dedication to the inclusion only of the probable in her novels enabled the author to distil for her readers the essence of her experience of human nature. In Waldron's view, 'Because we are not aghast at the predicaments of Austen's central characters (as we must be with Clarissa, Cecilia, Camilla, Ellis-Juliet, for instance) we can be more open to the intricacies of their minds'.⁶ This has become a widely held view of Austen that is succinctly summarised by Susannah Carson who states in the Introduction to her collection of essays, 'Austen is a humanist who seems to understand certain eternal truths of human nature'.⁷ Thus literary critiques from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first have comprehensively established Austen's especially acute awareness and perceptions of 'human nature'.

Interestingly, more recent explorations of Austen's understanding of human nature and psychology as revealed through the 'intricacies' of the minds of her characters have looked at the author's work from the perspectives of cognitive science and cognitive neuroscience. Cognitive science is interested in the way that the brain as a whole functions to bring about various cognitive phenomena such as memory, language, perception, attention and reasoning. Branches of cognitive science involve linguistics, psychology, neuroscience and philosophy. This field thus encompasses questions of mind-brain and mind-

after much labour?' See *Jane Austen's Letters*, coll. and ed. by Deirdre Le Faye, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); letter to James Edward Austen, **146**, 16th-17th December 1816, pp. 336-338 (p. 337). Hereafter in this thesis, quotations from letters in Le Faye's collection will be cited as: *Letters*, followed by the number of the letter in bold, date and year of writing, page(s), in parentheses the page(s) on which the quotation is located.

⁶ Mary Waldron, *Jane Austen and The Fiction of Her Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, paperback edition, 2001), p. 14. Austen's commitment to realism in her portrayal of human nature is underscored by her wry comments on Mary Brunton's *Self Control* in letters that she wrote to Cassandra and to Anna Lefroy. To Cassandra, Austen observes that *Self Control* is 'an excellently-meant, elegantly-written Work, without anything of Nature of Probability in it'. Austen continues, 'I declare I do not know whether Laura's passage down the American River, is not the most natural, possible, every-day thing she does.' To Anna Lefroy, Austen amusingly suggests that she (Austen) might improve on Brunton's work: 'my Heroine shall not merely be wafted down an American river in a boat by herself, she shall cross the Atlantic in the same way, & never stop till she reaches Gravesent.' See letter to Cassandra in *Letters*, **91**, 11th-12th October 1813, pp. 242-246 (p. 244), and to Anna Lefroy, **111**, 24th November 1814, p. 295.

⁷ Susannah Carson, *A Truth Universally Acknowledged: 33 Reasons Why We Can't Stop Reading Jane Austen*, (London: Particular Books, 2009), p. xix. This collection of essays includes similar reflections in essays by, for example, Lionel Trilling, Janet Todd and Ian Watt.

body connections.⁸ Cognitive neuroscience is concerned with the biology of the brain, in particular the activity of neurones and neural connections that are involved in cognitive processes such as those listed above: memory, language, and so on.⁹ In relation to Austen, John Wiltshire, for example, has provided a detailed cognitive scientific and neuroscientific exposition of the significance of psychological functions such as memory and the expression of internal states through body language and facial expression in Austen's characterisations.¹⁰ One of the specific areas of cognitive science to which Wiltshire refers relates to the influence of levels of attention and emotion on the encoding and retrieval of memories.¹¹ In one section he uses findings within this field of research to explain Catherine Moreland's complete inability to remember having seen John Thorpe at all on the morning of his proposal of marriage to her, in contrast with her constant recall of meetings and exchanges with Henry Tilney. In this Wiltshire perceives that 'Austen seems to have constructed here an egregious instance of the dependence of recollection on previous attention', which he later suggests is the basis upon which readers gather that Catherine has no interest in Thorpe and is in love with Tilney.¹²

From a different angle, writers Alan Richardson and Lisa Zunshine explore Austen's characters and their interactions in the context of the

⁸ See, for example, José Luis Bermúdez, *Cognitive Science: An Introduction to The Science of The Mind*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) and *The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Science*, ed. by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For a philosophical slant see Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, revised edn (Cambridge Mass: MIT Press, 2016). Cognitive science has reached a popular audience through publications such as Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow* (London: Penguin Books, 2011) and Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (London: Penguin Books, 2005) which review cognitive scientific studies of the processes of reasoning and decision-making, and Daniel Gilbert's *Stumbling on Happiness: Why the Future Won't Feel the Way You Think It Will* (London: Harper Press, 2006) which covers research into the relationship between the brain and emotions.

⁹ Most prominent in this field is Michael Gazzaniga whose seminal introductory text is now in its fourth edition; Michael S. Gazzaniga, Richard B. Ivry & George R. Mangun, *Cognitive Neuroscience: The Biology of The Mind* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company Ltd., 2014). See also Paul L. Nunez, *The New Science of Consciousness: Exploring the Complexity of Brain, Mind and Self* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2016).

¹⁰ John Wiltshire, *The Hidden Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹¹ Wiltshire draws on work by, for example, Michael Posner, *Cognitive Neuroscience of Attention*, 2nd edn (New York: Guilford Press, 2012), and Elizabeth Styles, *The Psychology of Attention*, 2nd edn (Hove and New York: Psychology Press, 2006).

¹² Wiltshire, *The Hidden Jane Austen*, see pp. 12-18, (p. 13). See also, Natalie M. Phillips and others, 'Patterns of Attention and Memory in Jane Austen', in Beth Lau, ed., *Jane Austen and the Sciences of the Mind* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 156-179.

cognitive scientific concept of 'Theory of Mind'. Cognitive scientist, Alvin Goldman, defines Theory of Mind as 'the cognitive capacity to attribute mental states to self and others'.¹³ In other words, a person's theory of mind constitutes their ability to recognise that they themselves have mental states such as beliefs, desires, knowledge and opinions, and that other people may have different such mental states from themselves. In order to glean the mental or emotional states of others, people pay attention to non-verbal signs such as direction of gaze, facial expression, physical gestures and tone of voice.

Richardson applies the notion of Theory of Mind to his analysis of *Emma*:

in *Emma* [...] Austen represents a repertoire of interpersonal behaviours that can best be described and understood in relation to theories of Theory of the Mind. Placing her characters in situations that force them to guess and guess again at one another's intentions, beliefs, and emotional states, Austen shows how pervasively they rely on social-cognitive strategies closely analogous to those that cognitive neuroscientists currently study under the rubric of "theory of mind".¹⁴

The 'social-cognitive strategies' that Richardson identifies in his analysis are indeed those that, according to cognitive neuroscientists, inform an individual's theory of mind, including even 'the movements of blood under the skin'.

Richardson concludes:

The narrative attention and descriptive clarity that Austen brings to these intersubjective transactions and the sense of conscious purpose that her characters sometimes bring to the effort of "mind reading" invite us to consider Austen herself as an early theorist of what is now called "Theory of Mind." (p. 81)

¹³ See Alvin I. Goldman, 'Theory of Mind', in *The Oxford Handbook of The Philosophy of Cognitive Science*, ed. by Eric Margolis, Richard Ian Samuels and Stephen P. Stich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 402. For Richardson and Zunshine on Austen and Theory of Mind, see Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010), especially Chapter 5, 'Reading Minds — and Bodies — in *Emma*', pp. 79-97, and Lisa Zunshine, 'Why Jane Austen was different, and why we may need cognitive science to see it', in *Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* (2008), 24, 141-161.

¹⁴ See Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, p. 81. Further quotations from this publication are cited in brackets following a quote or series of quotes from the same page of the publication.

Zunshine concurs with Richardson's summation, and observes that it is the degree of attentiveness to the minds and emotional states of others which Austen attributes to her characters that is indicative of their degree of sensitivity, rather than their outward expressions of emotionality and 'greedy self-consciousness'.¹⁵ This perspective from Theory of Mind offers an interesting standpoint from which we might perceive Austen's departure from the contemporary fashion for the sentimental novel. As John Mullan succinctly explains of David Hume, Samuel Richardson and Lawrence Sterne, these were all writers for whom the development of social bonds and harmonious social interaction depended upon the outward 'communication of passions and sentiments'.¹⁶ For Zunshine, the most sophisticated and skilled social communicators in Austen's novels are not those who feel and express their emotions most effusively. Rather they are those who have a highly developed theory of mind, and who mediate their behaviour and expressions of thought and emotions accordingly.¹⁷

Immaterial Anachronism or Illuminating 'Interdisciplinarity'

Reflection upon Austen's work in twentieth- and twenty-first century cognitive neuroscientific terms such as 'theory of mind' is not unproblematic. In his Introduction to *The Neural Sublime*, Alan Richardson acknowledges concerns held by some literary critics that modern cognitive scientific readings of the literature of past eras are immaterial and unenlightening because they do not take into account the historical, cultural and linguistic contexts within which these works were produced.¹⁸ From this perspective, to describe Austen's depiction of the communicative interplay between her characters in terms of Theory of Mind theory is unedifying. The concept of Theory of Mind did not

¹⁵ Zunshine, 'Why Jane Austen was different', p. 146.

¹⁶ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 2. I discuss Eighteenth-Century sentimentalism and its influence on Austen further during the course of this thesis, in particular in Chapter Two to follow.

¹⁷ See also Beth Lau's chapter, 'Catherine Moreland's Education in Mindreading in *Northanger Abbey*', in Lau, ed., *Jane Austen and the Sciences of the Mind*, pp. 37-57.

¹⁸ See also Richardson's attention to Professor of History of Science, Anne Harrington, who cautioned that 'Historians are creatures of their time no less than the people they study' and warned against the use of history as 'a vehicle to hunt for the present in an earlier age'. See Anne Harrington, *Medicine, Mind and the Double Brain: A Study in Nineteenth Century Thought* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 5, and cited in Alan Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 3.

exist in Austen's time, therefore it would hardly be possible for Austen to have conceived of patterns of communication in ways that conform to Theory of Mind. Equally, from this viewpoint, Austen could not have illustrated 'the dependence of recollection on previous attention', as Wiltshire proposes, because the scientific research into the aspect of cognition which revealed that dependence had not yet been carried out.¹⁹ I am aware that this thesis may be subject to a challenge on similar grounds since all of the psychotherapeutic terms that I use in my discussion of Austen's work have emerged in the post-Austen era, including the words 'psychotherapy', 'psychotherapist' and 'psychotherapeutic' themselves.²⁰

In response to such reservations, I would refer to Richardson's acknowledgement of N. Katherine Hayles' notion of 'constrained constructivism'.²¹ Constrained constructivism recognises the historical and cultural constraints on current perceptions and interpretations, and yet 'attempts to excavate from an abstracted shorthand the complexities that unite subject and object in a dynamic, interactive, on-going process of perception and social construction'.²² As Hayles notes, this dynamic process cannot construct a perfect match between past and present understandings and representations, yet it does not indicate resemblances arbitrarily. Rather it 'engages in a rhetoric of "good enough"', where 'enough consistencies obtain in the processing and in the flux to make recognition reliably and relatively stable'.²³ So, when Richardson and Zunshine refer to Theory of Mind, and Wiltshire to the processes involved in the encoding and retrieval of memories in their analyses of Austen's work, I assume that they neither seek to assert an exact correspondence between Austen's understanding of human psychology and

¹⁹ Analogous to this is the view held by some reviewers that it is unhelpful and inappropriate to use the term 'feminist' in relation to Austen and her work since the word 'feminist' was not in use until the 1880s. See Devoney Looser, ed. *Jane Austen and The Discourses of Feminism* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 3.

²⁰ The *OED* records the first use of the words 'psychotherapy', 'psychotherapist' and 'psychotherapeutic' as occurring from the mid- to late nineteenth century.

²¹ See N. Katherine Hayles, 'Constrained Constructivism: Locating Scientific Inquiry in the Theatre of Representation', in *Realism and Representation: Essays on the Problem of Realism in Relation to Science, Literature and Culture*, ed. by George Levine (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 27-43.

²² Hayles, p. 32.

²³ Hayles, p. 32. In this light, see Mary Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

that of twentieth- and the twenty-first century cognitive scientists, nor to propose that she was somehow prescient of future discoveries in the cognitive scientific schools. What these writers do demonstrate is that it is possible to identify similarities between the behaviours and interactions of Austen's characters and the psychological processes identified by cognitive scientific research, sufficient to elucidate Austen's psychological insights more specifically, and to show how this can enhance our comprehension and appreciation of her characters.²⁴ As Richardson explains in relation to his exploration of scientists of the brain in the Romantic era, 'It is less a matter of insisting on resemblance than of listening for resonance, and allowing that resonance to help reopen avenues for scholarly investigation'.²⁵ I present readings of Austen from a psychotherapeutic perspective in this thesis in the same spirit and with the same aims.

In addition, I follow Richardson's further recommendation that modern psychological analyses of Austen's work need not, and indeed should not, inappropriately resist, minimise or ignore the significance of the historical and cultural context within which the author wrote her novels. He advises that to note the coincidence of current cognitive scientific models with representations of the past portrayed in her literature is 'the beginning not the end of the process of interrogation'. It is a process that he suggests should include the following questions:

What, if anything, in the social, philosophical, and scientific discourses of the time made it possible for Austen to observe these behaviours as such and to think them worth representing in her fiction? Can one find analogous representations in the early psychological thought of the

²⁴ For further and varied twentieth and twenty-first century cognitive scientific perspectives on Romantic and Victorian era literature in general and of Austen in particular, see also Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and The Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), Brian Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), David Lodge, *Consciousness and The Novel* (London: Secker and Warburg, 2004), Alan Palmer, *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), Blakeley Vermeule, *Why Do We Care About Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010). In addition, *Mindful Aesthetics: Literature and Science of Mind*, ed. by Chris Danta and Helen Groth (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) presents a wide ranging collection of essays on this topic.

²⁵ Alan Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, p. 3.

period, whether or not one can establish conclusively that Austen had read such accounts?

Along with 'careful scholarship, serious consideration of alternative explanations, critical judgement, and the persuasiveness of specific examples', for Richardson, questions such as these take us back into the historical context of the text under analysis, and thus legitimise collaboration between the scientific and literary academic communities. (p. 15) He describes this collaboration as a 'new interdisciplinarity' that serves to bridge 'the notorious but increasingly narrow "gap" between the humanities and the sciences' in way that informs and illuminates both of these fields. (p. ix)²⁶

In the last decade or so since the emergence of this interdisciplinarity, it appears thus far largely to have been constituted of contributions to literary criticism from the cognitive sciences and cognitive psychology. The psychotherapeutic field from which I draw my interpretations of Austen's work has connections with these psychological sciences. However, its focus and intentions are very different, as I will clarify with a definition of psychotherapy, and explanations of the different schools of psychotherapy in detail in Chapter One of this thesis. Insofar as this thesis might itself be viewed as a foray into the 'new interdisciplinarity', I address the questions that Richardson prescribed in relation to relevant discourses and representations prevailing in Austen's time. Where relevant, I refer to novels, poetry, political and philosophical commentaries, and journals and conduct books that Austen is known to have read, and to those to which it is at least believed she would have had access. In particular, I will take account of the likely influence on Austen's writing of essayist Samuel Johnson, Enlightenment thinkers and writers such as Adam Smith, John Locke and David Hume, of the Sentimentalists such as Sterne and Mackenzie, of Rousseau and Mary Wollstonecraft, as well as of the ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Epictetus, and the Roman

²⁶ Alan Richardson envisages a mutual exchange of insights between science and literature in a way that informs and enhances both fields. Interesting in this respect is Sally Shuttleworth's exploration of the ways in which literature informed the developing disciplines of child psychology and psychiatry between 1840 and 1900. See Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science and Medicine 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Emperor/philosopher Marcus Aurelius.²⁷ Furthermore, throughout the thesis I will provide specific examples from Austen's texts to illustrate and support my propositions.

Psychotherapy: theoretical and practical diversity

First, it is important to define and explicate the psychotherapeutic background that informs my reading of Austen's novels. The *OED* (2nd rev. edn) defines the term 'Psychotherapy' as 'The treatment of disorders of the mind or personality by psychological methods'. The dictionary has the term 'Psychotherapeutics' to refer to 'The methods or practice of psychotherapy; the branch of medicine or science concerned with this' and 'Psychotherapeutic' defined as 'Relating to, based on, or practising psychotherapy; *spec.* (in early use) relating to the treatment of disease by psychic or hypnotic influence.' So, when I describe my approach to Austen's novels as 'psychotherapeutic' I mean that it is related to and based on 'the methods' and 'practice' of psychotherapy. The methods used in the practice of psychotherapy are derived from theoretical concepts of the ways in which the human mind and personality develop. These give rise to formulations regarding the causes of disorders of the mind and personality; formulations which, in turn, indicate the form of psychotherapeutics, or psychotherapeutic treatment, that is most likely to be effective in any particular case.

²⁷ The earliest accounts of the scope of Austen's reading are given by her brothers, see Henry Austen, 'Biographical Notice of the Author', 1817, repr. in *Persuasion*, ed. by Janet Todd and Antje Blank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Appendix 2, pp. 326-332, and James Edward Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (London: The Folio Society, 1989 [Text taken from the 2nd edn of the work published 1871, ed. by R. W. Chapman, Clarendon Press, 1926]). For comprehensive overviews of Jane Austen's literary background, see William Baker, *Critical Companion to Jane Austen: A Literary Reference to Her Life and Work* (New York: Facts on File Inc., 2008) and David Gilson, *A Bibliography of Jane Austen*, with new intro. and corrections (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1997). See also Jane Stabler, 'Literary Influences', in *Jane Austen in Context*, ed. by Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 41-50, and the Introductions to the Cambridge editions Austen's works (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006). An interesting and useful review with commentary is provided also by Katie Halsey in Chapter One of her publication, *Jane Austen and her Readers, 1786-1945* (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2013), pp. 17-35. For further comments on the novels and poetry in particular that engaged Austen, see Paula Byrne, *The Real Jane Austen: A Life in Small Things* (London: HarperPress, 2013), pp. 75-91 and for Austen's education and reading more generally, see Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life* (London: Viking, 1997).

It is important to be clear that there is not just one theory of the nature of human psychology and interrelationships that is shared and agreed upon by all psychotherapists. The various forms of practice that constitute the field of modern-day psychotherapy have emerged over the last century or so from very different and often contradictory ideas about the psychology and behaviour of human beings. Chapter One of this thesis traces the development of these ideas and the formation of the main schools of psychotherapy: Freudian Psychoanalysis, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and finally the Humanistic schools of Gestalt, Transactional Analysis (TA), and the hugely influential Client-Centered model of counselling.²⁸ The validity of the theoretical foundations of the different schools and the relative efficacy of their practical applications is still a matter for debate within the field.²⁹ However, it is not my intention to engage with the arguments involved in that debate here, or to offer any critique of my own in this regard. Rather, this discussion takes an interdisciplinary approach which relates a non-evaluative overview of the key features of each of the different psychotherapeutic models mentioned above to the ways in which Austen creates her characters and cultivates the interactions that take place between them.

I associate my reference to aspects of a diverse range of therapeutic approaches in my analysis of Austen's novels with a movement that has been taking place within the field of psychotherapy for some time. This is a movement away from unitary approaches that adopt one of the major theoretical models and apply that system to all clients in all circumstances, towards those that utilise ideas and strategies from a range of different orientations according to the needs of individual clients in specific circumstances. This is my own preferred form of therapeutic work, and is classified as 'Integrative Psychotherapy'.

²⁸ There are many books published on the topic of psychotherapy and its different forms. A good place to start is with a resource widely used by students and practitioners of psychotherapy, now in its sixth edition: *The Handbook of Individual Therapy*, ed. by Windy Dryden and Andrew Reeves (London: Sage, 2014). See also, Richard Nelson-Jones, *Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 6th edn (London: Sage, 2015). Specific references to sources related to each of the individual models of psychotherapy mentioned here are provided in Chapter One of this thesis.

²⁹ See Bruce Wampold & Zac Imel, *The Great Psychotherapy Debate: The Evidence for What Makes Psychotherapy Work* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

The Institute for Integrative Psychotherapy defines the practice as:

a unifying psychotherapy that responds appropriately and effectively to the person at the affective, behavioral, cognitive, and physiological levels of functioning, and addresses as well the spiritual dimension of life.

The definition continues:

Integrative Psychotherapy takes into account many views of human functioning. The psychodynamic, client-centered, behaviorist, cognitive, family therapy, Gestalt therapy, body-psychotherapies, object relations theories, psychoanalytic self psychology, and transactional analysis approaches are all considered within a dynamic systems perspective. Each provides a partial explanation of behavior and each is enhanced when selectively integrated with other aspects of the therapist's approach.³⁰

The Integrative school thus holds that each of the main models of psychotherapy accounts for only part of the whole of the experience of the individual, and so provides scope for the use of any or all of these models according to the needs of a particular client. Rather than have a single theory inform the observation, understanding and treatment of the client, observation of the client informs understanding, and this understanding indicates which of the many therapeutic approaches may be useful. So it is with my analysis of Austen's novels. I began to read these texts with no notion of applying any particular psychotherapeutic model to my understanding or experience of them. In fact, I started to read them purely for pleasure. It was my realisation that I was able to recognise certain features of the various modern psychotherapeutic models in the novels, and that these informed my reading of

³⁰ This is the definition provided on the website for the Institute of Integrative Psychotherapy, <<http://www.integrativetherapy.com/en/integrative-psychotherapy.php>> (accessed 02.12.2016). There are many explanatory texts; see for example Kenneth, R. Evans & Maria, C. Gilbert, *An Introduction to Integrative Psychotherapy* (New York and Hants. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), and most recently Linda Finlay, *Relational Integrative Psychotherapy: Engaging Process and Theory in Practice* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016). A more recent development of psychotherapeutic practice, termed 'Pluralistic Psychotherapy', re-envision the current Integrative model. For an overview of Pluralistic Psychotherapy see Windy Dryden & Andrew Reeves, *The Handbook of Individual Psychotherapy*, pp. 547-573.

Austen's characters and my impressions of the author's intent, or, at least, her interest and focus, that led me to embark upon this project.

Having made the distinction between my integrative approach and the major unitary schools of psychotherapy, it should be said that, until now, critics have referred to the theoretical basis of only one of these main schools in any great depth or detail in the analysis of Austen's novels. I refer to readings of her work which are based significantly, or even solely on Freudian psychoanalytic theory, for example those of Tony Tanner and Julian Wilmot Wynne respectively.³¹ Freud's work is obviously central to the field of psychotherapy. However my view is that, fascinating as Freud's ideas and Freudian interpretations may be, an analysis from a Freudian perspective alone does not provide the most illuminating reflections on Austen's writing. This is in the light of substantial and persuasive challenges to the fundamental bases of Freud's research methodology and formulations, especially the comprehensive critique of Freud's work presented by Richard Webster whose critique I discuss in the following chapter.³² Furthermore, even if this type of analysis were deemed to provide valid explanations for the behaviour and underlying motivations of Austen's characters, it seems to me that these accounts ultimately lead one away from a greater understanding and appreciation of the idiosyncratic natures of the specific characters themselves, within the particular contexts of the novels and stories that they inhabit. This is because Freud intended his work to be viewed as a scientific endeavour which would uncover universally applicable principles relating to the nature of human psychology as a whole. As Freud himself wrote:

³¹ Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen* (London: Macmillan, 1986), and Julian Wilmot Wynne, *Jane Austen and Sigmund Freud an Interpretation* (London: Plume, 1998). For more general psychoanalytic approaches to literature see also Meredith Anne Skura, *Literary Use of the Psychoanalytic Process* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1981), and more recently Norman N. Holland, *Holland's Guide to Psychoanalytic Psychology and Literature-and-Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). While the terms 'psycho-analytic' and 'psycho-analysis' are hyphenated in Freud's own writing, the hyphen has largely been dropped by commentators and by therapists themselves. Both the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy ((UKCP) and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) refer to unhyphenated 'psychoanalytic' and 'psychoanalysis'. In this thesis I will use these forms unless quoting directly from a text which includes the hyphen.

³² Richard Webster, *Why Freud Was Wrong. Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis* (London: Harper Collins, 1995).

The concept of the unconscious has long been knocking at the gates of psychology and asking to be let in. Philosophy and literature have often toyed with it, but science could find no use for it. Psycho-analysis has seized upon the concept, has taken it seriously and has given it a fresh content. By its *researches* it has led to a *knowledge* of the characteristics of the unconscious psychical which have hitherto been unsuspected, and it has discovered some of the *laws* which govern it.³³ (My italics)

One can see then that Freud wished to be regarded as having discovered 'laws' governing 'the unconscious psychical', that is the definition of the nature of the unconscious element which is part of the psychological make up of all human beings, in all places, at all times. Under Freudian psychoanalytic scrutiny, the most carefully delineated and unique qualities of each of Austen's characters become subsumed beneath the generality of Freudian interpretations of their actions, thoughts, speech and emotions.

An example of Tanner's Freudian analysis of a scene in *Northanger Abbey* will serve to illustrate my point. Tanner presents the view that it is reasonable to deduce an element of sexual arousal and fear of the loss of virginity in Catherine Morland's frightened excitement as she attempts to discover what is locked away in the cabinet in her bedroom at Northanger Abbey. He writes:

Without wishing to deviate into the follies of would-be psychosexual criticism, I think it is legitimate to recognise that in an impressionable adolescent girl the desire — craving, indeed — for some kind of intense excitation may easily be sexual even if it takes another form. To be aroused by fear is still to be aroused.³⁴

³³ In its entirety Freud's psycho-analytic theory and its applications to the practice of psycho-analytic psychotherapy is a large and complex body of work, translated into English over twenty four volumes; *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, jointly published by The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis. Citations are made by the title of the paper (where appropriate), abbreviation *Standard Ed.* followed by date of publication of papers presented in the edition in brackets, then volume and page number(s). For this quotation see 'Some Elementary Lessons in Psychoanalysis', in *Standard Ed.* (1937-9), XXIII, 283-286, p. 286.

³⁴ Tanner, p. 49.

In spite of Tanner's reluctance to 'deviate into the follies of would-be psychosexual criticism', Freud's theory is nevertheless the foundation for his comment on Catherine. Both the notion that feelings of excitement in adolescent girls 'may easily be sexual' and the idea that it might be possible for one psychological, emotional or physical experience (sexual desire) to be disguised as another that is less threatening to the psyche (fear), especially in childhood and adolescence, is rooted in Freudian psychosexual theory.³⁵ Whether or not this is folly is up for debate. My argument is simply that, even if Tanner is correct in his Freudian interpretation of Catherine's state of mind and emotions, this tells us nothing about Catherine as a character that distinguishes her from any other adolescent female character in Austen's novels or indeed those of any other writer. Tanner himself is cognisant of this as he continues

I would draw attention to the phrase used when Catherine is looking into the cabinet at all the (empty) drawers: there is 'in the centre, a small door, closed also with a lock and key (which) secured in all probability a cavity of importance'. This suggests to me a thinly veiled image of virginity, and if that seems far-fetched and perverse just let me suggest that there were more mysteries and possible problems and terrors in the transition from virginity to marriage — indeed, in that 'cavity of importance' — for a young girl such as Jane Austen was writing about than in *Udolpho* or any other novel, 'Gothic' or not, which Catherine may have read.³⁶

By this summation, and in accord with Freud's proposition, Catherine is no different in her psychological make-up than any other girl of her age. The same may be said of Tanner's explicitly Freudian reflection that Marianne Dashwood suffers from 'neurosis brought on by repression', or Wynne's surmise that Elizabeth's feelings towards her parents 'correspond well to Freud's description [...] from a 1919 essay, on the affections of a little girl that are fixed

³⁵ In one of Freud's most well-known case histories, The Wolf Man, a young boy's libidinal feelings towards his father are repressed and substituted by fear of wolves. See 'From the History of an Infantile Neurosis (1918)' in *Standard Ed.* (1917-19), XVII, 3ff. I do not contend that Tanner is necessarily familiar with and influenced directly by the specific case of The Wolf Man, only that, whether he wishes to acknowledge it or not, the notions contained within Tanner's analysis are Freudian. I provide further detail of Freud's theory in Chapter One of this thesis to follow.

³⁶ Tanner, p. 49.

on her father, “[...] who has probably done all he could to win her love, and in this way has sown the seeds of an attitude of hatred and rivalry towards her mother”³⁷ For Freud the phenomena of repression and the direction of a young child’s libido towards one parent and rivalry against the other are universal psychic processes.³⁸ Thus, when the characters are analysed in this way, for me they lose their intrinsic individuality and become instead simply examples or illustrations of the ways in which the psychic dynamics postulated by Freud to exist in all humans might be manifested.

I would go further to say that it is difficult to conceive of how this form of analysis is able to shed light on the form and degree of the often-acknowledged extraordinary psychological perceptiveness of the author herself. It may be, as Tanner submits, that Austen’s reference to ‘a cavity of importance’ is a ‘thinly veiled image of virginity’. It may even be that Mrs Bennet ‘stirring the fire’ while Mr. Collins transfers his intentions for marriage from Jane to Elizabeth, and the same character’s invitation to Mr. Bingley, ‘When you have killed all your own birds [...] I beg you will come here, and shoot as many as you please’ are both laden with ‘erotic innuendo’ as Wynne claims.³⁹ However, for Freud, the point of symbolic or metaphorical imagery is to shield the conscious mind from any threat to the psyche that may be posed by the conscious awareness of potentially dangerous thoughts, desires or motivations, especially those of a sexual nature. This would be as true for Austen as for any other author. The very theory that leads to the interpretations cited above would hold that any sexual content that may be observed in Austen’s writing would have emerged unbidden and unconsciously, and could be interpreted only under certain conditions of psychoanalysis. Wynne himself states this clearly and simply when he writes: ‘Jane Austen’s showing such communication in operation has no tendency to entail that she ‘knew’ she had

³⁷ Tanner, p. 99; Wynne, p. 111.

³⁸ Freud applied the terms ‘Oedipal complex’ and ‘Electra complex’ to these processes in boys and girls respectively. All aspects of the Oedipal and Electra complexes are explained in ‘The Ego and the Id’, in *Standard Ed.* (1923-25), XIX, 31-32.

³⁹ Quotations respectively; Tanner, p.49, Wynne, p. 115. The quotations cited from Austen refer respectively to the moment at which Mr. Collins ‘had only to change from Jane to Elizabeth—and it was soon done—done while Mrs. Bennet was stirring the fire.’ *Pride and Prejudice*, I:15, 79 and to Bingley’s visit to Longbourn to resume his courtship to Jane towards the end of the novel; *Pride and Prejudice*, III:11, 373.

done so'.⁴⁰ The supposition of a lack of conscious awareness on the part of the author inherent in a Freudian interpretation of Austen's work renders impossible the identification, or indeed attribution, of any special psychological insight on Austen's part.

My particular background as an integrative psychotherapist leads me to notice and ascribe significance to aspects of Austen's novels, and of her characters, in ways that are quite different from those derived from psychoanalysis as described above. The interpretations that I offer in this thesis are inspired most particularly by key elements of theory and psychotherapeutic practice within the fields of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Transactional Analysis and, especially, Rogerian Client-Centered therapy. My reading of Austen's novels has been informed as well by the model of Emotional Intelligence which incorporates important elements of Cognitive-Behavioural and Rogerian principles. These models rely for their understanding of human nature and psychology to a much lesser degree on theories regarding the workings of the unconscious mind and to a much greater extent on the *consciously observable* behaviour and characteristics of a person. Their formulations regard the particular, observable qualities and mannerisms of each individual person as indicative of a state of mind, being or purpose that relates specifically to that individual in a certain place and time, and they construe the nature of the individual according to their different theoretical frameworks. On this basis, I take Austen's descriptions of her characters and the structures of her narratives at face value. I do not attempt to glean from her writing any psychosexual or other form of unconscious psychodynamic force that she may have been unconsciously concealing from herself and her readers. Rather, my interest is to explore ways in which Austen expressed consciously and deliberately something that she wanted her readers to see and to understand about her characters, and perhaps, through those characters, something about themselves.

⁴⁰ Wynne, p. 98. See also, Norman N. Holland, *Holland's Guide to Psychoanalytic Psychology and Literature-and-Psychology*. Holland sees an author, like a patient, shaping 'unconscious material into consciously acceptable speech [...] one could interpret the dreamer's account of a dream this way [...] if you look for wishes and defences in a piece of language, you will find them', pp. 63-64.

In Chapters Two and Three of this thesis I present detailed readings of Austen's characters from the perspectives of the different major schools of psychotherapy that I identify above. Here I provide a brief example of my interpretation of Elizabeth Bennet in comparison with Lady Catherine de Bourgh to introduce my approach.

Austen's insight, characters and intention: a Rogerian view

It hardly needs to be said that there is already a vast body of non-psychoanalytic critical analysis of Austen's work in general, and of her characters; the emergence and development of this canon is documented most comprehensively in the collections of reviews edited by Brian Southam and Ian Littlewood.⁴¹ The critiques contained in these publications, as well as in individually-authored texts to which I will refer throughout this thesis, present observations on Austen's novels from a range of literary, political, historical and cultural viewpoints. In these critiques, terms are sometimes used that have significance in my reading of Austen from a psychotherapeutic perspective, but which, in the context of that psychotherapeutic perspective, have subtly different meanings. A significant example of this is the term, 'autonomy', which has a specific technical definition in the work of renowned psychotherapist, Carl Rogers. Rogers gave primacy in his seminal works to the development of an individual's personal autonomy in the process of psychotherapy. Rogers' theory holds that the possession of a high level of self-aware, self-valuing personal autonomy is requisite for a person to maintain a sense of personal efficacy and of inner psychological and emotional comfort and ease. His theory holds that autonomy involves both self-understanding and self-direction. From this viewpoint, autonomy is characterised by the ability to act firmly according to one's own beliefs, values, will and choices, but not solely by this. Crucially it is equally characterised by the ability to allow other people to act in the same

⁴¹ See B.C. Southam, ed. *Critical Essays on Jane Austen* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, Volume 1, 1811-1870* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, Volume 2, 1870-1940* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), *Jane Austen: Northanger Abbey and Persuasion. A Selection of Critical Essays*, and *Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice and Mansfield Park. A Selection of Critical Essays* (Hants. UK: Macmillan, 1976). Ian Littlewood, *Critical Assessments*, 4 vols. (East Sussex: Helm Information, 1998). See also Janet Todd, *Jane Austen In Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) for overviews and commentaries on early to more recent critical impressions of Austen's work.

way according to theirs. Thus, an individual is autonomous to the extent that they possess a high level of self-awareness and self-worth such that these qualities exist independently of the approval, validation, or compliance of others.⁴²

Given the importance of the concept of autonomy within my field of psychotherapy, it has been particularly interesting to me to note instances where the term has arisen in existing analyses of certain of Austen's characters, along with the words 'assertive' and/or 'aggressive' to describe a character's expression of their autonomy in communication with others. In the cases of these reviews, I recognise how the specific definitions of the terms 'autonomy', 'assertive' and 'aggressive' that I derive from my psychotherapeutic background lead me to very different interpretations of the nature of those characters, and thereby to different inferences with regard to Austen's intention for those characters. My response to Deborah Kaplan's analysis of Elizabeth Bennet is illustrative of this difference. Kaplan writes:

Under the cover of irony she sometimes assumes a dictatorial persona. Irony, because it is play, gives her license to dominate, but it does not nullify the impact of her assertive, indeed aggressive verbal behaviour [...] in her playfully domineering role, she refuses the silence and subordination marked out for women

And further:

Elizabeth, as we have seen, speaks out boldly, but the novel does not locate her voice specifically within a community of women. Elizabeth is more likely to be verbally aggressive with Mr Darcy, Mr. Bingley, or Lady Catherine than with intimate female friends [...]. Although her forceful talk

⁴² See Carl R. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, and *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* (London: Constable, 1961). Rogers formulated a model for the relationship between a therapist and their client that he considered would enable the client to achieve genuine self-understanding and self-direction; in other words, greater self-awareness and personal autonomy. I explain this model, along with Rogers' focus and views on the development of personal autonomy in detail in Chapter One of this thesis.

may betray a striking sense of autonomy, she does not make autonomy a topic of conversation with Jane or Charlotte or her aunt.⁴³

Kaplan's commentary above concurs in general with a strand of feminist criticism that ascribes a complex psychological conflict to Austen and other female writers of her time. Such criticism holds that while Austen conceived, and wished to express, rebelliousness against the patriarchy within which she was confined, nevertheless she had internalised the patriarchal paradigm to such a degree that, at the same time, she desired also to be accepted within her male-dominated social milieu.⁴⁴ The proposition from this point of view is that Austen invokes female characters in her novels who could behave in ways, or occupy positions, contrary to those permitted by society, but that she protects herself from censure by ensuring that 'unrestrained' or 'unconventional' behaviour in female characters was negated or at least modified, by 'qualifying strategies'.⁴⁵ For Kaplan, Austen allows Elizabeth to engage in 'aggressive' verbal communication only with male characters, with the exception of Lady Catherine. This effectively serves to place Elizabeth, along with Lady Catherine, outwith the 'community of women' in her readers' eyes, and thus disguises any support the author may have for the greater empowerment of women.

Such an interpretation of Elizabeth's behaviour, which aligns Elizabeth's manner with that of Lady Catherine, does provide support for a view of Austen as equivocal in her support of greater autonomy for women. For me, however, it is possible to construe Austen's characterisation of Elizabeth in this way only if one assumes that the word 'autonomous' is synonymous with the words 'bold', 'dictatorial', 'domineering', and 'forceful', and that the terms 'aggressive' and

⁴³ Deborah Kaplan, *Jane Austen Among Women* (London: The John Hopkins Press, 1994), p. 186, p. 194.

⁴⁴ This opinion was expressed most starkly by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their influential feminist polemic regarding women writers of the Nineteenth Century, *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984). For a range of comments on Austen's work from a feminist perspective, see also Judith Lowder Newton, *Women, Power, and Subversion: Social Strategies in British Fiction, 1778-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), LeRoy W. Smith, *Jane Austen and The Drama of Woman* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987), Claudia Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) and Mary Poovey's commentary on Austen in *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁴⁵ Kaplan, p. 190.

'assertive' are synonymous with each other. From my perspective this is far from the case. In fact, according to the definitions of the terms 'autonomous', 'aggressive' and 'assertive' that inform my approach, autonomy exists in opposition to dominance over others, and assertiveness in interactions with others is quite different in quality and intention from aggression or forcefulness. As I stated above, for me autonomy involves not only a person's ability to determine their own values, choices and actions, but also their willingness to allow others to do likewise. This enables the individual to adopt a form of communication through which they express their thoughts, feelings and wishes clearly and confidently without belligerently or forcefully attempting to impose their will upon others, for example by manipulations, threats or personal insults. This constitutes the definition of assertiveness which informs my understanding of Austen's characters.⁴⁶

Seen in this light, my perception is that while Lady Catherine has a great degree of authority, she is almost entirely lacking in autonomy. The character's sense of self appears to be nearly wholly dependent upon the esteem in which she is held by others and by the degree to which they will accept her dictatorship over them. Lady Catherine's conduct is aggressive even when she speaks quietly or smiles, because her consistent intent is to stifle the autonomy of others and gain dominance over them. Elizabeth, on the other hand, commands little authority in terms of social status, yet she models the nature and assertive expression of autonomy consistently in her interactions with all of the other characters in the novel, both male and female.⁴⁷ For example, I note

⁴⁶ The *OED* defines 'assertion' as, 'Of the nature of, or characterized by, assertion; declaratory, affirmative; positive, dogmatic'. In psychotherapeutic, personal developmental terms, assertive communication essentially and explicitly takes into account the views, needs and beliefs of others. I draw clear distinctions between passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive communication styles in my own published work, see Adrienne Green and John Humphrey, *Coaching For Resilience A Practical Guide to Using Positive Psychology* (London: Kogan Page, 2012), see pp. 109-122. See also, for example, Robert Alberti and Michael Emmans, *Your Perfect Right: Assertiveness and Equality in Your Life and Relationships* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2017), Conrad and Suzanne Potts, *Assertiveness: How To Be Strong in Every Situation* (Oxford: Capstone, 2013), Julie de Azevedo Hanks, *The Assertiveness Guide for Women: How to Communicate Your Needs, Set Healthy Boundaries and Transform Your Relationships* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2013), and Windy Dryden and Daniel Constantinou, *Assertiveness Step by Step* (London: Sheldon Press, 2004).

⁴⁷ The *OED* dates the use of the word 'autonomy' back to 1591, at which time the term was used in a political context to denote the self-government of a State or Institution. The concept acquired more individualistic connotations through moral philosophy from the late eighteenth century, however the

her straightforward response to Jane Bennet's ambivalence when Elizabeth relays to her Mr. Wickham's account of Mr. Darcy's alleged treatment of him. Jane remarks: "It is difficult indeed—it is distressing.—One does not know what to think.", to which Elizabeth replies: "I beg your pardon;—one knows exactly what to think."⁴⁸ While Elizabeth may be misguided in her judgement of Mr. Darcy at this point, this does not detract from the assertiveness of her reply to Jane. The character is similarly self-assured with her mother and her friend, Charlotte Lucas, as well as with Miss Bingley whose aggressive approaches she counters without recourse to similarly personal attacks:

"Miss Eliza Bennet," said Miss Bingley, "despises cards. She is a great reader and has no pleasure in anything else."

"I deserve neither such praise nor censure," cried Elizabeth; "I am *not* a great reader, and I have pleasure in many things."⁴⁹

Elizabeth speaks her mind and expresses her views and wishes 'boldly' at times, and she behaves according to her own values even where this incurs other people's displeasure and disapproval. Yet she is never aggressive. Elizabeth at no time attempts to force, manipulate or cajole any other character to act as she would herself, or as she would wish them to.

From this perspective, one may observe that Elizabeth is equally assertive, yet never aggressive, in her encounters with Lady Catherine. I expand on my perceptions of Elizabeth and Lady Catherine in Chapter Three of this thesis. To illustrate briefly here, however, I contrast the behaviour of the two characters during their climactic confrontation over Elizabeth's possible engagement to Mr Darcy.⁵⁰ To paraphrase Elizabeth's own reflection towards the end of their exchange, Lady Catherine insults her personally and her family

more general usage of the word to denote 'liberty to follow one's will; control over one's own affairs; freedom from external influence, personal independence' is first recorded by the *OED* in 1803. Austen does not use the precise word in her writing, however, as I aim to demonstrate in this thesis, autonomy is a continuous and central theme in Austen's novels, and her interpretation of the notion of autonomy and the ways in which that state of being is manifested closely resembles that which underlies the aims and practices of modern-day psychotherapy.

⁴⁸ *Pride and Prejudice*, I:17, 96.

⁴⁹ *Pride and Prejudice*, I:8, 40-41 (Austen's italics).

⁵⁰ See *Pride and Prejudice*, III:14, 391-397.

in every way possible in order to gain her acquiescence. Yet Elizabeth does not respond in kind. She challenges and questions Lady Catherine, however she makes no attack on Lady Catherine at a personal level. I note further that, as their argument draws to a conclusion, Elizabeth does not attempt even to persuade Lady Catherine to the courtesy of returning into the house with her. When her mother questions her as to why the visitor did not come in, Elizabeth replies simply that, 'She did not choose it [...] she would go.'⁵¹ In these aspects of the interaction between the two characters, I recognise the distinctions that I myself would make between 'aggressive' and 'assertive' forms of both verbal and non-verbal communication, and between 'autonomy and 'authority'. This leads me to a reading of the characters, and thus of Austen's purpose for them, that is very different from those exemplified by Kaplan above. Furthermore, for me, the contrast that I highlight between Elizabeth and Lady Catherine throws into question Gilbert and Gubar's proposition that Lady Catherine 'is herself in some ways an appropriate mother to Elizabeth because the two women are surprisingly similar', and that of Smith who states of Elizabeth that 'she wishes to prove the superiority of her own judgement in order to feel a sense of power', and through this runs the risk of becoming like Lady Catherine, 'a shrew, the caricatured opposite of the compliant woman'.⁵² From my perspective, Elizabeth and Lady Catherine are different in such a fundamental way that they are not, nor could ever be, by any means alike.

The discipline-specific definitions of terms that I bring to my reading inform my understanding of the behaviour exhibited by the characters of Elizabeth and Lady Catherine. I perceive additionally that Austen offers an insight into the psychological and emotional implications of the possession of autonomy or otherwise of these two characters. To use Alan Richardson's term, the insight that I observe in Austen's portrayal of the characters resonates strongly with a reading that a psychotherapist might draw of their internal states. Essentially, from the standpoint of the Rogerian principle as summarised above, an individual's psychological and emotional well-being depends upon

⁵¹ *Pride and Prejudice*, III:14, 397.

⁵² Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 172; Smith, *Jane Austen & The Drama of Women*, p. 91.

the possession of autonomy. Therefore, from this therapeutic viewpoint, I would anticipate that the absence of autonomy would be likely to constitute a source of uncomfortable and sometimes even painful anxiety for the individual involved. It is a sense of this discomfort and unease that I glean from the character of Lady Catherine from the first moments of Austen's introduction of the character into the novel. In Chapter Three of this thesis, I demonstrate ways in which, from a psychotherapeutic perspective, it is possible to adduce clear evidence for an intention on Austen's part to reveal this element of vulnerability within Lady Catherine, and for her readers to respond to the character with an element of compassion.

The words 'vulnerability' and 'compassion' are not terms that commentators on Austen's novels have employed to describe Lady Catherine, as I will show in an overview of responses to the character in Chapter Three. Aside from the views of critics writing from a political perspective such as Kaplan, for the most part, Lady Catherine has been regarded as a minor character, a one-dimensional figure, a comic caricature used by the author simply to contribute to the humorous element of the novel, or to emphasise the complexity and centrality of the more major characters. This is the case even on the rare occasions on which writers have remarked more penetratingly on Lady Catherine's lack of ability to make self-directed choices and her psychological dependency on others. For Alex Woloch, Lady Catherine's dependency is comical.⁵³ Marvin Mudrick proposes that the character's lack of self-awareness and self-determination places her in the category of 'the simple people'.⁵⁴ I would agree that, on one level, Lady Catherine is a comic character. However, as I explain above, from Austen's portrayal of her I infer a state of mind and emotion in the character that is more inductive of concern than amusement. Furthermore, from my perspective, lack of autonomy is as complex as the possession of it, and at least as interesting. Therefore, for me, Lady Catherine is as complex and significant a character as Elizabeth Bennet, and the relationship

⁵³ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), see p. 48.

⁵⁴ Marvin Mudrick, *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 123.

between the two is as important as that between Elizabeth and Mr Darcy in fulfilling what I perceive to be Austen's purpose for the novel.

The example I provide above from a Rogerian psychotherapeutic perspective demonstrates one of the ways in which my background in psychotherapy leads me to perceptions of Austen's characters that differ from, or expand upon, the views presented by other critics. As I state above, I discuss the characters of Elizabeth Bennet and Lady Catherine in greater depth in Chapter Three of this thesis. I also present interpretations of Catherine Morland and Charlotte Lucas who, from this Rogerian viewpoint, emerge as surprisingly autonomous individuals. As well in Chapter Three, I explore Mary Crawford's character and *Persuasion's* Mrs. Smith from the perspectives of Transactional Analysis and Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy respectively. In Chapter Two I engage in an extensive analysis of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood in the context of the model of Emotional Intelligence. In Chapter One to follow, I identify the proponents of each of schools of psychotherapy that inform this thesis, provide details of seminal and other relevant publications, and explain the theories and principles that underlie each of the models under discussion.

Over the course of this thesis I engage also with a central question that has occupied commentators on Austen's work. This is the question of whether Austen took a didactic moral stance in her novels, and it is one that has given rise to differing opinions. Eighteenth-century novelist and literary historian, Clara Reeve, states that 'the great and important duty of a writer is, to point out the difference between Virtue and Vice, to shew one rewarded, and the other punished'.⁵⁵ According to Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen shared Reeve's opinion, and was strongly influenced by religious and other conservative conduct-advice literature of the time.⁵⁶ Butler's perception of Austen is of an author shielded by her religion against the intellectual influences of the Enlightenment, and using

⁵⁵ Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, Through Times, Countries and Manners, With Remarks on the Good and Bad Effects of It on Them Respectively: In a Course of Evening Conversations*, 2 vols. (Colchester: W. Keymar, 1785. Facsimile reproduced by Editions d'Aujourd'hui, 1980), vol. 2, p. 95.

⁵⁶ See Butler's pivotal works: *Jane Austen and The War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), and *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

her literary art for morally didactic ends; 'not for the sake of the subject, but in order to give an appropriate morally objective ground against which the character can be judged'.⁵⁷ Thus, for Butler, Austen is unforgiving and punitive towards those of her characters who fall short of the author's 'pre-conceived and inflexible' morality, and writes as such in the service of her readers' moral instruction and improvement.⁵⁸ Mary Waldron takes the contrary view that Austen was discontented with the fiction that existed because of 'the fixed moral programme which justified the existence of many a contemporary novel' and which 'led to the interpolation of passages of "solemn specious nonsense — about something unconnected with the story"'.⁵⁹ Waldron's view is that Austen was concerned primarily to 'keep faith with her readers', and not to abandon her commitment to relate natural conduct and credible scenarios in order to make moral points.⁶⁰ She also considers that Austen 'complicates the interplay

⁵⁷ The quotation in this instance is with reference specifically to *Northanger Abbey* and exemplifies Butler's view. See *Jane Austen and The War of Ideas*, p. 173. A contrasting view is taken by Olivia Murphy who takes the view that Austen was 'a critical reader: interrogating and evaluating the literature of her day', and that 'it was critical practice that enabled her to find new possibilities for the novel, while laying the compulsory didacticism of the eighteenth century to rest.' See, Olivia Murphy, *Jane Austen The Reader: The Artist as Critic*, (Houndsmills, Hants.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. x, p. 61.

⁵⁸ *Jane Austen and The War of Ideas*, p. 298. Similar views on Austen have been expressed by, for example, Jan Fergus, *Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel* (Totowa: Barnes & Noble, 1983), and John Carey, *What Good are the Arts?* (London: Faber and Faber 2005). Carey sees Austen as influenced by the eighteenth-century secularisation of morality. For him, Austen achieves her moral purpose through her ridicule of certain of her characters whom she wishes her readers to perceive as morally contemptible. A contrasting view is taken by Olivia Murphy who takes the view that Austen was 'a critical reader: interrogating and evaluating the literature of her day', and that 'it was critical practice that enabled her to find new possibilities for the novel, while laying the compulsory didacticism of the eighteenth century to rest.' Olivia Murphy, *Jane Austen The Reader: The Artist as Critic*, (Houndsmills, Hants.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. x, p. 61.

⁵⁹ Mary Waldron, *Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time* ([1999] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, paperback edn, 2001), p. 13. The reference to 'solemn specious nonsense' is quoted from a letter from Austen to Cassandra with regard to *Pride and Prejudice*, as Southam explains, 'referring to the contemporary practice of using fiction [...] as a means of moral or educational improvement'. See Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts: A Study of The Author's Development Through the Surviving Papers* (London: The Athlone Press, 2001), p. 83. For Austen's letter to Cassandra see *Letters*, 80, 4th February 1813, pp. 211-213 (p. 212).

⁶⁰ Waldron, p. 34. A similar point, although on a different issue, was made by Virginia Woolf in her essay, 'Women Novelists', on the effect on women writers' fiction of the presence of a comment on the rights or social position of women. Woolf writes: 'The genius of Jane Austen and Emily Bronte is never more convincing than in their power to ignore such claims and solicitations and to hold on their way unperturbed by scorn or censure.' Virginia Woolf, *Selected Essays*, ed. by David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 135. For an opposing view see Harold Child, 'Jane Austen', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. by Sir A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, 15 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907-1921), XII (1915), pp. 231-244. Child remarks in relation to *Sense and Sensibility*, 'In the conduct of the novel, the feebleness of Edward Ferrars, the nonentity of Colonel Brandon and the meanness of the Steele sisters are all a little exaggerated, as if

of fictional forms and leaves the reader unsure whether to approve or disapprove of the heroine', thus deliberately creating moral ambiguities and inviting readers to reach their own conclusions.⁶¹ Waldron is supported in her opinion by Peter Knox-Shaw who confronts Butler's arguments directly with his belief that the author was influenced significantly by the moral scepticism of Enlightenment thinkers, especially Adam Smith.⁶²

I am in agreement with Waldron and with Knox-Shaw. As Knox-Shaw points out, Adam Smith's interest was on an individual's development of self-command mediated by their need for social approval and empathy for others and, from my perspective as a psychotherapist, I perceive this summary to encapsulate Austen's primary concern in her writing. Like Waldron, I observe Austen's presentation of moral ambiguities in her novels. In diametric opposition to Butler's opinion, I see in Austen's portrayal of all of her characters a non-judgemental and empathic sense of the instinctive and psychological needs that underlie and drive human behaviour, as well as forthright congruence in her illustration of their foibles. For example, while John Carey interprets Austen's critical description of Mrs Musgrove's emotionally demonstrative grieving for the loss of her son as unempathetic and morally contemptuous, my view is that Austen's comment on the artificiality of the character's mourning is not a moral one.⁶³ To me, Austen does not condemn

Jane Austen's desire to make her point had interfered with her complete control of her material' (p. 237).

⁶¹ Waldron, p. 34. In this view, Waldron echoes that of Lloyd Brown who writes that Austen educates her readers through her characters 'talking at cross purposes' and thereby presenting different viewpoints for her readers to reflect upon; Lloyd W. Brown, *Bits of Ivory: Narrative Techniques in Jane Austen's Fiction* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1923), p. 178. For Rachel Brownstein, it is Austen's use of irony that 'thwarts readers in search of straight answers to big questions'; Brownstein, 'Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. by Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 34.

⁶² See Peter Knox-Shaw, *Jane Austen and The Enlightenment*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁶³ Carey interprets Austen's presentation of Mrs. Musgrove as an expression of the author's view that 'it is all right to laugh at a mother weeping for her son, so long as she is fat'. He contrasts Austen with Wordsworth, concluding that Wordsworth's notion of 'comfort in the strength of love' is 'far beyond her orbit', Carey, *What Good are the Arts?*, p. 191. See also Mudrick, *Jane Austen: Irony as Defence and Discovery*, pp. 212-213 for a similar view. Writing earlier, Walter Allen too observes contemptuousness in Austen's writing: 'Miss Austen is never angry with her characters, but contempt for the silly and affected and stupid is constant in her work [...] the tone of contempt becomes drier in each succeeding book', see Walter Allen, *The English Novel: A Short Critical History* (London: Phoenix House, 1954), p. 110.

Mrs. Musgrove for her behaviour, she simply reveals her overblown expressions of grief to be inappropriate and inauthentic, and therefore more likely to elicit amusement than sympathy. Austen registers this in Captain Wentworth's 'too transient an indulgence of self-amusement to be detected' and immediately counteracts that response with a quite poignant illustration of Wentworth 'almost instantly afterwards coming up to the sofa [...] and entered into a conversation with (Mrs. Musgrove), in a low voice, about her son, doing it with so much sympathy and grace, as shewed the kindest consideration for all that was real and absurd in the parent's feelings.'⁶⁴ Here, Austen is congruent in articulating the lack of authenticity in Mrs. Musgrove's emotionality, yet, through the character of Wentworth, still demonstrates acceptance of, and empathy with, both the mother's genuine grief and her need to exaggerate her heartbreak. These are all qualities that Carl Rogers deemed to be essential qualities for a psychotherapist to adopt in order to build an effective psychotherapeutic relationship, as I explain in the chapter to follow.

It is important to note here that, although I identify Rogerian psychotherapeutic conditions in the example that I discuss above, I do not intend to argue that Austen set out to adopt the role of a 'psychotherapist' in relation to her readers. However, my perception of psychotherapeutic principles throughout Austen's work leads me to suggest a possible intentionality on the part of the author to bring about what we would now call a 'therapeutic' shift in her readers towards an enhanced understanding, not of any form of fixed moral code, but of the self, and a movement towards greater self-directed autonomy.⁶⁵ My view is that Austen achieves this effect by leading

⁶⁴ *Persuasion*, I:8, 73. See also D. W. Harding who, notwithstanding his perception of a moralistic inclination on Austen's part, nevertheless acknowledged this scene to be one of 'fine discrimination as well as toughness'. See D. W. Harding, 'An Introduction to *Persuasion*', in *Regulated Hatred and Other Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. by Monica Lawlor (London: Athlone Press, 1998), pp. 147-170, p. 164.

⁶⁵ For comments on the therapeutic use and effects of Austen's novels, see Marilyn Francus, 'Austen Therapy: *Pride and Prejudice* and Popular Culture', in *Persuasions On-line: Journal of The Jane Austen Society of North America*, 30:2, (Spring, 2010) <<http://jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol30no2/francus.html#8>> (accessed May 15, 2017). Francus presents a comprehensive overview which looks at publications such as Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (London: Picador, 1996) and *Bridget Jones and the Edge of Reason* (London: Picador, 1999), and Karen Joy Fowler's *The Jane Austen Book Club* (London: Plume, 2005) in this context. See also Sarah Raff, *Jane Austen's Erotic Advice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) for an interesting perspective on Austen's intention in this regard.

her readers through a process which closely compares to that which Stanley Fish refers to as ‘not so much a teaching as an ‘intangling’’ [sic].⁶⁶ That is, I suggest that Austen involves the reader in a negotiation through uncertainties, as opposed to attempting to influence her readers in a particular direction by the more straightforwardly didactic means employed by contemporary commentators such as Johnson, Gregory and Fordyce.⁶⁷ Over the course of this thesis I indicate instances which strike me as particularly indicative of Austen’s intention in this regard. To this extent, one may locate this project within the sphere of contemporary biblio-therapeutic publications which draw on literary works to provide therapeutic guidance to readers. Alain de Botton, for example, refers to the works of Proust for this purpose, while a number of writers note the potential therapeutic benefits of guidance based on Austen’s novels.⁶⁸

I concur with Alan Richardson that it would be inappropriate to suggest that Austen’s novels reveal a prescience of future models of psychotherapy on

⁶⁶ The therapeutic development of the reader through a process of the negotiation of textual ambiguities is explored by Stanley Fish in his analysis of the transformational effects on the reader of *Paradise Lost*. See Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), preface, p. x. I note again Lloyd Brown’s observation that Austen educates her readers through conversations in which her characters are ‘talking at cross-purposes’ thereby presenting different viewpoints that readers have to ‘unravel’: Brown, *Bits of Ivory: Narrative Techniques in Jane Austen’s Fiction*, p. 178.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Samuel Johnson, *Rambler*, published 1750-1762, 4 vols ([London: W. Suttaby, 1809), and *The Idler*, published 1758-1760, 2 vols ([1761] London: W. Suttaby, 1810). See also, Johnson, ‘The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia’, [1759] repr. from the first edn in ‘*A Johnson Reader*’, ed. by E. L. McAdam, Jr., and George Milne (New York: The Modern Library, 1964), pp. 216-314. The story of *Rasselas* opens with a clearly didactic instruction to readers: ‘Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas prince of Abissinia’ (p. 216). Dr. John Gregory, *Legacy to His Daughters* ([1774]. London: Scott, Webster and Geary, 1837). Revd. James Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*, 2 vols (London: T. Cadell & J. Dodsley, 1775). See also, Revd. John Bennett, *Letters to a young lady, on a variety of useful and interesting subjects: calculated to improve the heart, to form the manners, and enlighten the understanding*, 3rd edn (Dublin: J. Jones, 1791), and *Strictures on Female Education; chiefly as it relates to the Culture of the Heart. In in four essays* (Dublin, J. Jones, 1798) and Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, For the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest. By A Lover of her Sex*, (London: 1694), housed in Austen’s brother Edward’s library at Chawton House, and therefore quite likely to have been read by Austen.

⁶⁸ Alain de Botton, *How Proust can Change Your Life* (London, Picador, 1997). Publications that draw on the therapeutic potential of Austen’s novels include: Laura Henderson *Jane Austen’s Guide to Romance: The Regency Rules*, ebook (London, Headline Publishing Group, 2005), Elizabeth Kantor, *The Jane Austen Guide to Happily Ever After* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing Inc., 2012), and Lori Smith, *The Jane Austen Guide to Life: Thoughtful Lessons for the Modern Woman*. Rebecca Smith draws refers to Austen’s novels for reflections and advice on modern-day psychological, emotional, relationship issues, as well as practical dilemmas in: *Jane Austen’s Guide to Modern Life’s Dilemmas: Answers to your Most Burning Questions About Life, Love, Happiness (and What to Wear)* (East Sussex: Ivy Press, 2014).

her part. However, I propose that there are strong resonances between features of Austen's characterisations and narratives and twentieth-century psychotherapeutic understandings and formulations. I propose also that this occurs to an extent that not only validates critical acknowledgements of her unique psychological insights but also provides systematic, structured theoretical frameworks, constructs and concepts by which the author's insights may be more specifically defined. My primary intention in this thesis is to identify these resonances where I observe them to arise, and to demonstrate the ways in which they illuminate aspects of Austen's characterisations and, thereby, her extraordinary perceptiveness in respect of the nature of human beings and their interactions with one another.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC MODELS

It will not, in this respect, be sufficient for us to use the seeming *Logick* of a famous Modern, and say “*We think*: therefore *We are*. [...] the question is, “what constitutes the *We* or *I*?” (Earl of Shaftesbury)⁶⁹

In this chapter I provide explanations of the twentieth- to twenty-first-century models of psychotherapy which have informed my reading of Austen’s novels. There are three major schools within the field of modern psychotherapy: Psycho-Analytic, Cognitive-Behavioural and Humanistic. Offshoots within each of these schools modify the schools’ central theoretical formulations and practical applications to a greater or lesser extent.⁷⁰ It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine all of these aspects of the different major models of psychotherapy, nor would it be necessary to do so to reveal the extent to which a view from my psychotherapeutic perspective offers a differently nuanced understanding of the themes and characters of Austen’s novels. This chapter will focus only on the theoretical propositions and emergent psychotherapeutic practices encompassed by the most influential branches of each, as propounded and practiced by their originators.

Sigmund Freud is credited with the development of the first of the structured, non-medicalised treatments of psychological disorders.⁷¹ Therefore, this account of the different models of psychotherapy inevitably begins with Freud and the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. The following explanation

⁶⁹ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 3 vols (London, 1749), III, p. 132 (Author’s italics).

⁷⁰ See Dryden and Reeves, eds, *The Handbook of Individual Therapy* and John C. Norcroft, *The History of Psychotherapy: Continuity and Change*, 2nd edn (Washington D.C.: American Psychological Assoc., 2010) for detailed and comprehensive overviews of the forms and development of modern psychotherapy.

⁷¹ Although psychological disorders were recognised and treated prior to Freud, this was primarily by means of physical interventions. The prescriptions for such conditions laid out by Theophrastus Paracelsus (1493-1541) influenced approaches to such conditions for centuries to follow. See his treatise, ‘The Diseases That Deprive Man of His Reason, such as St. Vitus’ Dance, Falling Sickness, Melancholy, and Insanity, and Their Correct Treatment’, in *Paracelsus: Four Treatises*, ed. by Henri E. Sigerist (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1941; paperback edn, 1996), pp. 127-212. For a wider exploration of the historical development of psychotherapy see, *The History of Psychotherapy: From Healing Magic to Encounter*, ed. by Jan Ehrenwald (New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1991) and D. Hothersall, *History of Psychology* (San Francisco: McGraw Hill, 2004).

of the principles of psychoanalysis and the way in which these evolved will provide further substance for the reservations with regard to psychoanalytic readings of Austen's novels that I expressed in the Introduction to this thesis. It will also illustrate the fundamental elements of Freud's theory which, in spite of these reservations, I believe serve to explain to some extent the potentially psychotherapeutically transformational effects of Austen's novels on her readers.

1.1. Psychoanalysis: Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Psychoanalysis is based on Freud's theory of the dynamic relationship between the unconscious and conscious minds. His theory is often referred to as 'psychodynamic' for this reason. The recognition that there are aspects of human beings' conscious experience that appear to originate from somewhere outside of conscious awareness pre-dates Freud by some centuries.⁷² Crucially however, following Descartes' delineation of conscious awareness as the defining characteristic of the mind, phenomena that appeared to emerge without conscious consideration such as dreams, imagination or suddenly occurring ideas or revelations, were deemed to be by-products of somatic or physiological processes operating within the body, and thus placed outside the scope of an understanding of the mind.⁷³ Yet, as Law Whyte states, the phenomenon of the unconscious as experienced by religious, literary, philosophical and scientific thinkers of the time seemed inexplicable within the constraints imposed by Descartes' dualism. They were therefore drawn to explore the possibility that unconscious processes were actually mental events. Law Whyte reflects: '*the idea of unconscious mental processes was, in many of its aspects, conceivable around 1700, topical around 1800, and became effective around 1900*'.⁷⁴ That is, with Freud.

⁷² For overviews and analyses of pre-Freudian conceptions of the unconscious, see Lancelot Law Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1962) and the encyclopaedic exploration provided by Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious Mind. The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

⁷³ René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode* (1637). See Descartes, *A Discourse on the Method*, trans. by Ian Mclean (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁷⁴ Law Whyte, p.63. Whyte's italics.

Freud himself acknowledged that he was not the first to perceive, identify and attempt to articulate the nature of the unconscious.⁷⁵ Yet, there can be little argument that his theory was unprecedented in the intricacy of its descriptions of the location, content and activity of the unconscious, and of the part that it plays in the behaviour of healthy people as well as in the aetiology of the various forms of mental ill-health. Freud's great concern was that his work in the field of psychoanalysis should be regarded as scientific, with all the credibility that such a categorisation would afford it. This was substantially enabled by his location of the unconscious firmly within the realm of the mind and thereby to render it available for observation and measurement, and accessible to psychological analysis and psychotherapeutic intervention.⁷⁶ The establishment of the unconscious within the mind formed the foundation of Freud's theory, and the relationship that he posited between the unconscious and the conscious parts of the mind, which I describe below, became the basis for modern psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

The Freudian conscious and unconscious minds

Freud's theory holds that not only is the unconscious a mental entity, but that it is, initially at least, *all that is mental*. For Freud, the conscious mind evolves out of the unconscious, and only a tiny fraction of the entire content of the psyche is in conscious awareness at any one moment.⁷⁷ Freud proposed, therefore, that mental events of which a person becomes consciously aware must be, for periods of time, in what he called 'a state of latency'; that is to say, they must exist as a continual presence even while there is no conscious awareness of them.⁷⁸ This latent material makes itself known through consciously-

⁷⁵ Freud, 'Some Elementary Lessons in Psychoanalysis', *Standard Ed.* (1937-9), XXIII, 286.

⁷⁶ See *Standard Ed.* (1937-9) XXIII, 283-286 for Freud's rationale for the location of the unconscious within the realm of the mind. This section contains the original example of a slip of the tongue, now commonly referred to as a 'Freudian slip'. Freud's theory of the purpose of errors of speech, writing, hearing and action is detailed in 'The Psychopathology of Everyday Life', *Standard Ed.* (1901), VI. See also, 'The Unconscious', in *Standard Ed.* (1914-16), XIV, 166-167. Most importantly for Freud, it was people's dreams, and their ability to recall and give personal meaning to those dreams while in a fully awake and conscious state, that not only provided evidence of the mentality of the unconscious, but also enabled him to advance his understanding of the structure and composition of the mind. See: 'The Interpretation of Dreams (I)', *Standard Ed.* (1900) IV, and 'The Interpretation of Dreams (II)' and 'On Dreams', *Standard Ed.* (1900-1) V.

⁷⁷ See Sigmund Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, trans. by James Strachey (1925, London: Hogarth Press, 1935), especially p. 55.

⁷⁸ *Standard Ed.* (1914-16), XIV, 168.

experienced realisations, ideas and memories, both called for and uncalled for, or more subtly and obscurely by the way that it influences one's unwitting behaviour or the nature of one's dreams. Then, the material returns to the unconscious and may, or may not, reappear into conscious awareness at another time.

The development of Freud's theory of the relationship between the unconscious and the conscious is marked by two distinct phases. The first of these was underpinned by what he called the 'Topographical' Model.⁷⁹ This model dealt with the conscious and unconscious areas of the mind in terms of their spatial positions in relation to one another and the process by which the material of the psyche could be transferred back and forth between them. Freud later re-formulated this conception under the title of the 'Structural' Model. It was at this point that he introduced the familiar terms; 'Id', 'Ego', and 'Super-ego'. I provide summaries of each of these models below, beginning with an outline of the Topographical Model.⁸⁰

The Topographical Model

One may visualise the whole psychical structure topographically in three layers. The conscious is uppermost with its outer surface connecting directly with the external world. The conscious mind, self-evidently, constitutes all sensations, thoughts, memories, images and so on, of which a person is consciously aware. The pre-conscious lies just beneath the under-surface of the conscious. The pre-conscious contains content which is not in an individual's conscious awareness but could easily become so, for example, the name of a person's pet, or the colour of their front door, a holiday experience, or the sum of two plus two. Any form of neutral psychical content emanating from the unconscious is allowed into conscious awareness via the 'pre-conscious'. Finally, lying beneath the pre-conscious, and so a whole layer of the psyche away from the conscious, is the unconscious. This deepest area of the mind contains material that is associated

⁷⁹ See 'Various Meanings of "The Unconscious" – The Topographical Point of View' in *Standard Ed.*, XIV, 172-176.

⁸⁰ See 'The Ego and the Id', in *Standard Ed.* (1923-25), XIX, 12 ff. for further comments regarding the Topographical Model and an exposition of the functions of the Id, Ego and Super-ego identified within the Structural Model. For clear and concise descriptions of both the Topographical and Structural forms, see 'The Question of Lay Analysis', *Standard Ed.* (1937-39), XX, 195-205.

with some form of physical, emotional or psychological trauma, and thus has the potential to damage the conscious psyche if recalled into awareness.

The threatening content contained within the unconscious area of the mind is prevented from entering conscious awareness by 'ego-defence mechanisms' such as the well-known process of 'repression'. In Freud's words: *'the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious'*.⁸¹ Even the apparently innocuous forms of knowledge or memory exemplified above could occupy this part of the unconscious if they were in some way associated with a traumatic event. Equally, this area contains instinctive drives, primarily of hunger and the need for love, which could lead to physical or mental harm if acted upon. Importantly, repressed contents of the unconscious do not exist in a motionless state. They are continually pushing to enter conscious awareness so that whatever physical, emotional or psychological need, desire or intention they represent may be satisfied. Since they are prevented by the defence mechanisms from entering the conscious mind in their original form, they reveal themselves indirectly through dream symbolism, unintentional behaviours and the psychopathologies.⁸² For Freud, patients seeking treatment might be relieved of their symptoms only once the content of the unconscious is revealed in conscious awareness and dealt with safely by the individual. This could be achieved through therapeutic work with methods that evade the defence mechanisms, such as hypnosis, free-association and the interpretation of dreams. Notwithstanding, there will always be some elements that are buried so deeply that they will never enter into awareness.

⁸¹ *Standard Ed.* (1914-16), XIV, 147. (Freud's italics). Repression is just one of several methods by which the conscious mind defends itself against material from the unconscious that it perceives to be a threat. For descriptions of others such as 'projection', 'sublimation' and 'reversal to its opposite', see *Standard Ed.* (1914-16), XIV, 117.

⁸² Freud's therapeutic work is often associated with extremes of psychopathology such as the hysterical paralysis or convulsions, or physical pain or illness recorded in his early case studies with Josef Breuer, see 'Studies on Hysteria', *Standard Ed.* (1893-1895), II. However, in Freud's later writing (see, for example, 'The Question of Lay Analysis', *Standard Ed.* (1926), XX, 185-186) it becomes clear that his theory relates to conditions which resemble closely, and might be diagnosed in modern terms as, depression, social phobia, agoraphobia, compulsive, or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). It is possible also to discern, in Freud's descriptions, cases which might now be recognised as stress-related migraine, eating disorders and, perhaps not surprisingly given Freud's focus on the psycho-sexual aetiology of psychological disorders, common symptoms of sexual dysfunction such as impotence, or inability to tolerate physical intimacy due to feelings of anxiety or disgust.

Following his analytic work with a number of his predominantly female patients, Freud declared what he considered to be the nature of the most important form of repression revealed to him by those patients; the sexual abuse, or sexual assaults that they had experienced as young girls at the hands of their fathers. Freud presented this conclusion in a paper which he read before the Society for Psychiatry and Neurology in April of 1896.⁸³ The revelation was received with shock and disbelief, followed by a period during which Freud found himself ostracised by his fellow professionals, and abandoned by his patients. Freud's experience in the aftermath of this lecture is revealed in letters between himself and his friend and colleague, Wilhelm Fleiss, and in 1914, he began to make public a full retraction of what has become known as his 'seduction theory' and to present his new formulation.⁸⁴ At this point he stated that accounts of childhood sexual experiences related to him by his patients were not recollections of incidents that had actually taken place. They were, instead, to be recognised as fantasies that embodied repressed wishes.⁸⁵ Now Freud began to propose the presence of a sexual instinct at birth, and he incorporated his view of the development of this instinct from birth to adolescence in a new form of his original theory. He called this the Structural Model, which I describe in the following section.

The Structural Model

Within Freud's new theory, the sexual instinct takes the form of psychic energy called the 'libido', and the development of an individual's sexuality follows the focus (the 'cathexis') of this libido through 'oral', 'anal' and 'phallic' phases between the ages of nought to around five or six years. The most significant feature of the phallic stage, which occurs between the ages of five and six years, is the 'Oedipus complex' in boys and the 'Electra complex' in girls. It is at this

⁸³ See 'The Aetiology of Hysteria', *Standard Ed.* (1893-9), III, 191-221. Famously, in this paper, Freud described his findings with regard to his patients' childhood sexual experiences as 'the discovery of a *caput Nili in Neuropathology*', see *Standard Ed.*, III, 203.

⁸⁴ See *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fleiss, 1887-1904*, ed. by Jeffrey M. Masson (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1985), especially p. 185. See also Masson's footnote 1, p. 184.

⁸⁵ For Freud's reflections on this reversal, see 'An Autobiographical Study', in *Standard Ed.* (1925-26), XX, 34. Clear retractions are to be found in 'Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis', Lecture 23, 'Paths to the Formation of Symptoms', in *Standard Ed.* (1916-17), XVI, 358, and 'New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis', in *Standard Ed.* (1932-6), XX, 120.

point that girls and boys develop fantasies of sexual intimacy with the parent of the opposite sex. These unfulfillable and terrifying desires are repressed into the deep unconscious, never to appear in consciousness except, possibly later, as fantastical recollections of childhood sexual experiences during searching psychoanalysis.⁸⁶

In this new model, the unconscious is referred to as the 'id', the conscious as the 'ego', and there is an additional element which exists partly in the conscious and partly in the unconscious: the 'super-ego'. The super-ego emerges upon the resolution of the phallic stage through the identification by the child with the same-gender parent, and the adoption by the child of that parent's characteristics, behaviours and, most importantly, morals. So, in this formulation, there is the id from which libidinal urges continually push to enter consciousness, the ego which attempts to protect the individual from potentially harmful demands from the id, and the super-ego which exacerbates the continual psychic tension that exists between the unconscious and the conscious by imposing moral strictures on the ego.⁸⁷ From this psychoanalytic viewpoint, symptoms of psychological, behavioural or emotional disturbance are the result of a weak ego's inability to manage this dynamic psychic tension effectively. The aim of psychoanalytic therapy is, therefore, to strengthen an individual's ego so that the person is able to create an identity separate from that embodied in the super-ego, and to manage conscious awareness of instinctual drives effectively without the need for defence mechanisms which are often damaging in themselves. In Freud's own succinct summary, 'Where id was, there ego shall be.'⁸⁸

Freudian psychoanalysis is still widely practiced in modern psychotherapeutic circles, yet his work has attracted some serious criticism. My concurrence to a large degree with the critical stance that questions the validity of Freud's theory informs the reservations that I expressed in the Introduction

⁸⁶ All aspects of the sexual development of children and the Oedipal complexes are explained in 'The Ego and the Id', in *Standard Ed.* (1923-5), XIX, 31-32.

⁸⁷ See 'The Dissection of the Psychical Personality', *Standard Ed.* (1932-6), XX, 77 for Freud's analogy in which he compares the relationship between the id and the ego with that of a horse and its rider, and a diagrammatic representation of the Structural Model, p. 78.

⁸⁸ *Standard Ed.* XX, 80.

to this thesis regarding psychoanalytic readings of Austen's novels. Among the most well-known critical opinions of Freud have been those of Jeffrey Masson who contends that Freud constructed his new theory, against evidence, to regain the acceptance of the scientific community.⁸⁹ Other writers have offered different explanations for Freud's departure from the seduction theory, *inter alia* that he was unable himself to accept the idea of fathers as seducers of their daughters, that he was unwilling to believe that such occurrences could be as widespread as he himself was suggesting, and that he could not bring himself to confront situations that had arisen in his own childhood.⁹⁰ It is impossible to know the true motivation behind Freud's theoretical shift. However, it seems to me that the questions raised by these writers are sufficiently substantive to cast doubt on the relevance of interpretations of Austen's novels which are based on a psychoanalytic theory of repressed sexual fantasies in which Freud himself may not have believed. Furthermore, Freud's work is comprehensively questioned by Richard Webster, who argues convincingly that neither the seduction theory nor the later theory of infantile sexuality should be regarded as scientifically valid.⁹¹ Webster highlights elements of powerful suggestion and even coercion, on the part of Freud, in a significant number of the case histories of his patients who recalled sexual experiences in childhood. For Webster, this invalidates Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex from a scientific point of view. Notwithstanding the significant contribution to the debate in support of Freud's *oeuvre*, most notably those of Ernest Jones and Peter Gay, Webster concludes that the continuing influence of the psychoanalytic tradition owes more to Freud's charismatic personality and rhetorical skills than to the validity of his theories.⁹² For this reason, Webster suggests, the fact that Freud's theory

⁸⁹ Jeffrey Masson, *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., 1984; published with a new preface and afterword, London: Penguin, 1985; re-issued with a new preface under the title *Assault on Truth: Freud and Child Sexual Abuse*, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992).

⁹⁰ For a review of these opinions see Allen Esterton, 'The Myth of Freud's Ostracism by the Medical Community in 1896-1905: Jeffrey Masson's Assault on Truth', in *History of Psychology*, 2002, 5:2, 115-134.

⁹¹ Richard Webster, *Why Freud Was Wrong. Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995).

⁹² Other critics have taken a similar stance to that of Webster. See, for example, Ellenberger's comment on the difficulty of achieving an objective evaluation of Freud's theories 'before the true historic facts are separated from the legend', *The Discovery of The Unconscious*, p. 548, cited in Webster, p. 16. See also, Frank Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of The Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic*

is paradigmatic in our understanding of our psychological, emotional and intellectual lives is problematic, and it is my sympathy with his concerns that leads me to bring a certain scepticism to unquestioning psychoanalytic interpretations of any aspect of human experience; in particular, in the context of this thesis, to readings of Austen's novels.

Criticisms of Freud's formulations notwithstanding, I agree also with supporters of Freud who recognise that his ideas could not have gained such a powerful foothold in modern cultural consciousness if there was not something in the nature of his theories that resonates deeply with people's lived behavioural, emotional and psychological experience. For me, Freud's genius lies in the fundamental elements of his early model which focus on the need that people have to resist the recognition and acceptance of certain threatening or unpleasant elements of their nature or psyche, and their tendency as a result to push these away, to repress, deny, sublimate or project them out of conscious awareness. Where this occurs, true to Freud's conception, the challenge of psychotherapy is somehow to circumvent the individual's defence mechanisms and thereby enable greater self-awareness and conscious self-efficacy. Psychotherapists use a number of different techniques towards this aim, which I summarise briefly below.

Therapeutic circumvention of the 'ego-defence' mechanisms

As I state above, in psychoanalysis the evasion of the ego-defence mechanisms may be achieved through hypnosis, free-association and dream-interpretation. Other psychotherapeutic methods such as art or drama therapy have much the same aim.⁹³ This goal may also be accomplished by the telling of stories. Storytelling, specifically the use of metaphor, is a technique that is employed by

Legend (1979, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992) and 'Reassessing Freud's Case Histories. The Social Construction of Psychoanalysis', *Isis*, 82 (1991), pp. 245-75. For counter-arguments in support of Freud's work, see especially Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 3 vols (New York: Basic Books, 1953-7) and Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988).

⁹³ See, in particular, Caroline Case & Tessa Dalley, *The Handbook of Art Therapy*, 3rd edn (New York & Hove, East Sussex: Routledge, 2014), and Sue Jennings and others, *The Handbook of Drama Therapy* (New York & Hove, East Sussex: Routledge, 1994).

therapists across a range of psychotherapeutic disciplines.⁹⁴ Theoretically, while the client, or patient, pays conscious attention to the nature and experiences of a fictional character, they are at the same time unconsciously absorbing ideas that relate to themselves, and which they may reject out of hand if approached with those suggestions more directly. This is the aspect of psychoanalytic theory that I will bring to bear when I explore the potentially therapeutic aspects of Austen's novels in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

In the remaining sections of this chapter I provide explanations of the key features of the Cognitive-Behavioural and Humanistic schools of psychotherapy, and of the model of Emotional Intelligence, which encompasses important elements of the psychotherapeutic principles of both of these major disciplines.

1.2. Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy

The theory and practice of Cognitive-Behavioural Psychotherapy (CBT) were established by Aaron Beck in the 1960s and 1970s, and his early publications remain the seminal texts for the study of this field of psychotherapy.⁹⁵ While current practice of CBT is still based on the fundamental principles of Beck's original model, there are now a number of different strands of therapeutic technique that are related to CBT. In this section I examine the classic formulation of CBT, as well as the additional elements of the school, insofar as these will be of note in my reading of the character of Mrs. Smith, and of my understanding of the character's psychological resilience.

⁹⁴ Eminent Cognitive-Behavioural therapist, Michael D. Yapko, uses metaphorical story for psychotherapeutic purposes. For his rationale and illustrations of his method, see Yapko, *Trancework: An Introduction to the Practice of Clinical Hypnosis*, 4th edn (New York & Hove, East Sussex: Routledge, 2012). Yapko's work is founded on the principles and practice of hypnotherapy propounded by Milton Erickson whose substantial contribution to the field is usefully summarised in *My Voice Will Go With You: The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson*, ed. and with a commentary by Sydney Rosen (New York & London: W. W. Norton, 1982). See also, George W Burns, *Healing Stories: Using Metaphors in Therapy* (University of Michigan, 2001), and Brita, A. Martiny, 'The Multidimensional Application of Therapeutic Metaphors in the Treatment of Depression', in *Brief Therapy Approaches to Treating Anxiety and Depression*, ed. by Michael D. Yapko (New York & London: Routledge, 1989), 119-149

⁹⁵ Beck's initial work was focused on psychotherapeutic approaches to the treatment of depression, see Aaron T. Beck, *The Diagnosis and Management of Depression* (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1967) and *Depression: Causes and Treatment* (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1972). Beck's field then broadened to encompass other emotional disorders such as anxiety, see Aaron T. Beck, *Cognitive Therapy and The Emotional Disorders* (New York: Meridian, 1976; repr. New York: International Universities Press Inc., 1979).

As the name 'Cognitive-Behavioural' suggests, Beck's model incorporates principles underlying two distinct approaches to psychotherapy: 'cognitivism' and 'behaviourism'. I will trace briefly the emergence of each as separate disciplines before I discuss the practice of the two in combination. In keeping with the historical development of these branches of psychotherapy, I begin below with behaviourism.

1.2.1. Behaviourism

The concept of behaviourism in relation to human psychology stems from the work of the Russian physiologist, Ivan Pavlov.⁹⁶ Pavlov's investigations into human psychology and behaviour ran concurrently with Freud's work on psychoanalysis, yet their theories, and the methods of research from which they were derived, could not have been more different. In contrast to Freud, Pavlov regarded only that which could be objectively observed and measured to be a legitimate basis for the scientific study of human psychology and behaviour. The subjects of his studies were animals, and his findings then extrapolated to explain the functioning of the human brain.⁹⁷ Pavlov is most well-known for experiments in which he paired the presentation of food to a dog with the simultaneous sounding of a bell. After a number of repetitions of this pairing, Pavlov discovered that the dog would salivate upon hearing the sound of the bell even in the absence of food. Essentially, Pavlov had manipulated an automatic, or 'unconditioned' reflex, salivation in the presence of food, to occur in response to a neutral stimulus, the sound of a bell. This salivation response was now a 'conditioned reflex'.⁹⁸ The conclusions reached by Pavlov in the light of his findings are as well-established in modern popular culture as those arrived at by Freud. Just as, for example, people's slips-of-tongue are often

⁹⁶ For Pavlov's seminal work, see: Ivan Petrovitch Pavlov, *Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. by W. Horsley Gantt (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd. 1941).

⁹⁷ See Harry K. Wells, *Pavlov and Freud: Ivan P. Pavlov, Toward a Scientific Psychology and Psychiatry* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1956) p. 79 ff. for further clarification of Pavlov's theory relating to human language and emotion, and the process of psychotherapy. Wells explains: 'The theory underlying Pavlov's use of psychotherapy is based on the regulative role of the secondary signalling system in human beings...there is nothing in the least mystical about this', *Pavlov and Freud*, p. 164. The term 'mystical' is clearly a reference to Freud's emphasis on the influence of the unobservable unconscious mind in the aetiology of the neuroses.

⁹⁸ Pavlov's experiments with animal reflexes are detailed in *Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes: Volume II, Conditioned Reflexes and Psychiatry*.

termed 'Freudian', so their seemingly unthinking, or apparently reflexive reactions to a set of external circumstances are often referred to as 'Pavlovian'.

Pavlov's conception of human psychology gained considerable ground in the psychotherapeutic field, particularly with the concurrent work of American psychologist, John Broadus Watson, and later contributions to the field by Burrhus Frederic Skinner.⁹⁹ Watson was as determined as Pavlov to equate all aspects of human emotion and behaviour to the observable physiological reflex reactions of non-human animals, however he expanded Pavlov's research method to involve humans as subjects for his experiments. Research that he carried out with a nine-month-old boy known as 'Little Albert' is paradigmatic. Watson and his colleague, Rosalie Rayner, conditioned a fear of rats in Albert by clanging an iron rod whenever a rat was presented to him. After several repetitions of the pairing of the rat with the clanging rod, Watson and Rayner found that Albert became distressed in the presence of the rat which previously had not disturbed him at all.¹⁰⁰ Watson's methods would doubtless be considered ethically questionable at the very least by today's standards. Nevertheless, the processes of sensitisation and desensitisation which both he and Pavlov demonstrated are still incorporated into current psychotherapeutic treatments for a range of conditions including phobias, addictions and obsessive-compulsive disorders.¹⁰¹

Most importantly, neither Pavlov nor Watson postulated the operation of intermediary thought processes within the development or inhibition of the conditioned reflex. Burrhus Skinner maintained the behaviourist position to a

⁹⁹ For definitive expositions of Watson's approach see John B. Watson, *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviourist* ([1919] London and Dover, New Hampshire: Francis Pinter, 1983), and John B. Watson, *Behaviourism* ([1924] New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970). For full details of the background to, and development of, the work of Skinner, see Burrhus. F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behaviour* (New York: The Free Press, 1953), Burrhus. F. Skinner, *About Behaviourism* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974) and Burrhus. F. Skinner, *Notebooks: Selections from the Private Notebooks of America's Greatest Living Psychologist*, ed. by Robert Epstein (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980).

¹⁰⁰ See Watson and Rayner, 'Conditioned emotional reactions', *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 3:1 (1920), 1-14, and Watson and Rayner, 'Studies in infant psychology', *The Scientific Monthly*, 13:6 (1921), 493-515. Watson and Rayner's work was no doubt the inspiration for the 'Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning Rooms' in Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* ([1932] London: Vintage, 2007), in which loud alarms are sounded and mild electric shocks delivered when babies, which have been genetically engineered for the lower castes, approach books.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, the chapter dedicated to the theory and practice of Behavioural Psychotherapy in Nelson-Jones, *Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, pp. 209-242.

large extent, and employed animals as subjects for his classic experiments. However Skinner considered it a great over-simplification to conceive of highly complex human cognition, emotionality and physical skills purely as the outcomes of sequences of the conditioning of reflexes. Consequently, he developed methods to investigate the possibility of at least some intentionality in the actions of animals which he could then extrapolate to human behaviour. Through his researches, Skinner found that animals learned to act on the world to invoke certain consequences. When the animals' behaviour resulted in a reward such as food, they repeated that behaviour (the food is a positive reinforcement, and the behaviour followed by the positive reinforcement is termed an action–reward contingency). The animals also repeated behaviour that resulted in the cessation or avoidance of an unpleasant experience, for example an electric shock or a loud noise (again the outcome is positive for the animal and so this is also an action–reward contingency, although it is termed 'negative reinforcement' as it involves the avoidance of an unpleasant experience rather than the achievement of a pleasant one). Animals ceased behaviours that led directly to a disagreeable or painful outcome such as a shock or loud noise (the pain of the shock or noise is a punishment, and so the behaviour followed by the pain is termed an action–punishment contingency).¹⁰² Skinner applied the term 'operant conditioning' to the manipulation of animals' behaviour in his experiments to reflect the element of their active operation on the environment for particular outcomes. It is simple enough to make a comparison between the behaviour of the animals in Skinner's experiments and that of human beings. Like Skinner's subjects, people do not only react reflexively to environmental circumstances that impinge upon them, they also act intentionally on the environment to seek out or produce pleasure for themselves, and to avoid or prevent displeasure or pain.¹⁰³ On this basis, it is possible to construct programs of psychotherapeutic treatment which identify, address, and possibly attempt to reverse detrimental action – consequence contingencies that an individual has encountered. For example, where a damaging form of compulsive behaviour such as physical self-harming

¹⁰² See Skinner, *Science and Human Behaviour*, *About Behaviourism*, and *Notebooks*.

¹⁰³ For an overview, see Derek E. Blackman, *Operant Conditioning: An Experimental Analysis of Behaviour* (London: Routledge, 2017).

or addiction has been reinforced by a consequent reduction of anxiety or production of pleasure, psychotherapeutic treatment aims either to replace the behaviour with a non-destructive activity which delivers the same rewards, or to reverse the contingency by instigating a 'punishment' such as a painful or nausea-inducing outcome.

Thus the behaviourist model contributes some useful strategies in present-day psychotherapy. However, behaviourist techniques are generally combined with cognitivist and/or humanistic approaches. Cognitivist and humanistic perspectives hold that the behaviourists' focus on similarities between the actions and reactions of human beings and those of other animals severely limits their ability to explain humans' vastly more complex intellectual abilities, behavioural patterns and emotionality, as well as other aspects of human experience such as morality and spirituality. I will explore the cognitivist and humanistic positions further shortly. However, since Austen has provided a rich array of human behaviour in her novels, I will introduce my discussion of these two models, and demonstrate the central cognitivist and humanistic concerns regarding the limitations of behaviourism, with a brief reference to a small selection of Austen's characters.

Austen's characters illustrate the explanatory limitations of behaviourism

Before I refer to Austen's characters to illustrate issues relating to the behaviourist approach, I should re-emphasise that the proponents of behaviourism that I discuss above equated the reactions and responses of human beings to those of any other animal. This crucial aspect of the model indicates two key points. Firstly, in behaviourist terms, the concepts 'reward', 'reinforcement' and 'punishment' carry no moral significance. Thus, when I identify the outcome of the behaviour of a character of Austen's as a 'reward' or 'punishment', I do not mean this to suggest any adherence to, or promotion of, any particular moral code on the part of Austen.¹⁰⁴ Secondly, a behaviourist reading of Austen's novels would offer a universal as opposed to an individualistic understanding of Austen's characters to an even greater extent

¹⁰⁴ See the Introduction to this thesis for my comments on the view of Marilyn Butler and others of Austen as a morally didactic author.

than the psychoanalytic interpretations of Austen that I review in the Introduction to this thesis.¹⁰⁵ Therefore any comment about the effects of reward or punishment contingencies that one might apply to a particular character would apply to all. For me, as with the psychodynamic readings, this universalising obscures rather than clarifies the psychological complexities of Austen's characterisations. In addition, as a result, the model veils rather than reveals the nature of Austen's psychological insight or purpose. It is for these reasons, as well as in light of the additional limitations of the behaviourist paradigm that I will explore below, that I do not look at Austen's characters from a purely behaviourist perspective any further in the chapters that follow.

To start to sketch Austen's characters from a behaviourist viewpoint, one might look at Lydia Bennet and Mr. Wickham. Lydia's self-centred and irresponsible behaviour is reinforced by the indulgence of her parents, and Mr. Wickham's by Mr. Darcy's early financial concessions to him, and Mr. Darcy's desire to suppress news of Mr. Wickham's attempt to seduce and abduct Mr. Darcy's young sister.¹⁰⁶ Lydia and Mr. Wickham repeat their patterns of behaviour throughout the course of *Pride and Prejudice* since, in behaviourist terms, they never suffer any form of punishment in consequence of their actions.¹⁰⁷ In contrast, we see a swift change of behaviour in Emma following Mr. Knightley's admonishment for her insensitive and hurtful comment to Miss Bates during the picnic at Box Hill. A behaviourist would liken Mr. Knightley's reprimand to an administration of a sudden electric shock to Emma.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ The psychoanalytic model offers a universal theory of the psychological make-up of all human beings. The behaviourist view presents a theory that is intended to encompass all animals (including human beings).

¹⁰⁶ See *Pride and Prejudice*, II:18, 256-257 for Elizabeth's failed attempt to persuade her father against allowing Lydia to go to Brighton from where Lydia elopes with Mr. Wickham: "If you, my dear father, will not take the trouble of checking her exuberant spirits, and of teaching her that her present pursuits are not to be the business of her life, she will soon be beyond the reach of amendment". Circumstances surrounding Mr. Darcy's financial concessions to Mr. Wickham, and Mr. Wickham's attempt to seduce and abduct Georgiana are detailed in Mr. Darcy's letter to Elizabeth Bennet, II:12, 222-225. Mr. Darcy takes full responsibility for Mr. Wickham's behaviour in relation to Lydia: 'It was owing to him, to his reserve, and want of proper consideration, that Wickham's character had been so misunderstood', see Mrs. Gardner's letter to Elizabeth, III:10, 359.

¹⁰⁷ For example, Mr. Bennet states initially: "Into *one* house in this neighbourhood, they shall never have admittance. I will not encourage the impudence of either, by receiving them at Longbourn", *Pride and Prejudice*, III:8, 342 (Austen's italics). However, he capitulates shortly afterwards: 'When Mr. Bennet wrote again to his brother, [...], he sent his permission for them to come', III:8, 346-347.

¹⁰⁸ See *Emma*, III:7, 403 for Emma's comment to Miss Bates in context, and III:7, 407-409 for Knightley's admonishment, and the intensity of Emma's consequent pain.

Similarly, from a behaviourist viewpoint, in *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot experiences Lady Russell's disapproval of Captain Wentworth as a punishment, and thus relinquishes her attachment to him.¹⁰⁹ In both cases, the characters then continue in their altered behaviour. Austen makes it clear that Anne has never even alluded to the episode involving Captain Wentworth in the nearly eight years that have followed his departure, and that Emma will never again be rude to Miss Bates, or indeed anyone like her.¹¹⁰ For a behaviourist, the characters' modified behaviour is positively reinforced by the reward of resultant approval, or, in other words, negatively reinforced by aversion to the recurrence of the unpleasantness of disapproval.

The above examples are illustrations of behaviour-consequence contingencies that are simple enough to elucidate in behaviourist terms. However, this becomes a little more complicated when the presence of multiple and simultaneous reward-punishment eventualities is apparent. For instance, in *Sense and Sensibility*, Mr. Willoughby runs away from Marianne and her impoverished state as one of Skinner's animals would run from an electric shock. At the same time, Mr. Willoughby's marriage to a woman whom he does not love produces sustained discomfort from which he struggles to escape. Thus there is punishment in store for Mr. Willoughby whichever way he turns, and a behaviourist might compare the character's anguished and emotional confusion at that time, and his desperate search for some reassurance to ease his suffering, to the frantic dashing of a rat from one end of a cage to the other in search of a spot that is both quiet and un-electrified.¹¹¹ To some extent this would appear to constitute a reasonable enough explanation of Mr. Willoughby's actions and reactions in his given set of circumstances. However, when one reads of the multifarious thoughts and feelings that underlay his decision to relinquish Marianne, along with the complex mixture of grief, frustration, guilt and self-justification that he expresses in his emotional interview with Elinor, questions arise as to the scope of a strictly behaviourist

¹⁰⁹ Lady Russell 'deprecated the connexion in every light', and 'Such opposition, as these feelings produced, was more than Anne could combat.' *Persuasion*, I:4, 29.

¹¹⁰ See *Persuasion*, I:4, 31, and *Emma*, III:8, 410.

¹¹¹ Mr. Willoughby's desperate state is illuminated during the scene in which he visits Elinor while Marianne recovers from her illness at Cleveland. See *Sense and Sensibility*, III:8, 359-376.

model to provide a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the psychological depth of Austen's portrayal of the character. The same concerns may be applied to the behaviourist reductions of Austen's depictions that I presented above of Emma and Anne Elliot, and even of Lydia and Mr. Wickham.

There is a yet further weakness in behaviourism as a fully explanatory model with reference to Austen's characters. One will recall that animals in Skinner's experiments ceased behaviours that resulted in punishment. How then could the behaviourist model account for those of Austen's characters whose actions deliver, and promise to continue to deliver, only punishment, with no externally observable reward in evidence? It is possible to identify an element of reward in the situations of all of those characters already mentioned; even Mr. Willoughby who loses the woman he loves but at least gains financial security in his unhappy marriage. However, Edward Ferrars proceeds with his engagement to Lucy Steele even though he stands to lose his love, his family ties and his fortune in consequence.¹¹² Fanny Price maintains her rejection of Henry Crawford's marriage proposal in spite of the relentlessly punishing anger from Sir Thomas that she faces as a result.¹¹³ Catherine Morland refuses to agree to go on a carriage ride with her brother, Isabella and John Thorpe, even though the three place her under a great deal of sustained emotional duress.¹¹⁴ The behaviourist model would struggle to an even greater extent to account for characters whose behaviour brings about punishment in more subtle forms that are not outwardly perceptible or measurable, for example: Elinor Dashwood's agonising secrecy on behalf of Lucy Steele regarding Lucy's engagement to Edward, and Elizabeth Bennet's discomforted yet determined refusal to submit to Lady Catherine de Bourgh's offensive and overbearing demands.¹¹⁵ Behaviourism simply lacks the subtlety and compass

¹¹² See *Sense and Sensibility*, III:1.

¹¹³ Austen describes the painfully distressing effect on Fanny of Sir Thomas's anger over the course of five chapters; see *Mansfield Park*, III:1 to III:6. Finally, the author explicitly describes Sir Thomas' plan to send Fanny back to Portsmouth to visit her family as an 'experiment' whereby 'a little abstinence from the elegancies and luxuries of Mansfield Park' would lead Fanny to change her behaviour. See *Mansfield Park*, III:6, 425-426.

¹¹⁴ See *Northanger Abbey*, I:13, 97-101. I analyse this scene in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹¹⁵ *Sense and Sensibility*, I:22, 149-152 and *Pride and Prejudice*, III:14, 391-397. I examine the former in depth in Chapter Two of this thesis, and the latter scene in Chapter Three.

to illuminate the sources and forms of motivation, determination and emotionality in these cases.

The development of psychotherapy beyond Behaviourism

The limitations of the Behaviourist model that I illustrate above in the light of Austen's characters are the same as those that concerned early theorists and practitioners working with people in the fields of psychiatry, psychology and psychotherapy. Thus, although Pavlov and his colleagues were convinced that a comprehensive understanding of behaviour in animals would lead eventually to knowledge of human psychology and the source of psychopathology in human beings, the further development of the field of non-psychoanalytic psychotherapy has in fact depended largely upon cognitivist and humanistic approaches to psychotherapy.¹¹⁶ Proponents of these two major schools of psychotherapy were unwilling to discard from the scope of their interest any aspect of human psychology that could not be categorised as an automatic physiological reaction, nor could they conceive of Skinner's theory of operant conditioning as remotely sufficient to explain the complexities of human psychology. For the original cognitivists such as Aaron Beck, in order to understand the human psyche, it was both necessary and scientific to work with human beings themselves, and to take into account their subjectively reported cognitive and emotional experiences. The cognitive-behavioral model emerged with the incorporation of Pavlovian reflexive reactions and Skinnerian operant behaviour into the cognitivist psychotherapeutic framework. At around the same time, the founders of humanistic psychotherapy revisited psychoanalytic conceptions of the unconscious mind, and explored, additionally, aspects of self-awareness, self-development, autonomy, spirituality and so on, that they regarded as intrinsically human. I outline the central theoretical and practical bases of cognitive-behavioural and humanistic psychotherapy in the sections below. Then, over the following two substantive chapters of the thesis, I illustrate the particular light that these perspectives are

¹¹⁶ See the account of Pavlov's work and reflections on the future significance of Behaviourism in Brian Harman, 'The Application of Conditioned Reflexes to Psychiatry', in *Ivan Pavlov 1849-1936 Centenary Lectures II*. Lecture delivered 13th Oct 1949 (London: Science Section, Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR, 1949).

able to throw on the nature of the themes and characterisations within Austen's novels.

I begin here with an explanation of the theory and practice of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). I will draw primarily on Aaron Beck's original formulation for my presentation of the model since, while there have been, and are still, numerous significant contributors to the discipline, Beck is held to be the 'father' of CBT by researchers and practitioners in the field.¹¹⁷ Beck's interest was initially on the cognitive aspects of people's experience and the effects of their thought processes on their emotions and behaviour. He subsumed the more behaviouristic approaches into his model at a later stage, and I reflect this development towards the end of the following overview.

1.2.2. Cognitivism, leading to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): Aaron Beck (b. 1921)¹¹⁸

In the Introduction to one of his most influential publications, Beck presents a clear and succinct distinction between his own therapeutic formulation and the approaches to psychological disturbance that had, up to that point, been most widely employed: neuropsychiatric and biological, psychoanalytic, and behaviourist.¹¹⁹ While Beck acknowledges the fundamental differences between these three treatment methodologies, he notes that 'they share one basic assumption: the emotionally disturbed person is victimized by concealed forces over which he has no control' (p. 2). The first of the three assigns biological or neurological causes to emotional or behavioural disorders, and seeks to correct maladjustments with the application of drug medication or the imposition of physical restraints or hardships. Psychoanalysis conceives of a

¹¹⁷ See, for example, Gretchen M. Reevy, *Encyclopedia of Emotion*, 2 vols (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2010), specifically I, p. 117, and Chiara Ruini, *Positive Psychology in the Clinical Domains: Research and Practice* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2017), especially p. 83.

¹¹⁸ At the time of writing Aaron Beck is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychiatry at Pennsylvania University, and President Emeritus of the Beck Institute for Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) is widely used for the clinical diagnosis of depression, see A. T. Beck and others, 'An Inventory for Measuring Depression', *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 4 (June 1961), 561-571. A biographical overview of Beck's life and work, and an extensive list of his publications in the fields of psychiatry and psychotherapy since 1948 may be found at <<https://aaronbeckcentre.org/>> [accessed 02.09.17]. See also, <<https://beckinstitute.org/>> [accessed 02.09.17].

¹¹⁹ See Beck, *Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders*. In this section, page numbers for quotations taken from this publication are given in parentheses following quotes, or series of quotes taken from the same page of the publication.

troubled person as driven by elements of the psyche of which they have no conscious awareness and therefore over which they can exercise no conscious will. Finally, behaviourists base their therapeutic framework on theories of deviant conditioning of automatic reflexes, or dysfunctional reward-consequence contingencies which are unmediated by cognitive processing. From this Beck concludes, 'Because these three leading schools maintain that the source of the patient's disturbance lies beyond his awareness, they gloss over his conscious conceptions, his specific thoughts and fantasies' (p. 3). Beck continues to develop his proposition and its relevance to psychotherapeutic practice as follows:

Suppose, however, that these schools are on the wrong track. Let us conjecture, for the moment, that a person's consciousness contains elements that are responsible for the emotional upsets and blurred thinking that lead him to seek help. Moreover, let us suppose that the patient has at his disposal various rational techniques he can use, with proper instruction, to deal with these disturbing elements in his consciousness. If these suppositions are correct, then emotional disorders may be approached from an entirely different route: *Man has the key to understanding and solving his psychological disturbance within the scope of his own awareness.* He can correct the misconceptions producing his emotional disturbance with the same problem-solving apparatus that he has been accustomed to using at various stages in his development. (p. 3. Beck's italics)

Thus, in contrast to the existing schools of psychotherapeutic theory and practice, which placed the treatment of people's difficulties outwith their direct control, Beck's view was that individuals have the ability within themselves to ameliorate their own dysfunctional emotions and behaviour. He proposed that people's emotional states are brought about by the content of their conscious thoughts, and that their behaviour is consequent to their emotions. Further he observed that emotions and behaviours that are detrimental to the well-being of an individual arise from certain forms of unnecessarily negative or anxiety-provoking misperceptions of reality that are contained within the individual's

conscious thoughts. Finally, Beck considered that it is possible to use the same cognitive processes that give rise to injurious thoughts (that is, 'the same problem-solving apparatus that he has been accustomed to using at various stages in his development', see quotation above) to adjust the content of those thoughts towards more rational and therefore potentially less disturbing perceptions.¹²⁰ The role of the therapist in Beck's cognitive-therapeutic procedure may be summarised therefore as follows: to pay close attention to a client's reflections on their lives and on themselves, to draw the person's attention to any irrational or misconceived perceptions that are bringing about their stress, or distress, and to teach them certain strategies and techniques that enable them to make *a conscious and deliberate* therapeutic adjustment to those aspects of their thoughts.¹²¹

The general theoretical principles of cognitive therapy that I explain above form the background for an important aspect of my understanding of Austen's psychological position and purpose in the portrayal of certain of her characters. However, in this context, I also recognise certain very specific components of Beck's psychotherapeutic model in the characterisations in Austen's novels. These are the concepts of 'schemas', and of the 'cognitive triad' which he derived primarily from his research into the aetiology and treatment of depression. Although these two formulations emerged from Beck's investigations into a psychological disorder and were directed towards the

¹²⁰ See A.T. Beck, 'Thinking and depression', *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 9 (Oct. 1963), 324-333. Further, Beck offers a concise explanation of his rationale for the primacy of the influence of thoughts over the emotions, and of his observation of the ability of patients to ameliorate their painful emotions by adjusting the content of their thoughts in his letter to the editor in reply to Norman A. Harvey's 'Does thinking precede feeling?', *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 187 (March 1964), 781.

¹²¹ Also prominent in this field is Albert Ellis who concurred with Beck's view of both the causes and treatment of psychological disorders. Ellis developed the ABC model to illustrate a reciprocal relationship between 'activating events' (A), beliefs about those events (B), and the consequent emotions and behaviours (C). His therapeutic approach, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) is based on this model. See, for example, Albert Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy: A Comprehensive Method of Treating Human Disturbances*, revised edn (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1996, 1st edn, 1962), and Albert Ellis and Debbie Joffe-Ellis, *Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy* (Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2011). Another important and influential proponent of cognitive therapy, particularly in the treatment of depression, is Michael Yapko. Yapko emphasises the importance of people's tendency to believe in their misguided negative perceptions as he states, 'Simply put, people think about their life experiences, they project hurtful or distorted meanings, and then make the mistake of believing themselves', Yapko, *Breaking the Patterns of Depression* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), p. 10.

amelioration of that disorder, nevertheless they are equally useful as tools to identify the determinants of psychological well-being. Later in this thesis, I demonstrate how my understanding of both schemas and the cognitive triad plays a significant part in my comparison, for example, between Mary Elliot Musgrove who lives in reasonable comfort and yet is constantly frustrated and miserable, and Mrs Smith who maintains a surprisingly high level of contentment despite her straitened circumstances. Therefore, it will be worthwhile to summarise these two features of the model here.

The Components of Cognitive Therapy: Schemas and the Cognitive Triad

i. Schemas

For Beck, the ways in which people perceive themselves and interpret the circumstances they encounter arise out of an underlying set of beliefs that they hold about themselves, about the nature of their relationships with other people and about the world in general. Beck refers to these beliefs as ‘schemas’. He writes:

Any situation is composed of a plethora of stimuli. An individual selectively attends to specific stimuli, combines them in a pattern, and conceptualizes the situation. Although different persons may conceptualize the same situation in different ways, a particular person tends to be consistent in his response to particular types of events. Relatively stable cognitive patterns form the basis for the regularity of interpretations of a particular set of situations. The term “schema” designates these cognitive patterns.¹²²

To illustrate the notion of ‘schemas’, Beck identified certain negatively-skewed patterns of perception and understanding in his depressed patients. He found that, in these cases, schemas would often take the form of imperatives which are impossible to achieve. For example, to paraphrase and summarise Beck’s full exposition, a depressed individual’s schemas might be something like; ‘In order to be happy I *must* be liked by everyone at all times’, or ‘I *should* be successful in everything I undertake’, or ‘If I make a mistake that means I am

¹²² Beck and others, *Cognitive Therapy of Depression* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1979), p. 12

useless'.¹²³ As Beck points out, it is simply not possible always to succeed or be liked by everyone, or never to make a mistake, and so unhappiness or feelings of worthlessness are inevitable if one maintains such a belief system.¹²⁴

ii. The Cognitive Triad

As well as noting a range of idiosyncratic schemas such as those described above, Beck identified a set of three generalised, overarching dysfunctional assumptions made by depressed people. He applied the term 'cognitive triad' to this set of assumptions, and indicated three more functional modes of thinking towards which the cognitive therapist should guide the depressed person.¹²⁵ In my book, *Coaching for Resilience*, I apply the descriptor 'the "Three Ps"' to the dysfunctional triad, namely 'personal', 'pervasive' and 'permanent', and I identify their alternate forms to which people are directed in CBT as, respectively, 'external', 'specific' and 'flexible'.¹²⁶ I explain the nature of each of the Three Ps and their counterparts below.

a. Personal to External

First within the triad is the tendency of depressed people to attribute the cause of all negative circumstances, from localised bad weather to tragic world events, to their own actions, to some defect within themselves, or even to their very existence. The aim of CBT is to lead an individual who displays this form of thought process towards a more *external* thinking style, and enable them to recognise that there are many contingencies that are entirely independent of any actions, or the presence or otherwise, of the individual concerned.

¹²³ The 'must' and 'should' aspects of the schemas will be specifically relevant in Chapter Three of this thesis where I discuss attempts by Isabella and James Thorpe, and James Moreland, to compel Catherine Moreland to abandon her arrangements with Eleanor Tilney and to join them on their carriage ride outing instead; *Northanger Abbey* l:13, 97-101.

¹²⁴ See *Cognitive Therapy of Depression*. See also, A. T. Beck, 'Thinking and depression: Idiosyncratic content and cognitive distortions', *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 9 (1963), 324-333. Beck's assumption is that these negatively-skewed schemas have their origins in 'defective learning during the person's cognitive development', (*Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders*, p. 3). However, he is not interested in exploring where these beliefs come from as much as the form that the beliefs take, and the effects that they have on a person's psychological and emotional well-being.

¹²⁵ *Cognitive Therapy of Depression*, p. 11.

¹²⁶ Green and Humphrey, *Coaching for Resilience*, pp. 162-170. Practitioners of cognitive therapy have adopted different terms to refer to the dysfunctional cognitive patterns that Beck identified within the cognitive triad. For example, Michael Yapko labels the elements of the triad as 'internal', 'global' and 'stable', with their more functional alternatives; 'external', 'specific' and 'unstable'. See Yapko, *Breaking the Patterns of Depression*, pp. 170-173.

b. Pervasive to Specific

Secondly within the triad, the pervasive style is manifested by people for whom negativity is all-pervading. They perceive everything, everybody, and all life-events in a deeply pessimistic light. If one person betrays them they will believe that no-one is trustworthy. If one friend is out of touch for a while they will believe that no-one likes or cares about them. If a pervasive thinker hears a report of one tragic event, then, for them, the whole world is a terrible place. If they themselves make a mistake, then they tell themselves that they get everything wrong. People who engage in this form of cognitive processing find it very difficult to compartmentalise the different aspects of their lives.

Unhappiness or difficulty in one area encroaches on everything else that they experience. For example, if they are finding work challenging then they will be unable to enjoy the company of friends or activities outside of work. The pervasive style relates also to a person's tendency to ascribe their potential for happiness, their sense of self-worth or even their identity to a single element of their lives, for example, their job, their partner, their home, and so on. Self-evidently, people who evince any or all of these forms of pervasive thinking are extremely vulnerable to feelings of isolation and worthlessness. At times of loss they may even experience themselves to be 'nothing', or incapable of happiness.

In the case of the pervasive style, CBT guides the individual towards a more *specific* cognitive approach: to recognise the uniqueness of individuals, to notice the good and the beautiful things that exist in the world, to identify their successes, to take pleasure in some areas even while they are experiencing difficulties in others, and finally to recognise the many and varied elements that constitute their lives and the contribution that each of these elements makes to their well-being.

c. Permanent to flexible

The third form of cognitive processing in Beck's triad is manifest when depressed people look ahead to the future and anticipate that any difficulties they experience will be permanent and unchanging. They believe that their suffering, for example physically through illness, emotionally with bereavement or the end of a relationship, or practically and financially from the lack of a job,

will continue unremittingly and indefinitely. Further, from a slightly different angle, the permanent cognitive style leads people also to predict the future on the basis of previous negative experience. Thus, for example, they expect to be unsuccessful in an examination or job interview if they have failed at either in the past. CBT demonstrates that situations, emotions, and physical and emotional states are constantly changing, and that, by extension, it is not possible to predict the future from what has happened in the past. This enables people to become more *flexible* in their perception of the future.

It is important to note that cognitive therapy is applicable only where the person's views are dysfunctional, that is to say, where a person maintains their belief patterns in the absence of evidence to support their position, and even in the presence of evidence to the contrary.¹²⁷ The task of the therapist is to encourage the individual to view their belief 'as a hypothesis rather than as a fact; that is, as a possible but not necessarily true proposition. [...] Through careful scrutiny and consideration of the belief, the patient can gradually arrive at a different view.'¹²⁸ There are a number of different techniques and strategies that therapists working in this field employ to enable a client to achieve this cognitive transformation. I will outline these interventions below and, in doing so, will address the connection between cognitive and behavioural approaches within the CBT model.

Cognitive and Cognitive-Behavioural therapeutic techniques and strategies

The technique that cognitive therapists most commonly employ to bring clients to analyse and evaluate their beliefs more objectively is that of the Personal Journal. People who undertake cognitive therapy are most often advised to keep a written daily record of the situations that they have encountered, the emotions that they experienced in response to those situations, and the beliefs that they had about the situations at the time that may have given rise to those emotions. They are asked to engage in the 'careful scrutiny and consideration'

¹²⁷ A characteristic referred to as 'arbitrary inference', see Frank Wills, *Beck's Cognitive Therapy: Distinctive Features* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 14.

¹²⁸ Robert J. DeRubeis and others, 'Cognitive Therapy', in *Handbook of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapies*, ed. by Keith S. Dobson, 3rd edn (New York: The Guilford Press, 2010), 277-316, p. 278.

that I referred to above, to identify alternative and more realistic ways of thinking about the impact and meanings of an event or circumstance, and finally to record the effect on their emotional state of this analysis and the reconstruction of their beliefs. In theory, the process as a whole should ameliorate clients' difficult emotions and, in line with Beck's original findings, we generally find this to be the case in practice.¹²⁹ Alongside this record-keeping strategy, cognitive therapists identify the schemas that underlie their clients' views of themselves. They challenge the logic and achievability of the 'must' and 'should' messages that are embedded in schemas, and encourage clients to adopt views and aspirations that are, again, more realistic and appropriate.¹³⁰

The approaches that I have explained are typically viewed as purely cognitive strategies since they operate on modes of thinking. However, there is a range of different techniques at the disposal of a therapist working within this model, which draw on behavioural theory and practices. In *Cognitive Therapies and the Emotional Disorders*, Beck delineates two approaches within cognitive therapy: the 'intellectual', discussed above, and the 'experiential', which he described as 'the stock-in trade of behaviour therapists' (p. 215). Therapeutic techniques that would fall into the category of 'experiential' include, for example, 'counter-conditioning' and 'modelling' treatments introduced by Joseph Wolpe. Clients who experience distressing phobic responses may be desensitised through the employment of relaxation techniques (counter-conditioning) and/or by the demonstration (modelling) of lack of fear by the therapist.¹³¹ Additionally, there are methods such as those which involve the use of reward and self-reward for desired behaviours (Skinnerian reinforcement explained earlier in this chapter) and unpleasant consequences

¹²⁹ The Personal Journal strategy is described in numerous publications related to cognitive and cognitive-behavioural therapy, along with case studies and summaries of research that show the efficacy of cognitive and cognitive-behavioural therapy. See, for example, Christine Padesky and Dennis Greenberger, *Clinician's Guide to Mind Over Mood* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1995). For a brief explanation of the process and an example of the form that a Personal Journal might take, see Green and Humphrey, *Coaching for Resilience*, pp. 178-180.

¹³⁰ See, for example, Christine Padesky and Dennis Greenberger, 'Schema change processes in cognitive therapy', *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 1:5 (1994a), 267-278.

¹³¹ See Joseph Wolpe, *Psychotherapy by Reciprocal Inhibition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958).

for those that a client wishes to cease (aversion therapy, based on Skinnerian negative reinforcement and punishment contingencies).

Of particular interest in the context of this thesis are different behavioural approaches which include elements of meditation and mindfulness, one manifestation of which is the experience of 'flow'.¹³² The concept of 'flow' was applied by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi to the state that one might achieve through complete absorption in a task or activity to the extent that one loses awareness of external surroundings and occurrences, and even of the passage of time. So, in the state of flow, all potentially disturbing or anxiety-provoking ruminations are pushed outside of awareness, and this enables calm peacefulness, and possibly even feelings of happiness or joy to pervade. Noteworthy here is Csikszentmihalyi's comment that the condition of flow brings about a 'loss of self-consciousness', which 'does not involve a loss of self, and certainly not a loss of consciousness, but rather, only a loss of consciousness of the self. [...]. And being able to forget temporarily who we are seems to be very enjoyable.'¹³³ Also relevant are the techniques promulgated by the therapeutic model, 'Neuro-Linguistic Programming' (NLP).¹³⁴ In keeping with behaviourists' reluctance to become involved with the content of people's thoughts, practitioners of NLP are concerned, not with *what* people think, but with the ways in which their thoughts *are represented* in their minds, as an inner voice (auditory) or a movie clip or photograph (visual), or even in their bodies as a physical sensation (kinaesthetic). Once a therapist is aware of the representational form of the source of their client's distress or anxiety, then they begin to work towards transforming the qualities, as opposed to the content, of that representation. Thus, for example, if the client is hearing negative pervasive messages as a voice speaking in their head, they do not need to challenge or change the message, they can just turn the volume down, push it

¹³² For mindfulness meditation, see (amongst his many publications) Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: How to Cope with Stress, Pain and Illness Using Mindfulness Meditation* (London: Piatkus, 1990). The concept of 'flow' was introduced by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, Steps Toward Enhancing the Quality of Life* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991).

¹³³ Csikszentmihalyi, p. 64.

¹³⁴ As with all of the models of psychotherapy that I have explained, there are numerous texts which cover the theory and practices of NLP. For the original text see Richard Bandler and John Grinder, *Frogs into Princes: The Introduction to Neuro-Linguistic Programming*, (MOAB, Utah: Real People Press, 1979).

away into the distance, or simply imagine that they turn and walk away from it.¹³⁵

I outline the elements of CBT theory and therapeutic methods in some detail above because I perceive that Austen both describes, and places significance on, methods that are remarkably similar to these approaches. I refer again to Austen's portrayal of Mrs Smith. Through the apparently natural and un-self-conscious use of techniques that almost exactly match those that I have explored in the sections above (although not in the same terms), Mrs. Smith is able to maintain her psychological wellness in spite of loss and hardship, an ability which the author describes as 'the choicest gift from Heaven'.¹³⁶

A note on the philosophical background to the CBT paradigm

One may detect the position of Greek and Roman Stoic philosophers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius in Beck's cognitive-therapeutic model, as Beck himself is keen to point out.¹³⁷ The notion that people's thoughts influence their emotions, and that individuals themselves have the capacity to alter the way that they think and thereby change how they feel, is clear in passages such as this from *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*:

If you suffer pain because of some external cause, what troubles you is not the thing but your decision about it, and this it is in your power to wipe out at once. But if what pains you is something in your own disposition, who prevents you from correcting your judgement?¹³⁸

It would not have occurred to Austen to conceive of and include features of CBT in her novels in the terms used to refer to and about the model today.

Nevertheless, it is quite likely that the author absorbed elements of the Stoic

¹³⁵ For a summary of the key ideas behind the model and an illustrative exercise, see Green and Humphrey, *Coaching for Resilience*, pp. 183-186.

¹³⁶ *Persuasion*, II:5, 167.

¹³⁷ See *Cognitive Therapy of Depression*, pp. 8-9.

¹³⁸ A. S. L. Farquharson, ed., trans., and commentary, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, 2 vols ([1944] Oxford: Oxford University Press, repr. 1967), II, 8:47, p. 163. (Beck quotes this meditation in slightly different translation, see *Cognitive Therapy and The Emotional Disorders*, p. 263). See also Elizabeth Carter, trans., *Epictetus: Moral Discourses, Enchiridion and Fragments* ([1910] London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, last repr. 1957).

philosophical approach directly from translations of the philosophers' writings, or indirectly through her reading of commentators such as Samuel Johnson, who promoted rational stoicism in his publications, and whose works we know Austen followed and admired.¹³⁹

The subject of the next part of this chapter is the third major school of psychotherapy, the Humanistic school. I focus my discussion of the Humanistic field of psychotherapy primarily on the Rogerian Client-Centered model and on the framework of Emotional Intelligence. I perceive that aspects of the Rogerian formulation permeate Austen's portrayal of her characters, and that an understanding of these Rogerian elements within Austen's work illuminates both the subtle features of the author's characterisations and psychological insights that inform those characterisations. The Emotional Intelligence model encompasses principles of both the cognitive and the humanistic psychotherapeutic approaches, and provides the basis for my detailed analysis of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood in the next chapter of this thesis. I include an explanation of Transactional Analysis (TA) within the following overview of the Humanistic field. This is a formulation which informs my understanding of a range of Austen's characters, exemplified in Chapter Three in my analysis of Mary Crawford.

1.3. Humanistic Psychotherapy

Humanistic psychotherapy is underpinned by a theoretical stance which, as I remarked earlier in this chapter, goes beyond both the behaviourists' concentration on perceptible and measurable responses and actions, and the cognitivists' concern with conscious thought patterns. For humanistic therapists, it is not possible for therapy to be effective unless it takes all elements of human experience into account. The humanistic framework therefore seeks to encompass all aspects, consciously observable and otherwise, of both past and present experiences of the human subject. As well as the analysis of a client's present-moment behaviour and psychological and emotional condition, the strong influence of Freudian psychoanalytic concepts

¹³⁹ See the Introduction to this thesis for comments on, and references relating to, the influence on Austen's writing of her literary background.

is in evidence within the humanistic model, as well as a focus on other qualities that are not empirically measurable, such as spirituality. Modes of exploration of this breadth of human experience in the practice of humanistic psychotherapy take numerous different forms, including a range of drama, art and experiential meditative therapies. In very simple terms, these methods are formulated to reveal the contents of a person's unconscious mind through role play or the creation of artworks, and through procedures such as 'rebirthing therapy' that employ deep breathing techniques to draw the client into a state of deep awareness of the self and thereby to bring about therapeutic healing and change.¹⁴⁰ The eclecticism of the *modus operandi* within humanistic psychotherapy notwithstanding, the central concern within this school of psychotherapy is for the self-awareness and personal autonomy of the individual, and for the individual's capacity for development and growth in these areas.

There are certain proponents of the principles and practice of humanistic psychotherapy whose contributions to the school have been, and continue to be, especially significant. Arguably the most influential of these is Carl Rogers, originator of Client-Centered Therapy which I explain below.

1.3.1. Client-Centered Therapy: Carl Rogers (1902-1987)¹⁴¹

It would be difficult to over-emphasise the importance of the work of Carl Rogers within the current field of psychotherapy. To all intents and purposes, and supported by research to which I shall refer shortly, practitioners within all schools of psychotherapy accept that the application of the principles devised by Rogers is a necessary foundation for the effectiveness of their practice. Essentially, Rogers' influence stems from three key elements within his theoretical and practical framework. First is his emphasis on an instinctual drive within all organisms, and therefore within humans, to seek to develop

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Robert, J. Landy, *Drama Therapy: Concepts, Theories and Practices*, 2nd edn (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1994), Case and Dalley, *The Handbook of Art Therapy*, and Catherine Dowling, *Rebirthing and Breathwork: A Powerful Technique for Personal Transformation* (London: Judy Piatkus Ltd., 2000).

¹⁴¹ Unless otherwise stated, quotations throughout this discussion of Carl Rogers' Client-Centred model are from *On Becoming a Person*. Page numbers are given in parentheses following quotes, or series of quotes taken from the same page of the publication.

their ability to function and thrive independently of others, a drive to which he applied the term 'actualizing tendency'. Second is the explicit identification of the facilitation of the client's development of this personal autonomy as the primary aim of psychotherapy. Finally, the third is his prescription for the ethical, philosophical, psychological and emotional stance of the therapist, and the ways in which the therapist should relate to their clients in order to achieve the most effective therapeutic process.

In the section below, I begin with an explanation of Rogers' perception of the nature and significance of the actualizing tendency, and of the development of personal autonomy within psychotherapy. I then expand upon the three conditions of the therapist-client relationship which Rogers deemed to be required for the success of the therapeutic process, namely the non-judgmental approach, the empathy and the congruence that I mention and ascribe to Austen's approach to her characters in my Introduction to this thesis. I should reiterate here the point that I clarified in the Introduction, which is that it is not my intention to propose that Austen adopted these three qualities in her approach to her writing in order deliberately to create some form of a therapeutic relationship with her readers. It is rather that, as a therapist myself, I perceive a thread of the qualities defined by Rogers running through and underlying the author's writing. This leads me, later in this thesis, to consider a possible intentionality on the part of the author to bring her readers to adopt a similar stance in order to understand more fully the nature of her characters, and, possibly thereby, themselves.

Carl Rogers: the 'actualizing tendency' and the three 'core conditions'

i. The 'actualizing tendency'

As I state above, one of the foremost tenets of Rogers' model of psychotherapy is that all human beings are driven by what he called the 'actualizing tendency', an instinctive motivation towards the development of their ability to live independently of others. In Rogers' words, 'The organism has one basic tendency and striving — to actualize, maintain and enhance the experiencing

organism.’¹⁴² The proposition here is to a large extent self-evident at a biological level. It is that the behaviour of all organisms, including humans, is instinctively geared towards the maintenance and enhancement of their physiology through feeding and reproduction, in short, towards survival. However, the theory further describes the drive of all organisms, ‘to move in the direction of maturation, *as maturation is defined for each species.*’ This constitutes, ‘movement in the direction of greater independence or self-responsibility.’ Rogers writes (of the organism):

Its movement [...] is in the direction of an increasing self-government, self-regulation, and autonomy, and away from heteronymous [sic] control, or control by external forces. *This is true whether we are speaking of entirely unconscious organic processes, such as the regulation of body heat, or such uniquely human and intellectual functions as the choice of life goals.*¹⁴³

So, for Rogers, in all humans, the drive towards autonomy of thought, values and beliefs, and in the way these are expressed, along with an urge to grow and fulfil potential creativity, learning and so on, is *as inherent as the instinct for their survival.*¹⁴⁴ Crucially therefore, just as threats to the physical survival of a human being induce stress, so any constraint upon a human being’s ability to develop autonomy leads to stress. For Rogers, it is possible for an individual to become more able to express themselves autonomously, and to experience the consequent internal psychological and emotional ease, only when they have a clear and authentic sense of themselves: their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and of what motivates them to think, feel, or act as they do. Thus, self-awareness is the *sine qua non* of autonomy.

¹⁴² Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, p. 487.

¹⁴³ Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy*, p. 488. (My italics).

¹⁴⁴ One may recognise the term ‘self-actualization’ from Abraham Maslow’s renowned model of the hierarchy of needs to explain human motivation. Maslow used the term ‘self-actualization’ to describe the goal towards which all humans are driven once their need for the means to maintain their survival and safety has been met. In Maslow’s terms, self-actualization is characterized by motivation towards love, justice, kindness, beauty and, notably in the present context, towards autonomy. For Maslow, as for Rogers, the human drive towards self-actualization is as much an inherent part of the organism’s structure as the instinct for survival. See, Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd edn, revised by Robert Frager and others (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), and *Toward A Psychology of Being*, 3rd edn (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998).

In the light of this definition of autonomy and its inherent requirement for self-awareness, I return to references that I make earlier in this chapter to behaviourist interpretations of Austen's characters. There I question the ability of the behaviourist model to explain the psychological complexity that Austen presents in her portrayals of Mr. Willoughby and Edward Ferrars. I describe the potential behaviourist interpretation of Mr. Willoughby that would liken the character to one of Skinner's rats dashing around a cage to avoid noise and electric shocks and find a safe and peaceful spot. The Rogerian concept of the actualizing tendency offers a different and more nuanced reading of Mr. Willoughby's state. The character refuses to marry Eliza to appease his cousin, which suggests that he behaves autonomously. However he abandons Marianne because he is unable to overcome his "dread of poverty" which he now realises Marianne's "affection and her society would have deprived of all its horrors".¹⁴⁵ Here we see that Willoughby acts, in Rogers' terms, under 'heteronomous [sic] control'. This is because, when he relinquishes Marianne, he does so because he lacks self-awareness. Willoughby states:

"I did not *then* know what it was to love. But have I ever known it?—Well may it be doubted; for, had I really loved, could I have sacrificed my feelings to vanity, to avarice?"¹⁴⁶

When Willoughby abandons Marianne he acts against his own personal feelings and self-will because, at the time, he has no self-understanding. He experiences this restriction to his instinctive drive towards maturation and autonomy with the same physiological, emotional and psychological stress that would arise instinctively from a threat to his physical survival.

From this point of view, it is possible also to more fully understand Edward Ferrars' choice. In contrast to Willoughby who appears to act autonomously and yet does not, Edward seems to act without autonomy and yet, in Rogerian terms, the character's determination to maintain his engagement to Lucy Steele is a model of autonomous behaviour. Edward apparently acts very much against his own wishes, and indeed his own

¹⁴⁵ *Sense and Sensibility*, III:8, 366 and 363.

¹⁴⁶ *Sense and Sensibility*, III:8, 363.

interests, in his resolution to honour his engagement to Lucy Steele in spite of his love for Elinor. He appears to adhere to a code of conduct imposed by his social and cultural milieu to the detriment of his own personal happiness. However, when Mrs. Ferrars makes it clear that Edward must withdraw from his engagement to Lucy in order to fulfil his duty to meet the expectations of his social sphere and those of his family, she absolves him of any externally imposed responsibility to marry Lucy. Nevertheless, he persists with the engagement, and therefore there must be another, more powerful factor that motivates Edward's resolve.

From a Rogerian perspective, this factor is the character's understanding of himself and of his own independent values. Edward knows he has made a promise, and he knows that, for him, a promise must be kept. This strong sense of self facilitates his decision. More importantly from a Rogerian psychotherapeutic point of view, Edward's self-awareness and his ability to act according to that sense of self manifests the movement of the actualizing tendency towards independence, and this ensures peace of mind at a profound level in spite of the immediate discomfort and unhappiness he experiences through his choice. Edward would never be able to experience the satisfaction he should feel at gaining his mother's approval nor the happiness he could find in marriage with Elinor, with or without the comforts acquired through his inheritance, at the cost the violation of one of his deeply held values and thus obstructing the development of his autonomous self.

I explore the resonances between Austen's portrayals of autonomy and lack of autonomy in her characters and Rogerian principles in greater depth and detail in the chapters to follow in this thesis. For now, I return to my exposition of Rogers' theory, and focus on the primacy that he gives to the enhancement of an individual's self-awareness as a necessary means to the development of personal autonomy in the therapeutic process.

Rogers considered that the context in which a person's actualizing tendency may be realised are present within the context of a certain form of therapeutic relationship. This is a relationship in which the therapist provides

an environment in which the client is able to come to their own self-realisations, and determine for themselves the ways in which they may achieve their therapeutic aims *independently* of any observations, opinions or agenda that the therapist might hold. In this way the relationship that the therapist develops with the client is one of an alliance of equals rather than one in which the therapist presents themselves as the expert or teacher (as may be the case in the cognitive-behavioural therapies for example). As Rogers states succinctly:

I can state the overall hypothesis in one sentence, as follows. If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other person will discover within himself the capacity to use that relationship for growth, and change and development will occur. (p. 33)

The ‘certain type of relationship’ to which Rogers refers is one in which the client does not feel judged, in which they perceive that the way that they experience themselves at each moment is understood and to some extent shared at that moment by the therapist, and in which honesty and transparency is offered as well as invited by the therapist. This therapeutic context requires the therapist to provide three conditions in relation to their client, often termed the ‘core conditions’.¹⁴⁷ Respectively, these conditions are, as identified earlier in this section: unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence. I will explore each of these in turn in a little more detail now since they are the guiding principles of the practice of Client-Centered therapy. My work as a psychotherapist has been significantly influenced by Rogerian theory and principles of practice. Inevitably therefore, the reading that I present of Austen’s novels in this thesis reflects my knowledge and understanding of the Client-Centered model, and I refer a great deal to these three therapeutic conditions in my exploration of Austen’s writing over the course of the chapters of this thesis to follow.

¹⁴⁷ Windy Dryden and Andrew Reeves use the term ‘core conditions’ in *The Handbook of Individual Therapy*, and see also publications specifically related to Rogerian psychotherapy such as Barry A. Farber, Debra C. Brink & Patricia M. Raskin, eds, *The Psychotherapy of Carl Rogers: Cases and Commentary* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996), and Steve Vincent, *Being Empathic: Carl Rogers’ Core Conditions in Depth* (Florida: CRC press, 2005). The term is not to be found in Rogers’ seminal works referred to in this thesis, *Client-Centered Therapy* and *On Becoming a Person*.

ii. The core conditions for an effective therapeutic relationship

a. Unconditional positive regard

In Rogerian psychotherapy the term ‘unconditional positive regard’ refers to the attitude of care and respect that the therapist holds towards their client, regardless of the degree to which the therapist agrees with or approves of the client’s feelings, thoughts or actions. In Rogers’ words, the therapist’s stance is “I care”; not “I care for you *if* you behave thus and so.” To be very clear, the condition of unconditional positive regard does not require a therapist to concur with a client’s views or to be at ease with all feelings, wishes or behaviours that the client expresses or describes. It calls for the therapist simply to accept the client as they are without making judgements or attaching ‘conditions of worth’. The definition of unconditional positive regard is refined further by Rogers as he states, ‘It involves an acceptance of and a caring for the client as a *separate* person, with permission for him to have his own feelings and experiences, and to find his own meanings in them.’ (p. 283. Rogers’ italics) The notion of the therapist’s acceptance of the separateness of the other person shows that the therapist does not require acquiescence, submission or compliance to their opinions, beliefs or authority in order to maintain their own sense of self. Thus the therapist provides a model of personal autonomy that leads the client not only to begin to trust and express their own feelings and responses without looking for external validation, but to begin themselves to accept the unique feelings and values which exist in another person.

The element of Client-Centered therapy that emphasises the acceptance of the autonomy of others as part of the development of one’s own autonomy is a significant factor in my analysis of the characters in Austen’s novels in Chapter Three of this thesis. In that chapter I show that this aspect of autonomy is one of the defining characteristics of Catherine Morland’s behaviour, and I contrast Elizabeth Bennet, who demonstrates this quality of acceptance, with Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is consistently unable to respect the autonomous decisions and actions of others.

In relation to unconditional positive regard, Rogers points out that this condition is meaningless unless it is offered in the presence of as complete and

accurate an understanding of the client as possible. It is easy to show acceptance of another person if their thoughts, feelings and actions are superficially similar to our own, or to those that we appreciate or admire. However, for the client, it is the sense of being cared for as a person despite their expressions of deeper and perhaps more uncomfortable or challenging emotions or views that is of most therapeutic value. Therefore, it is incumbent on the therapist to seek to understand the client at this more profound level and to maintain their regard for the client no matter how troubling their revelations may be. The form that this understanding takes is encompassed within the term 'empathy', which is the core condition I explore next.

b. Empathy

The *OED* defines 'empathy' as, 'The ability to understand and appreciate another person's feelings, experience, etc.', and I would imagine that this is a commonly held understanding of the meaning of the term. To gauge the full implication of the concept however, it is useful to compare it to a related term, 'sympathy', which the *OED* defines partially as, 'The quality or state of being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other; the fact or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings of another or others; fellow-feeling', and further as, 'The quality or state of being thus affected by the suffering or sorrow of another; a feeling of compassion or commiseration'. For psychotherapeutic purposes, there is a crucial distinction to be made between the definition of empathy and that of sympathy. That distinction lies in the element of separateness of emotional experience. Sympathy denotes a sense of one finding in oneself a feeling of one's own that 'corresponds' with that which another person is experiencing, or indeed feeling the same way about something and thus 'entering into' or 'sharing' another person's feelings. Empathy, on the other hand, involves one in becoming aware of the emotional experience of another without engaging one's own emotions to bring about that connection, or bringing oneself to have the same emotional reaction as another person to a given circumstance or situation.¹⁴⁸ Rogers'

¹⁴⁸ The meaning and purpose of empathy that I present here is purely an explanation of the Rogerian view of empathy and its importance in the therapeutic relationship. Etymologically speaking, the word as it is currently understood appeared in the early twentieth century, and so would not have been in

explanation of empathy in the therapeutic context draws on this distinction between the two concepts, as follows:

To sense the client's private world as if it were your own, but without ever losing the "as if" quality [...]. To sense the client's anger, fear or confusion as if it were your own, yet without your anger, fear or confusion getting bound up in it, is the condition we are endeavoring [sic] to describe. (p. 284)

It is the 'as if' element that is key here in a therapeutic context. If the therapist were to exhibit their own anger, fear or grief alongside their client, or indeed become consumed with compassion or sorrow for their client, they would be unable to maintain the client's sense of being in a safe environment and the client might even begin to reassure or comfort the therapist. The therapist feels what the client is experiencing in an empathic way in order to achieve two main outcomes. First, it is to understand the client's position more deeply and clearly, and to reflect their understanding back to the client. It is possible that the therapist will be able to communicate something of the client's experience of which the client is not aware, thus developing the individual's self-awareness. Second, it is to be able to show the client the therapist's *informed* non-judgmental regard, so that the client may feel more able to explore further their thoughts, feelings, desires, motivations, fears and so on.

Thus, the condition of empathy, closely aligned with the non-judgmental acceptance of the client's state by the therapist, provides the client with an experience of being valued even during the emergence and external observation of potentially challenging or disturbing aspects of themselves. This leads the client to be open to developing greater awareness and acceptance of themselves. The effects of the non-judgmental acceptance and empathy that I

usage at the time of Austen's writing. Nevertheless, the possibility that emotions felt by one person could be experienced by another was acknowledged then, albeit with negative connotations. In *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (California: Stanford University Press, 1996) Adela Pinch explores the way in which the sharing of emotional experience was seen at that time as analogous to the transmission of a viral infection from one person to another. In the following chapter I discuss my view of Austen's more positive portrayal of emotions and 'empathy'. Dating from the fifteenth century, the term 'sympathy' was in usage during Austen's period. Again, I explore discussions relating to empathy and sympathy in Austen's novels in the following chapter of this thesis.

have discussed above are facilitated further by the way in which the therapist communicates with their client. This aspect of the relationship is defined by the third of Rogers' three core conditions, 'congruence', which I will explain below.

c. Congruence

The condition of congruence requires that the therapist is aware of their own thoughts, feelings and reactions at each moment of a therapy session, and that, where appropriate and constructive, they communicate those thoughts, feelings and reactions to their client. When they do decide to present something of their own experience to the client, they must proceed with genuine honesty and transparency. Rogers explains thus:

Being genuine [...] involves the willingness to be and to express, in my own words and my behavior, the various feelings and attitudes which exist in me. It is only in this way that the relationship can have *reality* [...]. It is only by providing the genuine reality which is in me, that the other person can successfully seek for the reality in him. I have found this to be true even when the attitudes I feel are not attitudes with which I am pleased, or attitudes which seem conducive to a good relationship. It seems extremely important to be *real*. (p. 33. Rogers' italics)

So, to fulfil the condition of congruence, the therapist must know themselves, and be themselves, even when this entails knowledge and expression of less than appealing, or even threatening, elements of the self. For a simple example, if a therapist is irritated with a client who repeatedly arrives late for appointments, it is the therapist's responsibility to acknowledge that response both inwardly to themselves and outwardly to the client. The therapist must experience the internal discomfort, and risk unease and perhaps even confrontation between themselves and the client, rather than attempt to pretend to themselves and to their client that they are relaxed and fine in order to maintain a 'nice' or 'good' relationship.

It is important for the therapist to be congruent in order to build the trust necessary for therapy to advance successfully. However, congruence serves a further purpose at a deeper level. It is a means by which the therapist

manifests the nature and the achievability of the therapeutic goal of self-aware autonomy. With the therapist as a model, the client is able to observe objectively that it is possible for a person to know themselves, to accept themselves and to be themselves, and still to survive. They learn also that it is possible for a person to be congruent within a relationship and for that relationship still to survive, even when, to paraphrase Rogers' quotation a little earlier, the attitudes that they discover within themselves seem to be uncondusive to that relationship. Thus, the self-aware congruence of the therapist has the potential to heighten the client's own levels of self-awareness, self-determination and authentic self-expression. For Rogers, this is the foundation for therapeutic growth and transformation.¹⁴⁹

As I indicate above, and in the Introduction to this thesis, I perceive a strong resonance in Austen's writing with the central features of the Rogerian Client-Centered model of psychotherapy. However, my interpretation of a certain aspect of Austen's characterisations has emerged in the light of another major psychotherapeutic model within the Humanistic school, namely Transactional Analysis, which I discuss in the section below.

1.3.2. Transactional Analysis: Eric Berne (1910-1970)

I will focus on the work of Eric Berne in the following account as key elements of Berne's Transactional Analysis (TA) model are of particular relevance to my discussion of Austen's work. However, it would be remiss not to mention at least, in this context, the contribution to the humanistic paradigm that was made by Fritz Perls, the originator of Gestalt therapy.¹⁵⁰ Contemporaneous with Carl Rogers, and like Rogers, both Perls and Berne emphasised the centrality to the work of psychotherapy of the development of the authenticity and

¹⁴⁹ At the beginning of my presentation of the Client-Centered model, I mention the fact that therapists working across all schools of psychotherapy accept the necessity for the application of Rogerian principles in their own practice. For evidence, see Michael J. Lambert and Dean E. Barley, 'Research summary on the therapeutic relationship and psychotherapy outcome.' *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 38:4 (2001), 357-361. For a general discussion see Richard J. Hazler and Nick Barwick, *The Therapeutic Environment: Core Conditions for Facilitating Therapy* (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 2001). For a specific exploration of the relevance of Rogerian principles to cognitive therapy, see Aaron T. Beck and others, 'The Therapeutic Relationship: Application to Cognitive Therapy', in *Cognitive Therapy of Depression*, pp. 45-60.

¹⁵⁰ See Frederick S. Perls, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* ([1959] Moab, Utah: Real People Press, 13th repr. 1979),

autonomy of the individual. The latter two psychologists were especially interested in investigating the challenges involved in the transition from childhood to adulthood, embodying, as they saw it, the potentially threatening and anxiety-provoking shift from dependence to independence.

Berne's TA model is distinguished by his systematic theory of the structure of personality that exists within an individual at different points in their psychological transition between childhood and adulthood, and by how people's communicative interactions with others reveal the position they occupy in that transition at any one moment. His formulation gained prominence, in large part, from the way in which he represented it in a simple but compellingly interpretative diagrammatic form. Below I examine the defining features of Berne's theory, and illustrate the way in which his theory is depicted diagrammatically in accordance with his model. This will prove to be particularly apt in my interpretation of the character of Mary Crawford in Chapter Three of this thesis, however it could provide an interesting viewpoint from which other of Austen's characters may also be analysed. I begin with an explanation of the foundational concept of Berne's theory of the structure of personality, that is the concept of the 'ego states'.

Eric Berne: the 'ego states'¹⁵¹

The basis of Berne's model of the structure of personality is his conceptualisation of three separate entities that represent elements of an individual adult's personality. He termed these entities, 'ego states'. One of these ego states pertains to the individual's present experience as an adult, and as such is called the 'Adult ego state', or more simply, the 'Adult'. The other two ego states are those that relate to the individual's past experiences. These are the Parent ego state, and the 'Child ego state'; simply the 'Parent' and the

¹⁵¹ Unless otherwise stated, quotations throughout this discussion of the TA model are from Eric Berne's seminal publication, *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy: A Systematic Individual and Social Psychiatry* (New York: Grove Press, 1961). Page numbers are given in parentheses following quotes, or series of quotes taken from the same page of the publication. Eric Berne's work was popularised by his publication, *Games People Play. The Psychology of Human Relationships* ([1968] London: Penguin, 2010).

'Child'.¹⁵² Berne's theory holds that, 'ego states of former age levels are maintained in potential existence within the persona' (p. 19). In other words, while a person may have reached adulthood by virtue of their age, they retain traces of their personalities that were formed at different stages, or ages, of their development. In consequence, at any moment, an individual may inhabit and exhibit any one of the three ego states that form their personality as a whole. There are clear echoes of Freud's topographical model in Berne's terminology (see my discussion of Freudian psychoanalytic theory earlier in this chapter). However, Berne is quick to point out that the Parent, Adult and Child in TA are not the equivalents of the Freudian Superego, Ego and Id.

In Berne's theory, the ego states are not, as Freud would have it, psychic phenomena that operate at different levels of consciousness in the mind and which are experienced by a person in symbolic, or otherwise disguised or distorted forms. For Berne they are, as he puts it 'phenomenological realities' (p. 23). For example, when a person inhabits the Parent ego part of their personality, they do not behave *like a parent*, they behave *as their own parent would*. Similarly, if a person feels petulant or needful, this is not a revelation of their dynamic psychical Id, it is a re-emergence of themselves as they were when they were a child. Again, they are not reacting *like a child*, or *childishly*, they are reacting *in the way that they would have when they themselves were a child*. In some people, one or other of the three ego states is dominant and they react recurrently to situations in their Parent, Adult or Child personality. In other people there is a more frequent shift between ego states. It is important to be clear that no one of the ego states is to be viewed as either wholly beneficial, or entirely detrimental, to an individual's ability to function. As Berne states, the terms Parent, Adult and Child are 'biological and not prejudicial'.¹⁵³ The Adult is essential for the individual's ability to survive and thrive since, in this ego state, the individual brings their own uniquely developed, mature personality to bear on their processes of analysis,

¹⁵² Berne applied technical terms to these ego states, namely 'Neopsyche' (Adult ego state), 'Exteropsyche' (Parent ego state) and 'Archaeopsyche' (Child ego state). I will use the more colloquial forms as Berne himself employed them, and it is by these names that the ego states are commonly referred in popular psychology as well as in the professional field.

¹⁵³ Berne, *Games People Play*, p. 24.

evaluation, decision-making and communication in their current circumstances. However, it is important that the Child ego state is able to dominate from time to time, since the Child contributes spontaneity, creativity, intuition, playfulness and, what we might call, 'charm', to an individual's personality. Equally, it is helpful for the Parent to emerge at times. The Parent has the potential to enhance the individual's capacity for nurturing others, in particular, children, and thus may enable an individual to function effectively as an actual parent themselves. So, all three aspects of the personality have value. Therapeutic intervention is only indicated when one or other of these ego states becomes inappropriately dominant and disrupts or undermines the equilibrium of the individual or the quality of their relationships. Below, I go on to explain the components and process of TA psychotherapy.

TA psychotherapy: structural and transactional analysis

TA psychotherapy begins with a 'structural analysis' to discover which, if any, of the ego states dominates in an individual's emotions and behaviour. This is followed by the 'transactional analysis' which explores the ways in which the individual's ego states affect their communicative interactions, or 'transactions', with other people. The process of the analysis of transactions may itself be diagnostic as a person's ego states are revealed by the ways in which they communicate with others. It is this function of the transactional analysis that comes into play in my observation of Austen's characters, so it is this aspect of the model that I will review in greater detail in the section below.

Diagnosis of ego states by transactional analysis

In transactional analysis, a transaction is, quite simply, any single piece of verbal or non-verbal communicative exchange between two people. When two or more people encounter one another, it is most usual for one of them to begin to speak. This opening piece of communication is called the 'transactional stimulus'. The other person, or, in a group, another person, will respond. This is called the 'transactional response'. The transactional response now becomes a transactional stimulus for the contributor of the original stimulus, or another person, to produce a transactional response, which then becomes a transactional stimulus, and so on. Transactional analysis involves the scrutiny

of these transactional segments in order to identify from which ego state each of them has arisen. Berne summarises the rationale for the diagnostic process, and the terminology he applied to it, as follows:

The position is, then, that at any given moment each individual in a social aggregation will exhibit a Parental, Adult or Child ego state, and that individuals can shift with varying degrees of readiness from one ego state to another. These observations give rise to certain diagnostic statements. 'That is your Parent' means: 'You are now in the same state of mind as one of your parents (or a parental substitute) used to be, and you are responding as he would, with the same posture, gestures, vocabulary, feelings, etc.' 'That is your Adult' means: 'You have just made an autonomous, objective appraisal of the situation and are stating these thought processes, or the problems you perceive, or the conclusions you have come to, in a non-prejudicial manner.' 'That is your Child' means: 'The manner and intent of your reaction is the same as it would have been when you were a very little boy or girl.'¹⁵⁴

Thus, Berne articulates the basic qualities of the forms of communication that emerge from the different ego states.

Communication from the Adult ego state reflects the present moment experience of the adult communicator. It is recognised as such by the speaker's clear statements about, or evaluations of, current situations, and by their unambiguous and straightforward declarations of, for example, their intents and wishes. The form that these observations and declarations take reveals the nature of the adult personality of the adult speaker. On the other hand, both Parent and Child ego states are drawn from an individual's personality as it was in the past. Communication from either of these ego states may be identified by the observation of a speaker's projection of the needs of their past personalities onto others. For example, an adult communicator who is being influenced by their Child ego state may attempt to create, in their listener, a parental figure with whom they can interact to gain the parent-like attention they crave. This

¹⁵⁴ Berne, *The Games People Play*, pp. 23-24.

projection may take the form of expressions of neediness or dependency in order to elicit a guiding, comforting or nurturing response from the listener. However, the Child ego's need for attention will be met even, and sometimes especially, if this takes the form of a critical scolding. Actual children who feel a lack of attention are understood to misbehave or put themselves at risk deliberately, whether with or without conscious intent, in order to generate this kind of reaction from their parents or carers.¹⁵⁵ If this was the way that a person sought and gained attention during their childhood, then this will be the manner in which they seek attention in their adulthood. By that token, an adult communicator who is being prompted by their Parent ego state may be seen to project that ego state's needs by criticising, reprimanding, advising or soothing other adults, as if those adults were naughty or needy children.

At this point, it will be useful to illustrate the aspects of Berne's model that I have outlined above with an example of an interaction that involves elements of communication from each of the three ego states. I will do so with the use of the diagrammatic form of representation that is distinctive of Berne's model (see Figs. 1, 2 and 3 below). The example is drawn from *Transactional Analysis*, and is one in which Berne analyses an exchange between three women: Camellia, Rosita and Holly, in a clinical group-therapy situation (see pp. 91-96). At one instance in the session, Camellia reports that she has told her husband that she no longer wants to have intercourse with him, and that he should go and find another woman. This constitutes a transactional stimulus that comes from Camellia's Adult. In theory, communication from the Adult is clear of projections from the past, and thus its intention is always to evince a transactional response directly from the Adult of another person. In accordance with this, Rosita's reply comes from her Adult as she asks Camellia, in a

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, Dr. William Sears and Martha Sears, R.N., *The Good Behaviour Book. How to have a better-behaved child from birth to age ten* (London: Thorsons, 2005). There are also numerous websites that explore the issue of the attention-seeking child, for example research and recommendations by Kylie Rymanovicz, 'Goals of Misbehavior - Part 1: Attention', published by Michigan State University at <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/goals_of_misbehavior_part_1_attention> [accessed 18th April 2018]. In addition, see popular information sites such as <<https://www.familyeducation.com/life/discipline-strategies/handling-attention-seeking-child>> [accessed 18th April 2018].

straightforward manner, why she made that approach to her husband, (“Why did you do that?” (p. 91)).

At the moment the transaction is Adult to Adult as illustrated in Fig. 1. It is a ‘complementary transaction’ because the ego state of the speaker receives a response from the ego state of the listener as intended. As is shown in Fig. 2, Rosita’s reply now becomes a stimulus from her Adult towards Camellia, with the expectation of a response from Camellia’s Adult. This might have taken the form of a statement by Camellia on the reason, or reasons, for her action, and the conversation would then have continued to flow. However, instead, Camellia reacts to Rosita’s enquiry by bursting into tears and complaining that she is being criticised no matter how hard she tries, (“I try so hard and then you criticize me.” (p. 91)). In the analysis of this transaction, one would observe that Camellia has misinterpreted Rosita’s ego-state as a critical Parent and responded to that in her vulnerable Child ego-state. Camellia’s misperception may have been triggered by a similarity between the words, manner or tone of Rosita’s response, and those that Camellia would have experienced from her parent, or parents, at some time in her childhood. If Rosita had, in fact spoken in her Parent, then her stimulus and Camellia’s response would have constituted a ‘complementary transaction’. However, since Rosita’s enquiry came from her Adult, and Camellia responded in her Child, the transaction is ‘crossed’ (see Fig. 2) and the smooth course of the exchange is interrupted. Rosita, still in her Adult, is confused and silenced by Camellia’s outburst.

Now, another participant, Holly, steps into the conversation. While Camellia’s Child reaction has not activated Rosita’s Parent, it has tapped into that ego state in Holly, who proceeds to take it upon herself to comfort and reassure Camellia’s Child. Berne writes:

Holly [...] immediately began to comfort Camellia and apologize for Rosita, just as she might talk to a hurt child. A free version of her remarks would read: “Don’t cry, honey, everything will be all right, we all love you and that stupid lady didn’t intend to be mean.” [...] Camellia responded with grateful “self-pity”. (p. 94)

Here, in the way that I described earlier, Camellia has created a parental figure in Holly and receives the consolation that her criticised Child craves, and, in her Parent, Holly has effectively projected the nurturing style of her own parent, or parents, onto Camellia. As illustrated in Fig. 3 below, the transaction between Camellia and Holly is a complementary one, and therefore they could have persisted in this manner. However, an interjection from Rosita's Adult ("This love-making could go on forever!") brings Holly into her own 'hurt and frightened Child', Camellia herself now resorts to silence, and the therapist is called upon to return all parties to their Adult ego states in order to engage them in the therapeutic analysis that I have outlined. (p. 94)

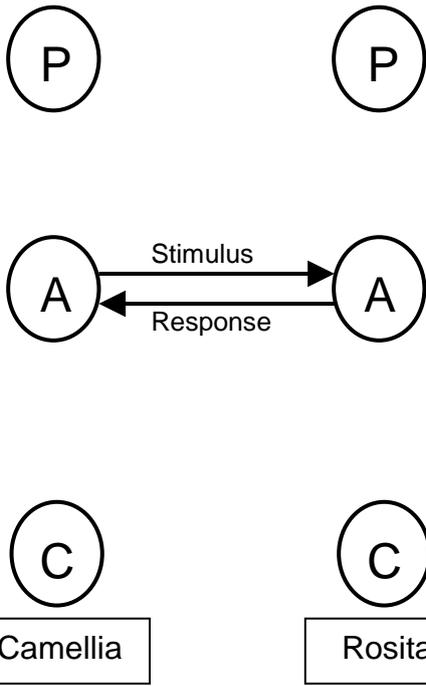


Fig. 1 Complementary Transaction

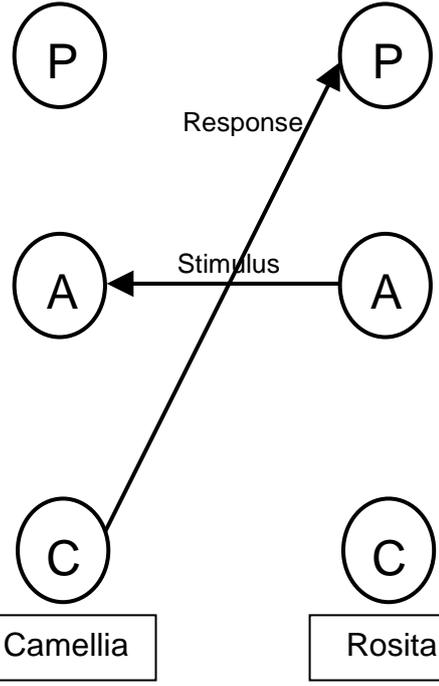


Fig. 2 Crossed Transaction

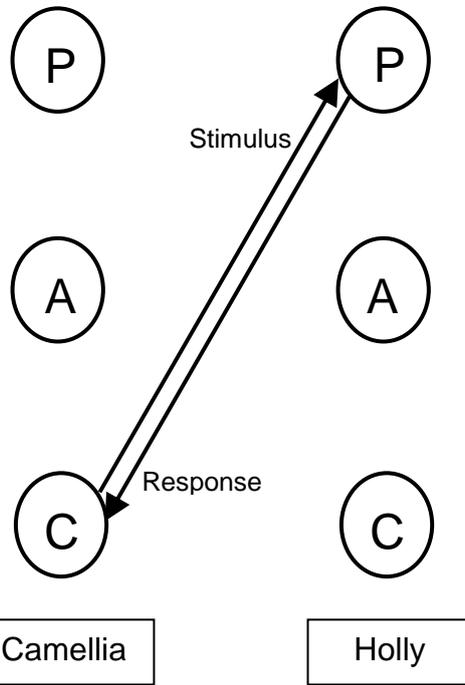


Fig. 3 Complementary Transaction

Diagrammatic Representation of Transactional Analysis of interactions between Camellia, Rosita and Holly described above.

It is not only in a clinical context that it is possible to observe the transactional dynamics revealed in the study above. According to Berne's proposition, the ego states exist within the structure of human personality, therefore they will be in evidence in one form or other in any and all human interactions. In theory, therefore, it would be possible to dissect the exchanges between all characters in all literature in transactional-analytical terms. This is certainly the case with regard to the characters portrayed in Austen's novels. In Chapter Three of this thesis, I examine particular sequences of complementary and crossed Parent-Adult-Child transactions that are perceptible in an exchange between Mary Crawford, Edmund Bertram and Mrs. Grant in the garden at the Grant's parsonage. This analysis demonstrates the way in which Berne's model serves to illuminate subtle aspects of the complex character of Mary Crawford, and throws further light on the specific nature of Austen's perceptions of human psychology and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships.

In the final section of this chapter, I explore the model of Emotional Intelligence (EI). Although the concepts upon which EI is based inform much of the practice of formal psychotherapy, EI does not, as a paradigm in itself, constitute a separate school of psychotherapy. I include the model in this thesis as it encompasses aspects of both the CBT and Humanistic schools of psychotherapy that I have discussed above. Earlier in this chapter I presented Aaron Beck's cognitive-therapeutic theory which holds that people's painful or damaging emotions and behaviours arise as a consequence of unnecessarily or inappropriately negative thought patterns. At that point I alluded, in footnotes, to the emphasis that Beck placed on the influence of thoughts upon the emotions, as opposed to the reverse, as argued by Beck's correspondent, Norman Harvey.¹⁵⁶ The question of the sequence of the emergence of thoughts and emotions is one that is a significant issue in the EI model. Further, the EI model picks up the themes of autonomy, self-awareness, non-judgemental acceptance, congruence and empathy that are incorporated within Rogerian theory and are now subsumed to a greater or lesser extent into the practice of

¹⁵⁶ Beck, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 9, 324-333.

all forms of psychotherapy. The EI model provides a framework by which one is able to illustrate how the principles that underlie the major schools of psychotherapy might operate in, and explain, people's everyday experience of themselves and the way that they relate to others. It is by this means that the model of EI has highlighted for me certain aspects of Austen's characters and their interrelationships.

The first of my substantive discussions of Austen's novels in this thesis is based on the framework of EI. In Chapter Two to follow, I present an in-depth exploration of the characters of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, and their relationship with each other and with other characters in *Sense and Sensibility* from the perspective of the EI model. In anticipation of this detailed discussion I will focus on the key features of the model below.

1.3.3. Emotional Intelligence (EI): Peter Salovey (b. 1958) and John D. Mayer (b. 1953)¹⁵⁷

The term 'emotional intelligence' was introduced by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990.¹⁵⁸ While cognitivists, such as Beck, focused on the influence of people's cognitions over their emotional states, Salovey and Mayer explored the relationship between thought and emotion from a different angle. In their paper 'Emotional Intelligence: Implications for personal, social, academic and workplace success', Marc Brackett reflects, with Susan Rivers and Peter Salovey, upon an historical context in which 'emotion' and 'intelligence'

¹⁵⁷ At the time of writing, Peter Salovey is President of Yale University, John Mayer is a psychologist at the University of New Hampshire.

¹⁵⁸ Peter Salovey & John, D. Mayer, 'Emotional intelligence', *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9 (1990), 185-211. For a more up-to-date revision and comprehensive overview of the theory and review of research, see Marc A. Brackett, Susan, E. Rivers and Peter Salovey, 'Emotional intelligence: implications for personal, social, academic and workplace success', *Social and Personality Compass*, 5:1 (2011), 88-103. As I state in the Introduction to this thesis, it is not my intention to engage in questions regarding the validity or effectiveness of the model. For a comprehensive overview of challenges to EI, and further reflections on the model, see *Psychological Inquiry*, 15:3 (June 2004), 179-255, in particular John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey & David R. Caruso, 'Emotional intelligence: theory, findings and implications', pp. 197-215. The concept of EI is most likely to be popularly recognised from the bestselling publications by the writer and science journalist, Daniel Goleman, for example, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), and *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998). Salovey and Mayer, with their colleagues, Marc Brackett and David Caruso, take issue with claims made by Goleman about the qualities and applicability of the EI model for which Goleman lacked substantiating evidence, and about which they themselves had not postulated, see John Mayer, Peter Salovey and David R. Caruso, 'Emotional intelligence: new ability or eclectic traits', *American Psychologist*, 63:6 (Sept 2008), 503-517. I restrict my discussion of Austen's novels from an EI perspective to the model as it is defined by Salovey, Mayer, and their co-researchers.

were regarded as functioning in opposition to one another, with emotionality seen as detrimental to the effective operation of rational intelligence.¹⁵⁹ However, as they reflect in their overview of EI, ‘The theory of emotional intelligence suggested the opposite, emotions make cognitive processes adaptive and individuals can think rationally about emotions.’ So, for these researchers, the relationship between rationality and emotionality is reciprocal. That is to say, while intellectual assessments or interpretations mediate the experience and/or expression of emotional states, equally emotions inform and enhance cognitive tasks such as the storage and retrieval of memories, the analysis and evaluation of situations, as well as reasoning and decision-making. Another important factor in the development of the concept of emotional intelligence was what Brackett and his co-authors identify as ‘an evolution in models of intelligence itself’.¹⁶⁰ This ‘evolution’ encouraged the categorisation of more creative and practical abilities, including the ability to become aware of one’s own emotional condition and to monitor the emotions and moods of other people, as forms of ‘intelligence’. In this regard the authors cite psychologist and educationalist, Howard Gardner’s notion of ‘personal intelligences’, a concept that incorporates ‘the capacities involved in accessing one’s own feeling life (intrapersonal intelligence) and the ability to monitor others’ emotions and mood (interpersonal intelligence).¹⁶¹ Salovey and Mayer

¹⁵⁹ *Social and Personality Compass*, 5:1 (2011), 88-103. The authors cite a chapter by A. C. Lloyd, ‘Emotion and Decision in Stoic Psychology’, in J. M. Rist, ed., *The Stoics*, (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 223-246, and P. T. Young’s exposition, *Emotion in Man and Animal: Its nature in Relation to Attitude and Motive* (Oxford: J. Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1943). I will discuss pre-and post-Enlightenment views of emotion and rationality in greater depth in the following chapter of this thesis.

¹⁶⁰ Both quotations in this paragraph; Brackett, Rivers and Salovey, *Social and Personality Compass*, 5:1 (2011), p. 89. See also; Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, *American Psychologist*, 63:6 (Sept 2008), 503-517.

¹⁶¹ *Social and Personality Compass*, 5:1 (2011), p. 89. See Howard Gardner’s ground-breaking publications, *inter alia*, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, (First published 1983. New York: Basic Books, 2011), and *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993). Gardner held the view that the assessment of intelligence in children based solely on measures of capacities traditionally considered to constitute ‘intelligence’, such as IQ indicators of linguistic, logico-mathematical and spatial competencies, failed to take into account other forms of abilities that children possess, such as kinaesthetic (body) awareness, musical abilities, and inter/intra personal skills. For Gardner, these qualities should be regarded equally as forms of intelligence and measured as such. Gardner’s approach is influential still in educational contexts, see for example, Thomas Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 4th edn (Alexandria, VA: ASCD Publications, 2017). For a critique of Gardner’s theory, see John White, *Do Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences Add Up?* (Pamphlet 36pp. University of London Institute of Education, 1998). While White concurs with Gardner’s concern for the lack of measurement of skills and qualities that

conceived of both the possession of these intra- and interpersonal forms of intelligence, *and* the aptitude for the use of such emotional awareness in the management of thought and behaviour, as essential components of EI. Further, they viewed emotional intelligence, as a whole, to be ‘a set of interrelated *abilities*’ which could be measured and developed towards enhanced personal efficacy, as opposed to ‘an eclectic mix of *traits* [...] such as happiness, self-esteem, optimism, and self-management’, many of which, firstly, are aspects of one’s disposition or personality, and secondly, are neither emotions nor aspects of intelligence.¹⁶² All of this is encapsulated in their definition of EI that I present below.

The definition of EI

Salovey and Mayer introduced EI as ‘[...] the subset of social intelligence that involves the *ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.*’¹⁶³ In a later, elaborated definition of the concept, the psychologists indicate the nature and purpose of EI more fully:

[...] the definition of emotional intelligence that we prefer is: “the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.” This definition combines the ideas that emotions make thinking more intelligent, and that one thinks intelligently about emotions. Both connect intelligence and emotion.¹⁶⁴

fall outside of the scope of traditional IQ testing, he questions the inclusion of such capacities within the category of ‘intelligence’.

¹⁶² Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, *American Psychologist*, 63:6 (Sept 2008), p. 503. My italics.

¹⁶³ *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9 (1990), p. 189. Salovey & Mayer’s italics.

¹⁶⁴ John. D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, ‘What is Emotional Intelligence?’, in *Emotional Intelligence: Key Readings on the Mayer and Salovey Model*, ed.by Peter Salovey, Marc A. Brackett and John D. Mayer (Port Chester, New York: Dude Publishing 2007), pp. 29-60 (p. 31). This article first appeared in Peter Salovey & David J. Sluyter, eds, *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Educational Implications* New York: Basic Books, 1997), pp. 3–31. The article also provides the psychologists’ rationale for the categorisation of emotional intelligence as a separate form of ‘intelligence’, and their framework for the measurement of levels of emotional intelligence in individuals (J. D. Mayer, P. Salovey, & D. R Caruso, *Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence*

As the definition above indicates, emotional intelligence does not denote states such as motivation, persistence, happiness, self-esteem, initiative, drive and so on as Goleman would have it, nor even, as Mayer, Salovey and Caruso point out, the ability to develop qualities such as optimism and assertiveness, even if these do serve to enhance one's life experience.¹⁶⁵ It is the connection between aspects of emotionality and capacities of the intellect that is important here, and the ways in which an individual's ability to use that connection may serve to enhance either or both entities. Mayer and Salovey, with Caruso, conceived their 'four-branch' model of EI to depict their specific definition of emotional intelligence that I outlined above. As its name implies, the model consists of four levels, each of which represents a more sophisticated measure of ability in emotional intelligence, and within each of which too there is a development of degrees of skill. I explain the four-branch model in more detail in the following section.

The four-branch model of EI¹⁶⁶

The Mayer, Salovey and Caruso model of EI describes a hierarchical structure that reflects the development of four separate but interrelated abilities. All of the skills that are designated within each of the four branches of the hierarchy require an active connection between an individual's emotionality and intellect, building from what the three psychologists describe as 'basic psychological processes (i.e., perceiving emotions)' to 'more advanced psychological processes (i.e., conscious, reflective regulation of emotion)' (p. 91). I summarise each of the branches of the four-branch model below.

Test (MSCEIT) User's Manual (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: MHS Publishers, 2002). See also, *Psychological Inquiry*, 15:3 (2004), 197-215, especially pp. 200-207, and *Social and Personality Compass*, 5:1 (2011), pp. 92-98 for discussions on the use and validity of the MSCEIT.

¹⁶⁵ Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, *American Psychologist*, 63:6 (Sept 2008), pp. 503-505. I explore 'assertiveness', and the significance of the concept in Austen's portrayal of her characters, in Chapter Three of this thesis. Assertiveness is generally perceived to be a positive quality for an individual to possess as it generally manifests the individual's self-aware autonomy (as discussed above in relation to the Rogerian model of psychotherapy) and, from a therapeutic perspective, it is a quality that an individual may learn and develop. However, to be clear, while to be assertive may be an outcome of the application of emotional intelligence, it is not, in itself, an aspect of emotional intelligence.

¹⁶⁶ The four-branch model of EI is described in a number of the publications cited in the references and bibliography of this thesis. The explanation of the model that I present here is drawn substantially from Salovey and Mayer's original 1990 paper, and from Mayer, Salovey and Caruso's revised model outlined in *Social and Personality Compass*, 5:1 (2011), p. 88-103. For quotations taken from this article, page numbers are given in parentheses following quotes, or series of quotes taken from the same page of the publication.

i. EI Branch One: Perception of emotion

In the most straightforward terms, the first branch of the model encompasses the ability of an individual to perceive and differentiate emotions in themselves and others. As I noted above, there is a calibration of the increasing sophistication of skills within each of the branches as well as between them. At the very base level of the first branch, people are able to use their awareness of their own physiological states or sensations, as well as of the content of their thoughts, to identify the specific form of emotion that they are experiencing. For example, the physiological sensations that arise from excitement are very similar to those that are brought about by anxiety. At this basic level, an individual is able to combine their awareness of the *feeling* of the emotion with an intellectual assessment of the situation. They arrive thus at an apt perception of the emotion at play and proceed accordingly in their responses and behaviour.

A more advanced skill in this branch is the ability of an individual to identify the emotions that other people are experiencing. This is achieved by the observation of another's verbal and non-verbal signals such as facial expression, posture, gestures, tone of voice, pace of speech and so on. Sometimes people's non-verbal signals are not congruent with their verbal communication so, at a yet more highly-developed level of this branch of the model, individuals are able also to distinguish between congruent and non-congruent expressions in other people, perhaps by means of the smallest of micro-signals such as 'the movements of blood under the skin'.¹⁶⁷

In my Introduction to this thesis I discuss 'Theory of Mind', and I draw attention to the importance for an individual's inter-relational skills that Richardson and Zunshine place on the individual's awareness of other people's states of mind. However, EI goes further than Theory of Mind in its scope of exploration of the connection between mental knowledge and emotional awareness. Theory of Mind is concerned with one's cognitive ability to know that another person may have emotions and thoughts that are different from one's own, and to be able, again at a cognitive level, to discern what the

¹⁶⁷ Richardson, *The Neural Sublime*, p.81.

thoughts and emotional states of another might be. Proponents of EI identify this capacity as a feature of the first branch of the EI model. However, for these psychologists, the emotionally intelligent individual has a sense of the other person's condition at an emotional as well as at an intellectual level. That is to say, as well as intellectual knowledge, the emotionally intelligent individual possesses the skill of empathy, which Salovey and Mayer describe in their original 1990 paper as 'the ability to comprehend another's feelings *and to re-experience them oneself*'. In the same publication, Salovey and Mayer draw on the work of Carl Rogers, explained earlier in this chapter, to highlight the importance, for them, of the ability to empathise with others in the enhancement of people's experience of everyday life relationships, as well as of their potential to enable the development of emotional intelligence in others. They write:

Rogers believed an active striving to understand other people and to empathize with them is a priceless gift as well as a prerequisite for helping another grow. Empathy may be a central characteristic of emotionally intelligent behavior.¹⁶⁸

So, to be capable of both an intellectual understanding and an emotional sense of another person's position is a central feature of the first level of emotional intelligence. Finally, as Salovey and Mayer put it, at the most sophisticated level of this branch, 'These skills enable individuals to gauge accurately the affective responses in others and to choose socially adaptive behaviors in response.'¹⁶⁹ Quite simply, at this point in the branch a person brings their conscious cognitive and emotional awareness of the feelings of others to bear on the way in which they respond to other people's emotions, concerns and needs.

ii. EI Branch Two: Use of emotion to facilitate thinking

The second level branch of the EI model links a person's awareness of their own emotional states to the functioning of their cognitive processes such as reasoning, decision-making and problem solving. As I mention earlier in this

¹⁶⁸ Both quotations, *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9 (1990), p. 194. My italics. In the next chapter of this thesis I will expand further on the concept of empathy and the use and value of the quality in people's interrelationships.

¹⁶⁹ *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9 (1990), p. 195.

section, Salovey and Mayer refer to historical views of the relationship between emotions and rationality in which emotionality is seen as disruptive to an individual's intellectual thought processes. However, for them, a person's ability to perceive and pay attention to their emotions is crucial for effective engagement in cognition-based tasks. Research carried out by neuropsychologists on the functioning of patients who have suffered some form of brain damage has supported the psychologists' claims. Particularly well-known in this respect is the seminal research carried out by Antonio Damasio. Damasio discovered that when the connection between the amygdala (the area of the brain that gives rise to emotions), and the pre-frontal cortex (the information processing area of the brain where analysis, decision-making, problem solving and so on take place), was damaged, even though the frontal cortex was still intact, people found it practically impossible to make simple decisions and would make disastrous choices in important areas of their lives.¹⁷⁰ Damasio concludes that a person's emotional reactions constitute crucial information about meanings and significances within a given set of circumstances or choices, and this enables the individual to arrive at the most appropriate and constructive evaluations and decisions. At a more advanced level of this branch, once an individual has perceived their emotional reaction to circumstances, they actively engage with those emotions and generate more powerful feelings in order to facilitate their intellectual processes further.

iii. EI Branch Three: Understanding and analysing emotions

Given the significance of the perception of emotion to the constructive outcomes of rational thought processes, it is important that an individual is able to identify and name precisely the emotions that they are experiencing at any one moment; sorrow, anger, fear, joy and so on. The base level of this branch involves simply the 'comprehension of the language and meaning of emotions' (p. 91). At a more advanced level within the branch, people are able to distinguish, for example, sadness from grief, or frustration from anger, and to pinpoint and label in minimal gradations the milder antecedent forms of the emotion, and the more severe manifestations that might develop from it. Thus,

¹⁷⁰ Antonio Dimasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1994).

for example, gradually more moderate variants of 'sad' might be 'miserable' and 'blue'. Emotions of greater intensity might be graded as 'wretched' and 'grieving'.¹⁷¹ The most sophisticated skill located within the third branch is the ability to identify and interpret different emotions simultaneously experienced. For example, sadness and anger may be experienced as part and parcel of grief, with all three emotions experienced at the same moment. A person who is emotionally intelligent at this advanced level is able to pick apart complex combinations of emotional reactions and, without self-judgement, use their understanding of their emotional experience to inform their greater self-awareness and guide their subsequent thoughts and actions.

iv. EI Branch Four: Reflective regulation of emotions

The fourth and highest branch of the EI model comprises the ability of an individual to use all of their interrelated emotional and intellectual skills in the service of the regulation of their emotions, towards the most constructive outcomes for themselves and others within a particular situational context.

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso explain that the fourth branch of the EI model

[...] includes the ability to prevent, reduce, enhance, or modify an emotional response in oneself and others, as well as the ability to experience a range of emotions while making decisions about the appropriateness or usefulness of an emotion in a given situation. Basic emotion regulation ability involves attending to and staying open to pleasant and unpleasant feelings, while more advanced ability involves engaging or detaching from an emotion depending on its perceived utility in a situation. Monitoring and reflecting on one's own emotions and those of others (e.g., processing whether the emotion is typical, acceptable or influential) also represents more complex problem solving within this branch. (pp. 91-92)

¹⁷¹ Perception of these calibrations is subjective and may differ between individuals. For example, one person may view 'miserable' to be of greater intensity than 'sad', another may view it to be of less intensity. The requirement is not that a person should have learnt a correct form of tabulation of emotions, just that they should be able to recognise the subtle distinctions to be made between emotions and their relative intensities.

So, this branch of EI is concerned with the ways in which an individual is able to preside over their own emotional states and, where possible, to have some beneficial influence over those of others. This requires the ability of the individual to maintain an intellectual overview of the appropriateness and usefulness of the external expression of their and others' emotions that is concurrent with their personal internal emotional experience and observation of, and empathy with, the feelings of other people. From the point of view of the CBT and Humanistic schools of psychotherapy presented in previous sections of this chapter, the achievement of this level of emotional intelligence requires a very advanced degree of skill. From a CBT perspective, the branch reflects the management of emotion by the identification of thought processes that give rise to those emotions, and the evaluation of the rationality of perceptions and reactions at a cognitive level. As previously discussed, the element of empathy contained within the EI model is one of the key components of the humanistic psychotherapeutic paradigm. Further related to the Humanistic model, this stage of EI requires an individual's non-judgmental acceptance of their own and others' emotions. By this means, a person avoids the suppression, denial or rejection of any of their own or others' emotional states in the interests of deepening their self-awareness, enhancing their cognitive processing, and thus maintaining, as far as possible, their own and other peoples' well-being.

At this point I reflect again on Lisa Zunshine's view that the most skilful communicators in Austen's novels are those who have a well-developed theory of mind, and who use that capacity to mediate their actions and expressions. From my perspective, the complexity of Austen's portrayals of the psychological, emotional complexity of her characters resonates more closely with the subtle layering of aspects of human intra-and inter-personal psychological dynamics that is encapsulated within the EI model. In the following chapter, with the focus on *Sense and Sensibility* as a case study, I demonstrate how the view from an EI perspective constitutes the basis for my observations on whether Austen was motivated by a moral imperative in her exploration of the rational and emotional elements of human experience, and show how an understanding of the model gives rise to perceptions and

evaluations of Elinor and Marianne that both contribute to, and at times differ from, those represented in the critical literature to this point.

CHAPTER TWO

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN JANE AUSTEN

some of us tend to one thing, some to another; and this will be recognizable from the pleasure and the pain we feel. We must drag ourselves away to the contrary extreme; for we shall get into the intermediate state by drawing well away from error, as people do in straightening sticks that are bent. (Aristotle)¹⁷²

A Case Study: *Sense and Sensibility*

In the previous chapter I provided explanations of the foundational models of psychotherapy encompassed within the three major twentieth-century schools of psychotherapy: Psychoanalytic, Cognitive-Behavioural and Humanistic. Within that exposition I draw particular attention to the therapeutic frameworks that I perceive to be prefigured in Austen's novels, and which have thereby influenced, to a substantial degree, my understanding of the nature of the characters that the author portrays within those novels, as well as my sense of Austen's purpose in the production of her work. As I state in the Introduction to this thesis, for me, aspects of the psychotherapeutic theories and practices that I explain in the preceding chapter are in evidence within Austen's work to an extent that leads me to infer an intentionality on Austen's part to engage her readers in a process of the development of self-awareness and self-directed autonomy by means of therapeutic as opposed to didactic approaches.

I present my substantive arguments relating to Austen's novels from my psychotherapeutic perspective in this and the following chapter. In Chapter Three, I draw on Carl Rogers' Person-Centred Therapy, Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis and Aaron Beck's Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy paradigm as I focus on the theme of the development of personal autonomy

¹⁷² Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by David Ross, rev. and with notes and Intro. by Lesley Brown (325 BC. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2009), II:9. II09b, 1-5, p. 36. For discussions of Austen's awareness of the writings of Aristotle and possible influences of the philosopher on her work, see: Sarah Emsley, *Jane Austen's Philosophy of the Virtues* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), David Gallop, 'Jane Austen and the Aristotelian Ethic', *Philosophy and Literature*, 23:1 (April 1999), 96-109, and Ryle Gilbert, *Jane Austen and the Moralists. Collected Papers: Critical Essays* (1966. New York: Routledge, 2009). Gilbert observes that Austen was involved in 'small sophisticated circles [...] in which one could refer [...] to Locke, Descartes, Hobbes, Aristotle, Epicurus and Spinoza', p. 299.

evident in Austen's novels. In the current chapter, I explore my reading of Austen's work within the context of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso's model of Emotional Intelligence (EI). As I demonstrate in the final section of Chapter One above, this model encompasses aspects of both the Person-Centred and Cognitive models, and offers a framework for an understanding of the way in which human rationality and emotionality operate in conjunction with each other to guide, or determine, consequential behaviour. I draw primarily on *Sense and Sensibility* for this discussion, as it is within this novel that issues relating to EI, and the relationship between intellectual reasoning and the experiencing of emotions, arise most patently through Austen's portrayal of the characters of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood. However, to me, the principles of EI that I perceive to be central to this novel equally underlie Austen's presentations of individual characters and the ways in which they relate to other characters in all of her novels, and in due course I will offer further illustrations from *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and *Emma* to support this view.

In the analyses to follow, I do not intend to imply in the least that I am able to, or indeed wish to, map Mayer, Salovey and Caruso's distinct definitions of rationality and emotion onto meanings that Austen may herself have applied to the terms 'sense' and 'sensibility'. Nor would I propose an exactly direct comparison between the psychologists' four-branch model of EI, and the forms of interrelatedness between intellectual reasoning and emotional experience and awareness that I perceive in Austen's work. However, in the process of reading *Sense and Sensibility*, I was struck at numerous points by an impression of the author's exploration of the complex natures of rationality and emotionality, and the ways in which each operates in relation to the other both within and between individuals, that resonated strongly with my knowledge and understanding of the principles of EI. My engagement with this resonance refers back to my discussion in the Introduction to this thesis of N. Katherine Hayles' notion of 'constrained constructivism' and Alan Richardson's explanation of 'listening for resonance' and 'allowing that resonance to help

reopen [sic] avenues for scholarly investigation'.¹⁷³ It is this resonance, my consequent comprehension of the characters within Austen's novels, and the author's purpose in her particular portrayal of them that I will be discussing here.

A second point of clarification picks up the reference in my Introduction to Richardson's advice regarding the placement of modern psychological analyses of Austen's novels within the appropriate historical and cultural context. As I identify and define elements of Austen's keen psychological insight on the basis of my knowledge of modern psychotherapeutic formulations, I do not mean to suggest that Austen was the first writer to have perceived human psychology in such ways, nor would I propose that she could somehow have foretold future discoveries and psychotherapeutic notions and theories. Ideas relating to human nature encompassed within the fiction, and the philosophical, political, moral and social debates of which Austen would have been aware, directly or indirectly, undoubtedly would have drawn her to notice and consider certain aspects of the nature of the human being. I will indicate and comment upon these potential influences on Austen's writing as they relate to emotional intelligence in the concluding section of the current chapter.

The canon of critical responses to Austen's work is, of course, immense and so the examples that I interrogate and comment upon within the sections below are, by necessity, a greatly distilled selection of views that represent opinions most specifically related to this discussion. I will begin with a brief look at writers whose views have differed significantly from my own. I will proceed then with a discourse on my understanding of the novel, in particular of the characters of Elinor and Marianne, acknowledging other critical works that, albeit via different routes, incorporate many features that are in agreement with my reading.

¹⁷³ See the Introduction to this thesis, pp. 7-8.

A preliminary review of existing critiques of *Sense and Sensibility*

In his Introduction to the Cambridge Edition of *Sense and Sensibility*, Edward Copeland states, ‘There is nothing that makes a teacher’s heart sink lower than to find yet another student essay in the stack claiming that Elinor represents ‘Sense’ and Marianne represents ‘Sensibility’, or some variation on the theme.’ (p. li).¹⁷⁴ He then draws attention to Austen’s departure from the ‘oppositional structure’ of novels by her contemporaries, Maria Edgeworth and Jane West, in which rationality is rewarded and sensitive emotionality punished, with the inherent evident moral implication. Copeland’s view, that in writing *Sense and Sensibility* Austen intentionally subverted expectations grounded in the moralistic currency of publications such as those of Edgeworth and West, lies in clear contrast to that held by writers such as Marilyn Butler.¹⁷⁵ I refer here, as I did in my Introduction, primarily to Butler’s *War of Ideas* in my discussions of moral conservatism and didacticism in Austen’s novels as Butler’s book is seminal in this regard. However, the same stance is taken by Peter De Rose who holds the view that, with Johnson as her guiding light, morality is ‘an inseparable part of Jane Austen’s artistic achievement’. For De Rose, Elinor ‘remains to the end a “type” of rationality’, and Marianne, equally, ‘is a type, a figure of burlesque, a caricature whose responses to character and situation represent only the enthusiasm and eagerness of a weak-minded “feeler”’.¹⁷⁶ De Rose’s opinion echoes A. C. Bradley’s essay of 1911, in which Bradley writes of Austen that, ‘like Johnson, she is in the strict sense, a moralist’, and that this

¹⁷⁴ This interpretation of Austen’s intention for the characters of Elinor and Marianne persists, for example in Sally Winkle’s chapter, ‘Can There Be Sense without Sensibility? The Middle Road to Love and Marriage in Jane Austen’ in *Jane Austen and Philosophy*, ed. by Mimi Marinucci (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), pp. 15-25.

¹⁷⁵ Butler aligns *Sense and Sensibility* with the moral conservatism of Edgeworth’s *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795) and West’s *Advantages of Education* (1793) and *A Gossip’s Story* (1796). See *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁷⁶ Peter L. De Rose, *Jane Austen and Samuel Johnson* (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1980), pp. 115 and 102. Rose’s descriptor, ‘feeler’, is a reference to Samuel Johnson. He states, ‘Johnson’s attitude to sentimentalists, or “feelers”, as he loved to call them, is well-known.’ (De Rose, p. 98). For an example of Johnson’s use of this word, see his letter to Hester Thrale, 8th November, 1779 in which he writes, ‘You shall not hide Mrs Byron from me, for if she be a feeler, I can bear a feeler as well as You [sic]; and hope, that in tenderness for what she feels in nature, I am able to forgive or neglect what she feels by affectation.’ See *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. by Bruce Redford, 3 vols (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), vol. III, 1777-1781, p. 211. It is important to note that Johnson was not intolerant of emotionality as such. This letter reveals his impatience for affected outpouring of emotions (clearly De Rose’s view of Marianne’s behaviour) as opposed to his ‘tenderness’ for the genuine expression of emotions that arise naturally. I will touch on this distinction in Johnson’s work again later in this chapter.

leads her to a 'marked mistrust of any indulgence in emotion or imagination where these are not plainly subservient to a resolve to do the right thing' and thus 'to approve of such heroines as Elinor Dashwood, Fanny Price and Anne Elliot.'¹⁷⁷ A slight movement away from these critics' unreserved adherence to the perception of an 'oppositional structure' within the novel is perceptible in A. Walton Litz's summary.¹⁷⁸ Commenting on the 'standard thematic pattern set by late eighteenth-century moralistic fiction, in which opposed qualities of mind are dramatized through opposed personalities', he allows that Austen 'sought to modify this antithetical structure in creating *Sense and Sensibility*'. Litz nevertheless concludes that, in this novel, Austen 'never escaped from it; we are still justified in saying that Marianne represents Sensibility while Elinor stands for Sense.'¹⁷⁹ His conclusion notwithstanding, there is, in Litz's commentary, more than a hint that the differentiation to be drawn between the 'rationality' of Elinor and 'emotionality' of Marianne is not quite as clearly distinct as is so often postulated.

Claire Tomalin, for example, states initially that, 'In *Sense and Sensibility* Elinor and Marianne act out a debate about behaviour in which Austen compares the discretion, polite lies and carefully preserved privacy of one sister with the transparency, truth-telling and freely expressed emotion of the other.' However, later she expresses doubts, sensing that 'Marianne's morality, unfortunate as its effects are on her own life, is not so bad after all, and Austen's answer to the questions posed at the beginning becomes uncertain.'¹⁸⁰

Likewise, while John Mullan cites *Sense and Sensibility*, along with Wollstonecraft's *Maria*, as a critique of contemporary 'celebration of feeling' since, as he sees it, these books describe 'the discrepancy between sensibility and capacities for productive action or effective judgement', he concedes too

¹⁷⁷ A. C. Bradley, 'Jane Austen: A Lecture', in *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, 2 (1911), pp. 7-36, cited from a reprint in Southam, *The Critical Heritage, Volume 2*, pp.233-239 (pp. 234-235).

¹⁷⁸ A. Walton Litz, *Jane Austen, A Study of Her Artistic Development* (New York: Oxford University Press: 1965).

¹⁷⁹ Litz, pp.73-74. Litz considers that Austen did succeed in subverting the 'antithetical structure' in *Pride and Prejudice*, where he perceives that one is not easily able to associate one of the qualities in the title to the hero and the other to the heroine. For me, Austen was equally successful in these terms in *Sense and Sensibility*, and I will explore Litz's view in greater depth later in this chapter.

¹⁸⁰ Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life* (London: Viking, 1997), pp. 155 and 157.

that 'sensibility is not simply valueless or illusory in either of these novels.'¹⁸¹ Tony Tanner too perceives the 'complexity of Jane Austen's vision', and is sanguine in his conclusion that, 'no very simple verdicts are being invited in this early novel'.¹⁸²

Not all critics have found the ambiguity in question here as unproblematic as Mullan and Tanner. In *A Fine Brush on Ivory*, Richard Jenkyns expresses concern that, as a result of her lack of consistent differentiation between the natures of the two characters and of the relative worth of each of 'sense' and 'sensibility', and of the lack of clarity even of her definitions of the terms, Austen 'does not seem to be fully in control of her effect', and that her intention for the novel, 'has not been entirely carried out'. For, he asks, 'Does it not claim to demonstrate that sense is right and sensibility wrong?'¹⁸³ Jenkyns puts forward a number of propositions to resolve this seeming dilemma. As these ideas will form a useful starting point for my discussion of the novel from my own perspective, they will reward a little more detailed attention here. He suggests firstly that it might be possible to regard the novel as more successful if we surmise from the '*and*' in *Sense and Sensibility* that Austen's intention was, in fact, to demonstrate the moral equivalence of each of these qualities. However, he finds that, in this aim too, Austen has been less than completely successful. He points to the asymmetry of the characters of Elinor and Marianne as the result of the position of Elinor as the 'focalizer, the pair of eyes through whom most of the action is seen' in the narrative, and considers that, even though Marianne is the 'emotional heart' of the book, nevertheless, that Elinor carries too much 'weight' for Marianne to gain equal standing.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, Jenkyns points out that the limitations of sense are not drawn sufficiently to match those of sensibility. He allows that it is possible to detect Austen's

¹⁸¹ John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability. The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 120.

¹⁸² Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 85. In this segment of his book, Tanner draws attention to the way in which Austen incites the reader's sympathy for Marianne's openly emotional response to Mrs. Ferrars' belittlement of Elinor's screen-painting. He writes, 'We cannot fail to sympathise with her outburst if not positively applaud it, which means that Jane Austen has brought us to the point of feeling some positive approbation and appreciation for both the maintainer of screens and the discarding of screens.' (p. 85).

¹⁸³ Richard Jenkyns, *A Fine Brush on Ivory: An Appreciation of Jane Austen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 185.

¹⁸⁴ Jenkyns, pp. 186-187.

amusement at too great a degree of 'sense' at times, for example, when Edward makes the prosaic remark while commenting on the Devonshire countryside that, "It is a beautiful country," [...]; "but these bottoms must be dirty in winter", and the author's seriousness when she conveys Marianne's shock at the composure with which Elinor had tolerated the knowledge of Edward's engagement to Lucy Steele for four months.¹⁸⁵ Still, Jenkyns' view is that, while these could be seen to illustrate Austen's wish to present the desirability of sensibility, they do not match the level of the damaging effects of Marianne's lack of ability to control the force of her emotional distress in the face of the withdrawal of Willoughby's affections for her. Elinor comes to no actual harm as a result of her more managed responses to her own situation, nor does her more controlled manner cause disturbance to others, while Marianne brings herself close to death, and creates very great concern and distress among her family and friends as a result.

Finally, Jenkyns proposes that Austen's ideal could have been for the two qualities to act together in 'equilibrium' rather than to be merely of equal value. However, in this too he struggles to reconcile the apparent moral pre-eminence attributed by Austen to sense over sensibility. In sum, from this analysis, whether one takes the view that Austen's objective was to advocate sense over sensibility, to present the two as equally of value, or to suggest the benefit of equilibrium, it seems to be possible to demonstrate that the author has been less than entirely successful in achieving her aim in this novel. This leads Jenkyns to conclude ultimately that,

This is a book about a conflict of values or ideas which is at conflict with itself, a book which promises a clarity of conclusion which it fails to deliver. At one moment we may feel the fault to be that the characters are too much types; at another that they are not types enough, and have acquired sufficient autonomy to refuse to fit within the boundaries that the author has designed for them.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ *Sense and Sensibility*, I:16, 102.

¹⁸⁶ Jenkyns, p. 191.

There is an explicit assumption here, and on the part of each of the critics whom I have discussed so far, that Austen's aim in writing *Sense and Sensibility* was to engage with the debates of her time around the relative moral value of the two qualities, even if, as Tanner proposes, she intended to leave her own conclusion open to interpretation or to allow personal judgement on the matter. To me, it is this assumption that Austen is preoccupied with moral value that leads to the difficulties with the novel which I have reviewed above. I suggest that this holds especially for those commentators for whom, as Jenkyns writes, the novel 'claims to demonstrate that sense is right and sensibility wrong.' For me, the questions that most naturally arise from this observation are: whether, in fact, the novel does make this claim, whether Austen herself states this to be the case, and if so, where she does that.

For me, there is no evidence of a claim or statement about moral judgement either within the book, or even contained in the title. As Jenkyns points out, it is meaningful to reflect on why the author used the word 'and' in the title, as opposed to, for example, 'or', which would have implied a debate, or even, 'over', which would have anticipated not only a debate but also its likely conclusion. Still, the word 'and' need not imply an equivalence of moral value between rationality and emotionality. A different conclusion from that discussed by Jenkyns is reached by Joseph Wiesenfarth who considers the 'and' to reflect Austen's intent simply to indicate the necessity to marry the two qualities within human experience. He writes, 'Surely the title of the novel uses the word *and* conjunctively, not otherwise: to be a whole person, one must have sensibility enlightened by sense.'¹⁸⁷ This construal begins to reflect more closely the interpretation of Austen's 'and' that I would make from an EI perspective. From this viewpoint, while in agreement that one must have both sensibility and sense, I depart from Wiesenfarth's perception of the meaning of the 'and' when he assigns to sense a position of influence *over* sensibility. From the EI viewpoint, and, I would propose, Austen's, each of the qualities equally enlightens the other. Or, to put it more accurately, I should say each of the qualities equally *influences* the other, since the term 'enlightens' suggests an

¹⁸⁷ Joseph Wiesenfarth, *The Errand Form: An Assay of Jane Austen's Art* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1967), p. 55 (Wiesenfarth's italics).

enhancement of outcome, and this is not always the result of the interrelationship between the two.¹⁸⁸ To pick up again on Jenkyns' proposed interpretation, within my proposition of an equality of influence there is no suggestion that the two qualities are, or even should be ideally, in 'equilibrium'. From an EI stance, or even, I would contend, from a human one, it is difficult to imagine how a state of thought and feeling in equilibrium might be achieved since emotions and thoughts are both naturally in constant flow, the one continually and reciprocally transforming the other. Ultimately, I perceive in *Sense and Sensibility* only the inseparability of rationality and emotionality, and of the dynamics involved in the relationship between the two. For me, it is the nature of this interrelationship between thought and feeling that Austen anticipates in the title with her use of the word 'and'.¹⁸⁹

The understanding of a dynamic relationship between sense and sensibility fits the formulation within EI that 'combines the ideas that emotions make thinking more intelligent, and that one thinks intelligently about emotions', and that, 'Both connect intelligence and emotion'.¹⁹⁰ There is no notion within EI of a primacy of value to be placed on either emotional expression or intellectual reasoning, nor is either endowed with any element of moral superiority. From this perspective, I observe in the novel a much more intricate and involving study of interplay between both rationality and

¹⁸⁸ I explain the ways in which thoughts affect emotions in ways which undermine well-being in Chapter One of this thesis, see discussion of CBT. EI incorporates this understanding. However, the EI model posits a reciprocal relationship between thought and feelings in which emotional states can equally affect rationality in ways that lead to negative outcomes. I will explore this dual relationship extensively in this current chapter.

¹⁸⁹ Copeland provides a summary of the different interpretations to which the title '*Sense and Sensibility*' has given rise, see Introduction to *Sense and Sensibility*, pp. xxxix-xl. The oppositional structure is posited by Ian Watt, '*On Sense and Sensibility*', in *Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Ian Watt (Englewood cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 41-51 (initially in his Introduction to *Sense and Sensibility*, 1961), and by others including Stuart Tave, *Some Words of Jane Austen*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973) and Barbara Hardy, *A Reading of Jane Austen* (New York: University of New York, 1979). An amalgamation of the qualities of 'sense' and 'sensibility' within the novel is perceived by Wiesenfarth, see previous note, and Waldron for whom, 'In the final form of *Sense and Sensibility* the oppositional framework is modulated almost to invisibility', *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Her Time*, p. 64. See also Thomas Keymer, 'Northanger Abbey and *Sense and Sensibility*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. by Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 21-38, especially p. 35 for a further discussion regarding potential interpretations of the meaning of the title of *Sense and Sensibility*.

¹⁹⁰ Salovey, Brackett and Mayer, *Emotional Intelligence: Key Readings on the Mayer and Salovey Model*, p. 31.

emotionality within Elinor and Marianne than that claimed by other writers. I note, of course, the differences in the nature and outcomes of this interplay within each of the characters which is manifest in the very different personalities and behaviour. However, my impression is of *equality* between them at the level of the *form* of the internal interplay of thought and emotion from an EI point of view. In other words, I do not perceive the characters of Elinor and Marianne as representative of, or even as typifying, respectively, the qualities of 'sense' and 'sensibility'. Rather, as understood through the model of EI, they each demonstrate, in their unique and characteristic ways, the perpetual and necessary dynamic interaction between thought and feeling that constitutes human experience, as well as their conscious awareness of the operation of their will in the formation and expression of this internal dynamic interaction.

I would make a distinction here between the basis for my dissent from the view of an oppositional structure within *Sense and Sensibility* that I explain above, and that of Mary Waldron, who traces the near-invisibility of the oppositional framework to the ambiguity of the meanings of the terms 'sense' and 'sensibility' at the time of Austen's writing.¹⁹¹ It is certainly interesting to note that, while Samuel Johnson's writings evidence his advocacy of the moral primacy of sense over sensibility, the meanings that he ascribes to each of the terms in his authoritative dictionary of the time are by no means distinctly differentiated.¹⁹² Amongst the definitions that he attaches to 'sense' are: 'faculty or power by which external objects are perceived'; 'perception of intellect, apprehension of mind'; 'sensibility, quickness or keenness of perception; understanding, soundness of faculties, strength of natural reason; reason,

¹⁹¹ Waldron, *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Her Time*, p. 64. See my note above. Interestingly, Annika Bautz draws attention to Waldron's note that readers at the time would probably have expected *Sense and Sensibility* to present pairings where 'sense is aligned with propriety and civility, sensibility with feeling and [...] therefore condemned', that Austen would have supposed this to be the case, and set out deliberately to subvert these expectations. For further commentary on Waldron's position see Annika Bautz, *Jane Austen: Sense and Sensibility/Pride and Prejudice/Emma* (New York and Hants. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 83-86 (quotation, p. 84).

¹⁹² See Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* ([1755] London: John Williamson and Co., 1839), pp. 842-843. Reference to the *OED* reveals that the terms, 'sense' and 'sensibility' still have numerous potential meanings, several of which appear to be applicable to both words, and for most of which the *OED* gives citations which date back to the eighteenth century and before. The distinction between 'sense' and 'sensibility' was then, as now, by no means clear.

reasonable meaning; opinion, notion, judgement'; 'moral perception'. For 'sensibility, he gives 'quickness of sensation; quickness of perception, delicacy'. I notice also that he defines the related word, 'sensible', as 'perceiving by either mind or senses'; 'having moral perception, having the quality of being affected by moral good or ill; having quick intellectual feeling, being easily or strongly affected'. Interestingly, Austen uses the word 'sensible' to describe Marianne in a context that I will explore in some detail later in this chapter.¹⁹³ The word 'sensitive' is the only one that Johnson defines in terms of a complete lack of rationality: 'having sense or perception but not reason', and this is not a term that Austen employs either in the title of the novel or in her descriptions of Marianne.

The picture is complicated further when one brings the concepts of 'sentiment' and 'sentimentality' into the discussion. Ann Jessie Van Sant draws on the works of Richardson, Sterne and Mackenzie as she traces the evolution of definitions of 'sensibility' and 'sentiment'. While Van Sant is able to identify certain distinctions between the two concepts, she nevertheless concludes that 'eighteenth-century writers and speakers were neither precise nor consistent. Their usage frequently implies that *sentiment*, *sensibility*, and their variants are interchangeable.'¹⁹⁴ Michael Bell similarly traces the semantic shift in the literary use of the word 'sentiment' in his observation that, for Samuel Richardson, the word denoted 'moral principles', while Lawrence Sterne took the word to mean 'feelings' twenty or so years later.¹⁹⁵ Chris Jones, in *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s*, reflects upon this change in the meaning of 'sentiment'. Jones regards the replacement of the terms 'sentiment' and 'benevolence' by 'sensibility' as an attempt to locate a term that would encompass all forms of an individual's authentic emotional responses to situations and interactions within a social context.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Austen writes that Marianne 'was sensible and clever' (*Sense and Sensibility*, I:1, 7).

¹⁹⁴ Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 7. (Van Sant's italics).

¹⁹⁵ Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling* (Houndmills, Hants.: Palgrave, 2010), see p. 19.

¹⁹⁶ Chris Jones, *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. viii.

The ambiguities indicated by the various definitions and commentaries that I cite above throw a particularly interesting light on interpretations of Austen's intention in her characterisations of Marianne and Elinor from an EI perspective. For example, I note that Johnson's definition of 'sense' includes the word 'sensibility' itself, which he relates to 'strength of natural reason; reason, reasonable meaning'. These are qualities that I perceive to be aspects of the character of Marianne, as well as of Elinor, just as I perceive 'quickness of sensation; quickness of perception, delicacy', Johnson's definition of 'sensibility', to be as characteristic of Elinor as they are of Marianne. Thus, I would agree with Waldron that, due to the ambiguity, flexibility and instability of the meanings of the terms in question, any straightforward distinction between the personalities of characters in terms of their relative degrees of rationality or emotionality, and, by extension their relative moral standings, is problematic. However, for me, it is not necessary to draw on similarities in the personalities of Marianne and Elinor in order to challenge perceptions of moralistic didacticism on the part of the author. In fact, it seems to me to be evident that Austen intended to make the *differences* as well as the similarities between the two characters very clear from the outset of the novel, and she brings to life their contrasting approaches and responses to each new circumstance throughout. Still, I do not discern a moralistic commentary in Austen's portrayal of these characters.

As I state earlier in this chapter, beneath the contrasting outward behaviours of Elinor and Marianne, I perceive within each of the characters the inseparability of thought and feeling that EI theory proposes.¹⁹⁷ Within the EI model, thought and emotion are seen to be interdependent for the effective psychological functioning of the individual, and so the two qualities are equal in value. Neither can be morally, or in any other way, intrinsically 'better' or 'worse' than the other. Therefore, from a psychotherapeutic EI perspective, when I read *Sense and Sensibility*, the questions I ask are not whether a character's degree of rationality or emotionality is 'right' or 'wrong', or 'good', 'or bad' in a moralistic sense, I am interested only in how *effective* that

¹⁹⁷ I illustrate this perception with examples from the novel in sections of this chapter to follow.

character's behaviour is in terms of the consequences of it for their well-being.¹⁹⁸ Psychotherapeutic personal development in the context of EI involves the growth of an individual's awareness of the way in which the dynamic interrelationship between thought and feeling takes place within themselves, and of the effects of the outcomes of this psychological process, that is, their behaviour, on themselves and on others. This self-awareness gives the individual the ability to make a conscious and deliberate choice either to continue in the same manner, or to change their approach. It is an exposition of this non-moralistic and non-didactic approach that I perceive Austen to present in her portrayals of Elinor and Marianne.

Thus, to me, in this novel, Austen is concerned with a number of issues relating to the qualities of rationality and emotionality. Rather than for any moralistic purpose, the author provides points of focus for an *enquiry* on her part, and consequently on the part of the reader, into the nature of the qualities of 'sense' and 'sensibility', and of matters associated with those qualities; the dynamic interaction between thought and emotion; and the ways in which the nature of that interaction relates to the nature of the self, self-awareness and self-development of the individual. While there are no instances of Austen's use of free indirect speech, as such, in *Sense and Sensibility*, the author's detailed, moment-by-moment descriptions of the thoughts and feelings of Elinor and Marianne provide clear insight into the interaction between thought and emotion that takes place within the characters.¹⁹⁹ Further, it is through the close and loving relationship between Elinor and Marianne that Austen further reveals the way that both of the characters process their thoughts and emotions, and thereby articulates her own enquiry into the nature of the interdependent interrelationship between thought and emotion in general.

¹⁹⁸ See Chapter One for my detailed explanations of the principles of psychotherapy in general, and more specifically of Carl Rogers' three core conditions and the importance of the non-judgemental approach for effective psychotherapeutic practice.

¹⁹⁹ Through free indirect speech, Austen allows her characters to communicate their thoughts and feelings to the reader in their own voices. For discussions of Austen's use of free indirect speech see Barbara Hardy, in *A Reading of Jane Austen* (London: The Athlone Press, 1979). See also, for example, James Wood, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief* (London: Pimlico, 2000), and Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Keen maintains that the internal perspective derived through this technique enhances readers' identification with, and empathy in relation to, Austen's characters.

In the next section below, I provide a brief introductory review of literary critiques that approximate to my views. I then analyse certain scenes in *Sense and Sensibility* in some detail to demonstrate the ways in which Austen illustrates her perception of the dynamic interaction between thought and emotion. I discuss the implications of Elinor's and Marianne's different approaches and the more self-developmental aspects of EI in further sections to follow.

The dynamic interrelationship between thought and emotion

The perception of thought and emotion as separate and opposed entities, with emotion seen to disrupt and undermine rationality (a view exemplified by Mullan above), has shifted in the literature concerned with this topic. Critics are keen to emphasise the inseparability and interdependence of the two qualities, bringing the essential contribution of emotion within the psychological process as a whole to the fore. For example, writing within the developing field of the investigation of the importance of emotion in the genesis and shaping of historical events, Rob Boddice puts emotions 'at the heart of what it means to be human'. Boddice states, 'far from being merely irrational noise, emotions are the fundamental meaning-making phenomena in human life. They are part of cognitive processes, undergirding social relations, colouring in reasoned discourse'.²⁰⁰ This is a view that captures one of the key principles within EI which holds that the effectiveness of thought processes depends upon the connection between the emotional centres of the brain and those that are involved in analytical cognitive processing. Wendy Jones encapsulates Boddice's point specifically in relation to Austen when she states, 'Feeling can never escape thought, and more important, prudence always implicates feeling'. Jones' view further reflects my own understanding of *Sense and Sensibility* from an EI perspective when she continues, 'If we are entrapped by Austen's binaries to begin with [...], we are always shown that we have been foolish for thinking that such neatly bounded categories might govern something as morally and

²⁰⁰ Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), p. 191. See also, William M. Reddy, 'Sentimentalism and its erasure: The role of emotions in the era of the French Revolution', *Journal of Modern History*, 72 (2000), 109-52; and 'Historical research on the self and emotions', *Emotion Review*, 1 (2009), 302-15.

psychologically complex as human judgement and behaviour'.²⁰¹ I am in accord with Jones' position as my strongest impression on reading *Sense and Sensibility* from a psychotherapeutic EI perspective is of Austen's acute awareness of, and wish to communicate, the complexities involved in the human experience of thought and emotion. This view of the author is reinforced by Michael Bell's observation that, in the literature of the eighteenth-century, 'beneath the optimistic attempt to identify 'reason' and 'feeling' lies the deeper, as yet unformulated, intuition that, if they cannot be simply identified, neither can they be completely separated.'²⁰² Certainly, for me, this was Austen's intuition, and this is an important aspect of the affinity between EI and Austen's approach that I read in *Sense and Sensibility*.

I am aware of that affinity, for example, when I compare Marianne's and Elinor's reactions to the separate departures of Willoughby and Edward from Barton Cottage and note the reciprocal relationship between thought and emotion in each of the characters. When Willoughby leaves suddenly and unexpectedly, Marianne immerses herself in her thoughts in order to intensify her feelings of distress: 'When breakfast was over she walked out by herself, and wandered the village of Allenham, indulging in recollection of past enjoyment and crying over the present reverse for the chief of the morning'

²⁰¹ Wendy Jones, *Consensual Fictions: Women, Liberalism, and the English Novel* (Toronto: Toronto University Press Inc., 2005), p. 107. See also, Emily Auerbach, 'An Excellent Heart: *Sense and Sensibility*', in *Jane Austen: New Edition*, ed. & intro. by Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), pp. 251-278. First published in Emily Auerbach, *Searching for Jane Austen* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004). Auerbach similarly explores the complexities involved in distinguishing the characters of Elinor and Marianne in terms of their relative rationality and emotionality.

²⁰² Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling*, p. 19. See also Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2003). Dixon challenges the view held by philosophers such as Robert Solomon, and psychologists, for example, Antonio Dimasio and Robert Lazarus, that emotions were seen to be bodily, involuntary and irrational, and therefore insidious to morality, right up to the late twentieth-century. Dixon also questions the notion that it was only in the late twentieth-century that thought and feeling came to be seen as being interrelated. Dixon argues that, in fact, there has never been a school of thought that believed otherwise. Dixon refers, *inter alia*, to: Robert Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and The Meaning of Life* (1976. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993); Robert Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1991); Antonio Dimasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. See Chapter One of this thesis for a summary of Dimasio's research and findings.

(I:16, 96).²⁰³ On the other hand, on Edward's unhappy departure, Elinor derives her reflections from her emotions: 'Elinor found every day afforded her leisure enough to think of Edward, and of Edward's behaviour, in every possible variety which the different state of her spirits at different times could produce' (I:19, 121). Further, in relation to the same scenes in the novel, I note Austen's perception that it is not just emotion that may become difficult to control, but also thoughts. The author writes of Marianne's opinion: 'The business of self-command she settled very easily;—with strong affections it was impossible, with calm ones it could have no merit' (I:19, 121). Austen then applies the same understanding to the condition of thought when she writes of Elinor that, even though the character strives to avoid reflecting on her situation, in moments of solitude or silence: 'her thoughts could not be chained elsewhere; and the past and the future, on a subject so interesting, must be before her, must force her attention, and engross her memory, her reflection and her fancy' (I:19, 121). Thus, Austen gives us to understand that she views not only emotion, but thought too, to be a potentially disruptive force, and herein lies the foundation for a perception of the author's non-judgemental position with regard to the two qualities. Further, Austen clearly intimates her non-judgemental attitude to the two sisters' contrasting approaches when she writes, 'Their means were as different as their objects, and equally suited to the advancement of each' (I:19, 120). This simple explanatory statement reinforces the contrast between Marianne and Elinor in terms of the methods that each employs in order to achieve their opposite aims: the former deliberately ruminating on her situation to magnify her emotional experience, the latter attempting to distract and distance herself from thoughts about her circumstance in order to minimise her discomfort. At the same time, Austen's straightforward comment contains no suggestion of a query on the part of the author about the characters' comparative worth relative to their different behaviours and objectives. Austen gives no indication that she conceives of either one of the characters' approaches or aims to be more valid than the other's. However, as Austen ends a paragraph with this statement, it seems to me that she does leave

²⁰³ For the remainder of this thesis, the volume, chapter and page numbers for quotations taken from the Cambridge edition of Austen's novels are given in parentheses following quotes, or series of quotes taken from the same page of the publication.

a question hanging in the air. That is, whether or not those means, while being 'suited', are actually effective.

With regard to the scenarios that I discuss above, neither Marianne nor Elinor appear effectively to achieve their ends. In spite of Marianne's attempts to maintain and increase her own suffering, Austen shows that, 'Such violence of affliction indeed could not be supported forever; it sunk within a few days into a calmer melancholy' (I:16, 97), and, although Elinor's efforts to 'subdue' her personal emotional experience do prevent an increase in her sorrow, still, 'she did not lessen her own grief' (I:19, 120). One might reasonably wonder, therefore, whether both of the characters might have been more successful if they had each adopted the other's strategy. However, the key point here is the way in which Austen's understanding of the internal dynamic between thought and emotion resonates closely with that which underlies the EI model. Austen's reflections on the outcomes for each of the two characters demonstrate her perception firstly that the internal dynamic between thought and emotion is constantly evolving, and secondly, again, that it does so in ways that are, at times, independent of the will of the individual.²⁰⁴ In these illustrations, I see Austen's appreciation of the interconnectedness of thought and emotion, and of the equally mutual influence that each of the qualities has over the other, and over the individual who experiences them. Below, I show how the author demonstrates this more extensively in her presentation of the two characters' responses to their later, more challenging circumstances; Elinor on hearing of Lucy Steele's engagement to Edward Ferrars, and Marianne on Willoughby's rejection of her in London.

Elinor's initial reactions to Lucy's revelation of her long-standing engagement to Edward are primarily emotional experiences. Following Lucy's confirmation of her engagement to Edward, the question that Austen asks of Elinor's initial reaction is not, 'What thought Elinor in that moment?', but 'What *felt* Elinor in that moment?' The answer that Austen gives to her own question is,

²⁰⁴ Earlier in the current chapter I state that the EI model views the internal psychical interrelationship between thought and emotion to be in constant flow, each of the qualities continually and reciprocally transforming each other.

Astonishment, that would have been as painful as it was strong, had not an immediate disbelief of the assertion attended it. [...] she stood firmly in incredulity and felt in no danger of an hysterical fit, or a swoon. (I:22, 148. My italics)

Thus, Elinor's 'astonishment' is followed instantly by a disbelief on Elinor's part that has no evidential basis. It arises spontaneously as a response to what the character is feeling. The rationalisation itself then has a consequential effect on Elinor's emotional state. The character's disbelief protects her from experiencing unmanageable emotional distress, and that same incredulity accompanies the rise in Elinor's emotions with each new piece of information that Lucy offers to verify her story. For instance, Lucy asks, "Did you never hear him talk of Mr. Pratt?" and Elinor replies that she thinks she has, 'with an exertion of spirits, which increased with her increase of emotion'. Then, even though Lucy provides further details to corroborate her account, Elinor declares almost perversely, 'with revived security of Edward's honour and love, and her companion's falsehood',

"Engaged to Mr. Edward Ferrars!—I confess myself so totally surprised at what you tell me, that really—I beg your pardon; but surely there must be some mistake of person or name. We cannot mean the same Mr. Ferrars."

Lucy's retort is understandably dismissive, "you must allow that *I* am not likely to be deceived, as to the man on who all my happiness depends", with her knowingly italicised '*I*' intimating heavily towards the fact that it is Elinor who has been deceived in considering herself to be attached to Edward (I:22, 149-50. Austen's italics). We now see that Elinor is faced not only with the loss of the man with whom she herself had hoped to be happy, but also the loss of her faith in her own judgement. Each time Lucy produces more evidence, Elinor becomes more agitated and more fearful, and more incredulous. When Lucy shows her a miniature of Edward that she has in her possession, Elinor refuses to accept that it is Edward's face even though she can see that it is his likeness. Through all of this Austen shows thought and emotion relating to each other, and, up to this point, only to each other. Elinor's disbelief has no basis other

than the shock or upset that brings it about, and the easing of emotion that enables Elinor to remain reasonably stable has no foundation other than her disbelief. Thus, the interrelationship between thought and emotion that Austen presents here is an internal dynamic in which thought and emotion influence each other, as envisaged by the EI model. In Elinor's case, in this scene, the two qualities are engaged in a process of emotional management that operates spontaneously towards the maintenance of the integrity of the self.²⁰⁵

Gradually, however, the weight of evidence that Lucy produces disables this protective cycle and, as Elinor becomes bound to believe Lucy, her painful emotions intensify. When Lucy shows her a letter addressed to herself in Edward's hand, Elinor is no longer able to doubt her word. Austen describes Elinor at this point as 'almost overcome—her heart sunk within her, and she could hardly stand' (I:22, 154). Elinor struggles against being overwhelmed by her feelings, and she succeeds briefly, until Lucy mentions the lock of hair in the ring that Elinor and Marianne had noticed Edward wearing at Barton Cottage. Elinor acknowledges that she had seen it, 'with a composure of voice, under which was concealed an emotion and distress beyond anything she had ever felt before. She was mortified, shocked, confounded.' When she is alone at last she can 'think and be wretched' (I:22, 155). Conscious realisation of her situation has become unavoidable, and Elinor has now to consider how to handle the circumstances, and her own response to them. In this too, Austen shows the interaction between thought and emotion as Elinor moves from one interpretation of Edward's conduct to another. This time her reflective process begins with rationality as Elinor recognises that Lucy's story of Edward must be true, and that,

the picture, the letter, the ring, formed altogether a body of evidence, as overcame every fear of condemning him unfairly, and established as a

²⁰⁵ In his review of experimental psychological research, Daniel Gilbert terms this psychological phenomenon, 'the psychological immune system'. He writes, 'Intense suffering triggers the very processes that eradicate it.' See Daniel Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness: Why the Future Won't Feel the Way You Think it Will* (London: Harper Press, 2006), especially his chapter 'Immune to Reality', pp. 172-192, quotations p. 180, p. 181. See also Cordelia Fine, *A Mind of Its Own: How Your Brain Distorts and Deceives* (Cambridge: Icon Books Ltd., 2006).

fact, which no partiality could set aside, his ill-treatment of herself. (II:1, 159)

While Elinor's initial disbelief had protected her from the pain that would arise from a negative view of Edward's behaviour towards herself, now feelings of 'resentment' and 'indignation' arise in response to these more evidence-based thoughts. These new feelings in turn lead to a stream of rationalisations by which Elinor brings herself from anger towards forgiveness:

Had Edward been intentionally deceiving her? Had he feigned a regard for her which he did not feel? Was his engagement to Lucy, an engagement of the heart? No; whatever it might once have been, she could not believe it such at present. His affection was all her own. She could not be deceived in that. [...]. He certainly loved her. What a softener of the heart was this persuasion! How much could it not tempt her to forgive! (II:1, 159-60)

Even where Elinor finds herself unable to defend Edward, she manages to turn herself from blame to pity for him: 'He had been blameable [...]; but if he had injured her, how much more had he injured himself; if her case were pitiable, his was hopeless' (II:1, 160). Elinor begins to feel more compassion towards Edward than she does for herself, and in doing so, she brings herself to a state of managed control that enables her feel able to conceal the reality of her situation from her mother and sisters.

I perceive within Austen's portrayal here of the shifts in Elinor's ruminations and emotions the interaction between rationality and emotionality that is the core principle of EI. This is something that, for me, the author takes to an even deeper and more subtle level when she adds of Elinor that,

The necessity of concealing from her mother and Marianne, what had been entrusted in confidence to herself, though it obliged her to unceasing exertion, was no aggravation to Elinor's distress. On the contrary it was a relief to her, to be spared the communication of what would give such affliction to them, and to be saved likewise from hearing that condemnation of Edward, which would probably flow from the excess of

their partial affection for herself, and which was more than she felt equal to support. (II:1, 161)

It strikes me that Austen could have left her narrative of Elinor's psychological and emotional condition at the point at which the character feels able to keep her emotions in check sufficiently to sustain Lucy's confidence. However, the author goes on to reveal that secrecy is a relief to her. The emotion of relief draws a number of further rationalisations from Elinor that, in turn, reinforce and maintain her in that state of relief:

From their counsel, or their conversation she knew she could receive no assistance, their tenderness and sorrow must add to her distress, while her self-command would neither receive encouragement from their example nor from their praise. She was stronger alone, and her own good sense so well supported her, that her firmness was unshaken. (II:1, 162)

Thus, by means of this rationale, Elinor perceives that the necessity to keep the reality of her situation secret has benefits not only for her family, but also for herself. Ultimately, the necessity to keep the reality of her situation secret suits her very well.

In the scene under discussion above, I perceive that Austen takes the reader into the psyche of a character, and then, rather than concluding her exposition of the character with a description that would suffice perfectly well to carry the narrative of the story along, she reveals yet deeper layers of additional and increasingly specific and subtle psychological complexity. My recognition of this leads me to reflect on Virginia Woolf's famous comment on Austen that, 'of all great writers she is the most difficult to catch in the act of greatness'.²⁰⁶ One could hardly disagree with Woolf's summation, not least given the vast body of critical analysis that has been undertaken in the attempt to do just that. Austen's 'greatness' has been, and will continue to be discovered in various ways according to the different backgrounds, interests and perspectives of her readers. I see it most clearly in moments of psychological

²⁰⁶ Virginia Woolf, 'Jane Austen at Sixty', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 15 December, 1923. Repr. in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Andrew McNeillie, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1994), IV, 155.

insight such as the one that I illustrate above, and well-exemplified again in the same scene when Elinor anxiously surmises that Lucy's intention in disclosing her engagement to Edward was in order to gain superiority and to warn her away from Edward. Anxiety leads Elinor to re-open the conversation with Lucy regarding the engagement partly because 'she could not deny herself the comfort of *endeavouring* to convince Lucy that her heart was unwounded' (II:1, 163. My italics). As in the previous excerpts to which I refer above, my interpretation from an EI perspective of Elinor's behaviour here is that rationality and emotionality are working in conjunction with each other to enable the character to endure her circumstances. With immense subtlety, Austen conveys an emotional unease which leads to a rational caution, or vice versa, which warns the character to depend for her increased comfort not upon *success* in denying Lucy cause for exultation but in the effort alone. In *Coaching For Resilience*, I discuss the significance of the element of one's degree of control in the setting of interpersonal goals. I suggest that readers should articulate their desired outcomes as statements of what they themselves will do, think or feel, rather than in terms of any expected change in another person's attitudes or behaviours. This is because, however skilfully one approaches another person, one is never guaranteed to achieve the hoped-for effect. Thus, if one needs another person to do something differently, it would be more constructive to determine to put one's point across as eloquently and persuasively as possible than it would be to plan to make that person change their behaviour. In other words, in relation to having an effect on other people, it is most emotionally intelligent to decide to make one's best efforts, or, as Austen puts it, to *endeavour*, quite possibly more than once, in more than one way.²⁰⁷ Elinor is safe to conceive that only *the attempt* to convince Lucy will be sufficient to soothe her anxiety, as this, at least, is an aim over which she has complete control.

I continue below to illustrate my interpretation of Marianne's reactions following her receipt of Willoughby's letter from the same EI perspective.

²⁰⁷ See Green and Humphrey, *Coaching For Resilience* (2012). The approach that I take here is based on the notion of 'well-formed outcomes' which is defined within the model of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) that I introduced in Chapter One of this thesis.

However, before I do so, it is important for me to emphasise that it is not my intention to evaluate the degree of emotional intelligence overall in either Elinor or Marianne, nor to indicate which of the characters is (in our terms) more emotionally intelligent than the other. I believe that such an exercise would result simply in the construction of another unenlightening binary. The last specific example, above, demonstrates this point. While Austen's careful description of Elinor's purpose in relation to Lucy reveals an element of emotional intelligence on Elinor's part, one might wonder how emotionally intelligent it is for Elinor to concern herself with Lucy's impression of her in the first place. Elinor's hurt pride merely adds another layer of discomfort to the pain of her heartbreak and, instead of becoming aware of this and addressing her own view of herself internally, she looks to Lucy's perception of her as the source of, and therefore the means of recovery from, her feelings of humiliation. In terms of the EI model, this approach would not constitute a very constructive approach towards healing and well-being. I explore the self-developmental aspects of the four-branch model of EI in later sections of this chapter, so will not analyse this in further detail here. For the moment, my purpose in drawing attention to this aspect of Austen's portrayal of Elinor is simply to illustrate the complexities involved in an evaluation of the character in terms of a global measurement of her level of EI. The same is true of the character of Marianne. My aim, therefore, is not to assess the characters of Elinor and Marianne against each other in EI terms, but to demonstrate the ways in which I perceive Austen's portrayal of both to resonate with the model of EI in the psychological processes that underlie the characters' contrasting natures and reactions.

One of the most obvious differences in the responses of the two characters emerges in relation to the issue of pride that I explore in the paragraph above. Where Elinor's pride moves her to suppress and conceal her emotions, Marianne will not even countenance the possibility that her heartbreak over Willoughby's abandonment of her could constitute any element of pride. She declares, "misery such as mine has no pride. I care not who knows that I am wretched. [...]. I must feel—I must be wretched" (II:7, 215-16). Yet, in this scene, one is able to perceive the same 'immune system'

operating within Marianne that is evident earlier in Elinor's psychological process. Although Marianne wishes to experience her emotional reaction to Willoughby's behaviour as fully as possible, she cannot resist a certain amount of rationalisation to relieve the intensity of her anguish to some extent. At one point, she recalls signs that Willoughby had given her of his attachment to her during their time together at Barton and her distress increases to the point at which she can no longer speak. A couple of moments later, her words manifest the same dynamic between thought and emotion that I discuss above in relation to Elinor. In the brief silence, Marianne manages to absolve Willoughby of responsibility for his actions, and thereby relieve herself of the need to feel angry and resentful towards him. This enables her to talk again, and more firmly. She states: "Elinor, I have been cruelly used; but not by Willoughby". Again, like Elinor, Marianne has no evidence for her rationalisation. When Elinor asks who but Willoughby himself could be responsible, Marianne's reply ranges from "all the world", and "every creature of my acquaintance leagued together", to "This woman of whom he writes", and back again to "any one, in short, but your own dear self, mama and Edward". There is no foundation for her search for someone else to blame other than the fact that it is less painful for her to suspect others rather than Willoughby himself. Indeed, Marianne demonstrates conscious awareness of this as she asks rhetorically, "Beyond you three, is there a creature in the world whom I would not rather suspect of evil than Willoughby [...]", to which she adds revealingly, "whose heart I know so well?" (II:7, 215). Therein Austen reveals another layer of Marianne's distress. The character is struggling not only with her grief at the loss of Willoughby but also, like Elinor before in relation to Edward, with her fear that her own judgement is untrustworthy. Now, after another quiet and calmer pause, Marianne picks up Willoughby's letter again and the emotions intensify once more as she begins to centre responsibility on Willoughby again: "it is too much! Oh! Willoughby, Willoughby, could this be yours! Cruel, cruel—nothing can acquit you. [...] Willoughby, where was your heart when you wrote those words? Oh! Barbarously insolent!". When this becomes too much to bear, Marianne's thoughts turn away from the possibility of Willoughby's cruelty: "And yet this woman—who knows what her art may have been—", but, she is

then compelled to acknowledge that he had given her no inkling that there was anyone else who might have a claim on his affections: “Oh! No one, no one—he talked to me only of myself” (II:7, 216). Finally, in the last of Marianne’s attempts to protect herself from the full extent of her wretchedness, Marianne projects her agony onto her mother as she demands to go home immediately, “to comfort mama” (II:7, 217). When this retreat is denied to her for the moment, she perceives rationally that it is for her own comfort that she wishes to depart from London, and she succumbs to her despair. Interestingly, here Marianne reveals that she has concern for her pride after all when she states that she needs to leave town because she cannot endure “The pity of such a woman as Lady Middleton!” (II:7, 217). Except for the words ‘such a woman’, one might have gathered that Marianne feared that the questions and concerns of others would induce further intense emotions within her that would make her heartache even more difficult for her to bear. As it is, she reveals herself to be not quite as careless of pride as she would like to imagine herself to be. Thus, I perceive the deeper psychological dynamics that are articulated within the model of EI to be at work in both Elinor and Marianne.

Michael Bell refers to D. H. Lawrence’s concept of the ‘emotional mind’, stating that, ‘All argument in Lawrence encompasses, and is structured on, emotional realization. Most typically, saying what he thinks involves finding out what he feels’.²⁰⁸ Bell quotes Lawrence’s description of the dynamic relationship between thought and emotion that captures the process very aptly. Lawrence writes:

Now the emotional mind, if we may be allowed to say so, is not logical. It is a psychological fact that, when we are thinking emotionally or passionately, thinking and feeling at the same time, we do not think rationally: and therefore, and therefore, and therefore. Instead the mind makes swoops and circles. It touches the point of pain or interest, then sweeps away again [...]. It ‘repeats itself [...] stoops to the quarry, then leaves it without striking, soars, hovers, turns, swoops [...], yet again

²⁰⁸ Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling*, p. 199.

turns, bends, circles slowly, swoops and stoops again, until at last there is the closing in, and the clutch of a decision or resolve.²⁰⁹

Bell concludes that the purpose of the swooping and circling of the mind illustrated here by Lawrence is to enable an individual to tolerate and resolve distressing circumstances. As I demonstrate above, I perceive Austen to have encapsulated in *Sense and Sensibility* precisely the operation and the purpose of the dynamic interrelationship between thought and feeling that Lawrence articulates. Further, I consider that the fact that she shows this to occur in the same way within characters who are so different in their externally observable natures reveals an understanding of the nature and purpose of this dynamic to be an important aspect of Austen's insight into underlying human psychology.

Earlier in this chapter I note that the similarities between Elinor and Marianne are highlighted when one recognises the ambiguity and fluidity of the meanings of the terms 'sense' and 'sensibility', and in the section above I demonstrate the qualities that the two characters share at a deeper psychological level. However, as shown, Austen equally draws out the differences between Elinor and Marianne in the scenes that I analyse above. For me, the ways in which Austen portrays both the similarities and the differences between the characters indicate that Austen had an exploratory, and possibly even a personal-developmental intent towards her readers, rather than a moralistic purpose in her writing of *Sense and Sensibility*. I have focussed my discussion up to this point on the exposition of EI's central theoretical principle of the relationship between thought and emotion that I perceive within Austen's portrayal of the characters of Elinor and Marianne. I turn now to the more self-developmental aspect of EI to expand further on my argument. Below, I explore the characters of Elinor and Marianne from the perspective of the structured hierarchical framework of skills and qualities delineated by the four-branch model of EI.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Quotation from *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. by Edward D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1936), p. 250.

²¹⁰ See Chapter One of this thesis for my full explanation of this model. To recap briefly, the four-branch model represents a hierarchy of the skills and qualities that constitute emotional intelligence; Level 1: Perception of emotion, awareness of one's own emotions and those of others, Level 2: The

A four-branch model reading of Elinor and Marianne

Austen compares and contrasts the characters of Elinor and Marianne distinctly in the first chapter of *Sense and Sensibility* when she describes the responses of each of the characters to the loss of their beloved home, and the untimely and inconsiderate occupation of it by their brother, John Dashwood, and sister-in-law, Fanny. Of Elinor, Austen writes that she ‘possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgement’, and in greater detail that,

She had an excellent heart;—her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them: it was a knowledge which her mother had yet to learn, and which one of her sisters had resolved never to be taught.

Austen portrays Marianne thus:

Marianne’s abilities were, in many respects, quite equal to Elinor’s. She was sensible and clever; but eager in everything; her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation. She was generous, amiable, interesting: she was everything but prudent. (I:1, 7)

The author then elaborates:

Elinor saw, with concern, the excess of her sister’s sensibility; but by Mrs Dashwood it was valued and cherished. They encouraged each other now in the violence of their affliction. The agony of grief which overpowered them at first, was voluntarily renewed, was sought for, was created again and again. They gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow, seeking increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it, and resolved against ever admitting consolation in the future. Elinor, too, was deeply afflicted; but still she could struggle, she could exert herself. She could consult with her brother, could receive her sister-in-law on her arrival, and treat her with proper attention’. (I:1, 7-8)

use of emotion to facilitate thinking, Level 3: Understanding and analysing emotions, and Level 4: the ability of an individual to use their interrelated emotional and intellectual skills in the regulation of their emotions. It is important to keep in mind that, in the context of this model ‘regulation’ can involve the heightening as well as the lowering of an emotional state in the interests of the optimum functioning of the individual.

In these brief depictions it is possible to observe Austen subtly using the ambiguities in the meanings of the terms she employs to draw parallels between the two characters' personalities, as well as stating outright the ways in which the two characters are 'quite equal'. Austen's use of the word 'sensible' in her portrayal of Marianne is especially interesting to note here since the meanings attached to the term by Johnson include 'having quick intellectual feeling', as well as, 'being easily or strongly affected'. It seems reasonable to suppose that Austen selected this word deliberately to convey a combination of rationality and emotional responsiveness within the character of Marianne.²¹¹ Also worthy of notice is that Austen writes of Margaret, the youngest of the three Dashwood daughters, that 'she had already imbibed a good deal of Marianne's romance, without having much of her sense', (I:1, 8), rather than, as she might have done, 'without much of Elinor's sense'. Thus, for me, there can be little doubt that, from the outset of the novel, Austen intended her readers to gather that Elinor and Marianne are alike in the degree to which they possess both rationality and emotionality. This is not a great revelation at this point given my discussion earlier in this chapter regarding other critical reviews of the novel, and my explanations above of the ways in which I view the complex relationship between the two qualities to operate similarly within each of the characters. However, the four-branch model provides a structure of criteria by which I will now elucidate further the dynamic interrelation between thought and emotion for each of the characters, and trace the effectiveness and development of this psychological process relative to each of them.

To begin with, it is significant from the four-branch perspective that not only are Marianne and Elinor both capable of experiencing strong emotions, they are also both consciously aware of the nature of their emotions. Crucially, in addition, Austen makes clear the element of choice that this awareness affords for the two characters. Paradoxically, we comprehend these similarities between the two characters through a fundamental difference between them,

²¹¹ Austen does not use the particular word, 'sensible', in her description of Elinor here. However, the qualities associated with the term are incorporated in this early portrayal of the character and the author does use the specific term later as she relates Elinor's reactions to Lucy's revelation about her engagement to Edward. Austen writes that Elinor was 'most feelingly sensible of every fresh circumstance in favour of Lucy's veracity' (*Sense and Sensibility*, I:22, 153).

that is, the difference between what each of them *chooses to do* with their emotions. We know that Elinor must be conscious of her feelings because she manages them, and we know that Marianne apprehends the nature and intensity of her emotions because she instigates a renewal of them. While Elinor brings her rationality to bear on her 'struggle' to contain her emotions, Marianne's intellectual ability is what enables her to seek the 'increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it'. Thus, the outcomes of the interplay between thought and feeling are different for each of the characters, and this difference is manifested through the contrasting behaviour of each of them. However, the form of the interplay is exactly the same for each: they both feel emotions, they are each consciously aware of their own emotions, both of them know that they have options in terms of what they do with their emotions, and each makes a choice. Elinor has opted to know how to manage her emotions and to put that knowledge into practice. Marianne has 'resolved' to not even learn how to contain her emotionality.

No doubt those who would tend to ascribe a rationalistic moral tone to Austen's characterisations of Elinor and Marianne could perceive, even in this analysis, a higher regard on the part of the author for Elinor's choice to apply her awareness of her emotional state to the suppression of her emotions than for Marianne's to use hers towards the full experience and outward expression of her emotional state. However, if one suspends one's own judgement, or anticipation of judgement on the part of the author, Austen's initial illustrations of each of the characters emerge as purely descriptive. There is an exact parallel in the structure and tone of the author's introductions of each of the characters. First, for each, she presents a summary of the nature of the character, and then reveals a balancing, contrasting quality within the character. I note particularly that the conjunction between these elements of Austen's descriptions is, for both characters, the word 'but'. A reader might deduce a preference for either of the characters' choices if, for either, the structure had been different, and the author had used the word, 'and' instead of 'but'. For example, if the descriptions of the two characters had appeared differently in this way: 'Elinor had an excellent heart;—her disposition was affectionate, her feelings were *strong, and*

she knew how to govern them', while Marianne 'was sensible and *clever; but* eager in everything; her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation.' The imaginary use of the different conjunction implies a value judgement in a way that Austen's actual consistent use of 'but' does not.

Thus, from this reading, Austen attributes no greater value to Elinor's government of her emotions than she does to Marianne's open expression and enhancement of hers. This view of Austen's position is reinforced later in the novel as we discover that Marianne's expressiveness is appreciated, not only by her equally emotionally-inclined mother, but also by the eminently 'sensible [...] gentlemanlike' Colonel Brandon, who urges Elinor not to wish for Marianne to learn to act with greater propriety and thereby replace her "'romantic refinements'" with "'opinions as are but too common, and too dangerous!'" (I:7, 41 and I:11, 67).²¹² An example from another of Austen's novels reflects again the perception of the author's appreciation of the need for a self-conscious heightening of the awareness and experience of emotions. In *Pride and Prejudice*, at the point at which Elizabeth Bennet has received and read Mr. Darcy's letter to her, Austen writes of Elizabeth, 'Reflection must be reserved for solitary hours; whenever she was alone, she gave way to it as the greatest relief; and not a day went by in which she might indulge in all the delight of unpleasant recollections.' Elizabeth ruminates in this way to a point at which her spirits were 'so much affected as to make it almost impossible for her to appear tolerably cheerful.'²¹³ Yet, in spite of her emotional discomfort, Elizabeth's process of reflection leads her to clarify and in some ways transform both her cognitive understanding of, and her emotional response to, her situation. Austen has Marianne engage with her emotions in a way that is more extreme and, ultimately, more dangerous, which is perhaps why Austen has

²¹² Austen's appreciation of free and open expression of genuine emotion is evident in all of her novels. She attributes the same appreciation of 'an open temper' expressed by Colonel Brandon to the equally laudable Mr. Knightley (*Emma*, II:15, 312). Further, Austen writes of Emma herself with regard to Harriet Smith; 'her tears fell abundantly—but her grief was so truly artless, that no dignity could have made it more respectable in Emma's eyes [...] really for the time convinced that Harriet was the superior creature of the two—and that to resemble her would be more for her own welfare and happiness than all that genius or intelligence could do' (*Emma*, I:17, 153). See also, for example, Anne Elliot, for whom Mr. Elliot's lack of 'any burst of feeling, any warmth of indignation or delight' was 'a decided imperfection', and that 'She prized the frank, the open-hearted, the eager character beyond all others' (*Persuasion*, II:5, 175).

²¹³ *Pride and Prejudice*, II:14, 235 and II:14, 237.

been so often perceived as disapproving of Marianne while not of Elizabeth. Yet Marianne's self-awareness and process are the same as Elizabeth's and, as I will discuss in due course in the current chapter, the outcome of her traumatic experience is, like Elizabeth's, one of clarification and transformation.

The presentation by Austen of characters as different in nature as Elinor and Marianne in ways that emphasise the equivalence of their psychological functionality strikes me as a pre-figuring of a core principle of the EI model. This model holds no preference for an individual's choices that lead to the control of emotions over ones that allow the full emergence and expression of feelings. The manifest behaviour of both Elinor and Marianne is the outcome of choices that emerge out of their conscious and self-aware interrelated intellectual and emotional processes. Thus, in modern terms, we *could* conclude from this that both Elinor and Marianne (as well, as it happens, as Elizabeth Bennet) are emotionally intelligent at branch four of the four-branch model EI model. By the same criterion, we may surmise that both Dashwood sisters are more emotionally intelligent than their mother. While the outward emotional responses of Marianne and her mother are exactly the same, Mrs Dashwood's lack of knowledge as to the management of her emotions is simply a circumstance yet to be altered by learning, and not the outcome of a self-aware choice as it is for Marianne.

However, the picture is not quite so straightforward. There are three other major factors involved in the analysis and evaluation of an individual's level of emotional intelligence which I perceive Austen to encompass in her portrayal of Elinor and Marianne.²¹⁴ First, the level of an individual's attainment of emotional intelligence depends upon the degree to which the ways in which they employ their EI skills lead to constructive and beneficial outcomes for themselves and other people. If an individual's behaviour results in harm or damage to themselves or another person, then that individual could not be regarded as having acted with emotional intelligence simply because their choices were made with conscious self-awareness. One may easily observe and evaluate whether the external outcomes of an individual's behaviour are

²¹⁴ I introduce the three additional factors under discussion here in detail in Chapter One of this thesis.

beneficial or detrimental. However, it is more challenging to determine the consequences of a person's choices on their own internal psychological and emotional states. This requires an understanding of the rational basis for the person's choice of behaviour. In other words, we need to know what *motivates* a person in terms of their personal values or ethical codes. From a psychotherapeutic point of view, an individual is likely to maintain their internal well-being if their inter- or intrapersonal actions are in accord with their own values, even if their external situation becomes more difficult as a result of their behaviour. Absent of this accord, in other words without congruence, a person's inner state may be negatively affected even if their actions bring about more advantageous external circumstances.²¹⁵ Thus, in short, we need to consider both the external and the internal outcomes of a person's behaviour in order to judge the extent of their emotional intelligence, and to do that, we need to have some awareness of the individual's personal guiding principles.

The second of the three additional factors to take into account in the measurement of emotional intelligence involves the situational context of a person's actions. A particular mode of expression or behaviour may be entirely appropriate and beneficial in one situation yet detrimental in another. Thus, the fact that both Elinor and Marianne possess high-level skills of emotional intelligence does not necessarily mean that they are always emotionally intelligent at an advanced level in the ways that they conduct themselves. Whether they may be regarded as highly emotionally intelligent depends on the suitability and usefulness of their responses and behaviours *within a given set of circumstances*. The third and final factor relates to this situational aspect. A substantial part of what it means to be emotionally intelligent is an ability to monitor and evaluate continually the effects of one's thoughts, decisions, actions and emotional expressions, and, where one observes these to be unconstructive, to be willing to modify one's choices and behaviour accordingly. Thus, it is important to look to Elinor's and Marianne's capacity both to be

²¹⁵ See the section dealing with Rogerian Client-Centred therapy in Chapter One of this thesis for my full explanation of the principle of congruence. I explore Austen's novels in relation to this aspect of psychotherapeutic theory in the following chapter of this thesis.

aware of the effects of their behaviour and to allow their awareness to inform their current, ongoing and future choices.

As I state above, for me, Austen brings all of these elements of EI into her presentation of Elinor and Marianne as the narratives of the two characters unfold within the novel. In the sections to follow, I look first at the outcomes of each of the characters' behaviour in terms of their external circumstances and their own internal psychological and emotional experience, taking into account the bases for the choices that each of them makes. I then address the effects of their behaviour on other people. This brings an important aspect of the EI model into the discussion: empathy. The quality of empathy is included within the lowest branch of the four-branch model and is therefore a foundational element of emotional intelligence. My perception is that Austen's handling of this aspect of the rational-emotional process for both Elinor and Marianne resonates with the EI model in an especially subtle way. I also make some observations regarding the characters' responses within their different situational contexts and, finally, I will look at their developmental processes as they address and respond to the consequences of their choices.

Elinor's choices and consequences

I write in the previous section about the different responses of Elinor and Marianne to the take-over of their home by Fanny and John Dashwood, and conclude from that discussion that both Elinor and Marianne possess skills in emotional intelligence at the fourth-branch level of EI. I return to the same scenario now to determine to what extent the characters' contrasting reactions deliver what they need for their own well-being. The answer to this question is clear with regard to their external circumstances. As we discover in Chapter 2 of the novel, neither Marianne's outward distress nor Elinor's self-controlled civility have any impact at all upon Fanny's determination to discomfort Mrs Dashwood and her daughters, nor on her wish to dissuade her husband from assisting them with appropriate financial support.²¹⁶ Therefore neither of the

²¹⁶ I refer to the scene in which Fanny brings her husband from the point of giving his sisters the already-paltry sum of one thousand pounds each from the estate, to considering that it would be 'absolutely unnecessary, if not highly indecorous' to provide them with more than assistance with their move and the sending of occasional gifts. *Sense and Sensibility*, l:2, 9-15. Quotation, p. 15.

approaches taken by the two sisters brings about any amelioration of the situation for themselves, or, indeed, for their poor mother. Hence we could say that, from this point of view, Elinor and Marianne are equally ineffectual in EI terms. However, as I indicate above, when one wishes to observe the effect of Elinor and Marianne's behaviours on the internal states of the two characters themselves, the story becomes a little more complicated. I will look at Elinor first in this regard.

We know that, in the situation under discussion, Elinor is as 'deeply afflicted' as Marianne, and therefore that the character's outward behaviour is *not congruent* with her inner emotions. From a psychotherapeutic perspective, one would suspect that Elinor's lack of congruence could bring her little benefit at an internal emotional or psychological level.²¹⁷ Since Elinor's behaviour has not changed anything for the better for her family, or, apparently, within herself, one could conclude that she would have been as well to express and relieve her own grief as freely and openly as her sister. However, there is still the issue of the basis, or rationale, for Elinor's form of response to consider. A full assessment of the way that Elinor's outward manner affects her own internal state requires an understanding of what it is that motivates her to behave as she does. Her polite greeting of her brother and sister-in-law on their arrival at Norland is certainly not congruent with her emotional distress, however her actions may be congruent with something else, that is, with her personal values or code of conduct. As Salovey and Mayer put it, 'Emotional intelligence involves self-regulation appreciative of the fact that temporarily hurt feelings or emotional restraint is often necessary in the service of a greater objective.' They continue: 'Thus, emotionally intelligent individuals accurately perceive their emotions and use integrated, sophisticated approaches to regulate them as they proceed towards important goals.'²¹⁸ If Elinor's government of her emotions serves a greater purpose for her than to effect a

²¹⁷ In Chapter One of this thesis I note that both EI and Rogerian Client-Centred psychotherapy emphasise the importance of a person's acceptance and congruent expression of their own emotions. For EI, congruence enables a person to deepen their emotional self-awareness. This enhances their cognitive processing, which serves their own and other people's well-being. Rogerian principles hold that lack of congruence undermines a person's instinctive drive towards their individual personal autonomy, resulting in an inner state of discomfort and anxiety.

²¹⁸ Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 202.

change in Fanny and John's conduct, then she is being congruent in a different but important sense, and this in itself will ensure her some peace of mind and heart.

One might reasonably surmise that Elinor's primary purpose in the situation with John and Fanny is to behave according to what she perceives to be her duty since these are explicitly the terms on which she bases her own actions, as well as her judgements of Marianne's behaviour, throughout the novel. Earlier in the current chapter I note the intimate relationship between Elinor and Marianne to be an important context within which Austen reveals the ways that the characters process their thoughts and emotions. When Elinor explains to Marianne how she has been able to keep Lucy's engagement to Edward secret for four months, she does not say it was because she was doing her duty, nor does she say it was because she knew that she was doing her duty, but, she says, "*By feeling that I was doing my duty*" (III:1, 297. My italics). Austen connects Elinor's emotional awareness of doing what she feels to be right with the amelioration of her feelings sufficient to enable her to appear to be calm and even cheerful at times. To act according to what she perceives to be her duty is patently a significant driving force for Elinor, therefore for her to do so is emotionally intelligent as this works to maintain her well-being and ability to function under duress. Austen also demonstrates Elinor's dedication to an ideal of propriety within social situations, to the extent that, for example, when Marianne demonstrates her outrage at Mrs Ferrars' appallingly rude response to Elinor's screen, 'Elinor was much more hurt by Marianne's warmth, than she had been by what had produced it'. There is a poignancy in Austen's use of the word 'warmth' to describe Marianne's defence of her sister, and in her reflection through the character of Colonel Brandon that 'he noticed only what was amiable in it, the affectionate heart which could not bear to see a sister slighted in the smallest point' (II:12, 269). While Austen may be interrogating Elinor's attributions of worth in placing social appearances above genuine familial love and loyalty, in non-judgemental EI terms Elinor's civil behaviour towards her brother and sister-in-law is congruent with her deeply ingrained need to maintain conventional and formalised social manners. Elinor's conduct

in this scene also aligns with her tendency towards pride that I discuss earlier in this chapter. It is important to Elinor that other people do not gain a feeling of superiority over her from any impression that they might have that she feels hurt or distressed. Thus the controlled manner of her greeting of her brother and Fanny is congruent with her need to protect her pride.

In summary, the way in which Elinor greets Fanny and John is not congruent with her emotional distress, yet her conduct is congruent with her strong motivations towards duty, social propriety and personal pride. One might presume this to offset the discomfort that would arise from her overarching incongruence. Indeed, given these motivations within Elinor, the congruent expression of her emotional state would have elicited anxiety on any or all of these scores, and thereby heightened her anguish. To this extent, Elinor behaves in an emotionally intelligent way. Having said that, there is an element of deceit in Elinor's behaviour in her interactions with others which one imagines would not sit very comfortably with the character's appreciation of honesty. At the point at which Lucy reveals her engagement to Edward and disingenuously requests advice from Elinor, Austen writes that 'Elinor blushed for the insincerity of Edward's future wife' (II:2, 171). However, on a number of occasions we watch Elinor herself express inauthentic opinions in the interest of politeness or pride. For example, during the visit to Barton Park at which Elinor first meets the Steele sisters, Lucy Steele exclaims at one point: "What a sweet woman Lady Middleton is!". Austen writes that, in response:

Marianne was silent; it was impossible for her to say what she did not feel, however trivial the occasion; and upon Elinor therefore the whole task of telling lies when politeness required it, always fell. She did her best when thus called on, by speaking of Lady Middleton with more warmth than she felt, though with far less than Miss Lucy. (I:21, 141)

Here, while Marianne's silence is entirely true to her own nature, Elinor's dissembling is not wholly congruent with hers. Therefore one might reasonably suspect that Elinor, in spite of fulfilling what she perceives to be her duty to be polite, experiences an unease which Marianne does not. Further, it is surely

pride that leads Elinor to declare herself to feel pity 'with great sincerity' for Lucy's anxiety in anticipation of meeting Mrs. Ferrars: 'to the utter amazement of Lucy, who, though really uncomfortable herself, hoped at least to be an object of irrepressible envy to Elinor' (II:12, 264). Austen's tone is clearly heavily ironic as she describes Elinor's apparent support of Lucy, which is actually offered purely in the interest of denying Lucy any gratification. In a similar vein, when Elinor is asked for her opinion on the comparative heights of Fanny's son, Harry, and Lady Middleton's, William, she 'delivered her opinion on William's side, by which she offended Mrs Ferrars and Fanny still more' (II:12, 267). It is impossible to tell which of the boys is the taller since only Harry is present at the time, and we may fairly assume that Elinor has never given the subject a thought, as Marianne openly states of herself. It seems then that Elinor's conjecture arises only out of an intention to offend Mrs. Ferrars and Fanny. She obviously achieves this aim and it is implied that she gains a certain degree of satisfaction from this. However, again, one wonders how uncomfortable it would be for Elinor to behave in such an insincere and antagonistic way. Perhaps more significantly, one might also question the extent to which, on top of this, Elinor's minor victory over Mrs. Ferrars and Fanny could possibly ameliorate Elinor's deeper pain of loss and the bitterness of her resentment and hurt pride.

Thus, from an EI perspective, it is possible to observe the complexity involved in the relationship between Elinor's underlying motivations and her emotional well-being consequent to her behaviour. From an EI viewpoint I perceive aspects of Elinor's attitude and responses that could have beneficial effects for her psychological and emotional states. It is also clear that the character's reactions to situational, personal and emotional elements of the events in which she is involved may have the potential to undermine her well-being in ways which are perhaps not as immediately apparent. My understanding of Austen's illustration of Elinor raises questions for the critical view that I discuss earlier in this chapter, which perceives an intention on Austen's part for Elinor to emerge as a role-model for Marianne, and indeed for readers of the novel. Contrary to this position, I read a non-judgemental

attitude on the part of the author as she presents the psychologically complex nature of the character, thereby demonstrating the difficulty in assessing the usefulness of Elinor's choices and actions both in and of themselves, and in comparison with those of Marianne, on whose character I will now focus.

Marianne's choices and consequences

Returning to the scene in which John and Fanny Dashwood arrive to take possession of Norland, Marianne's outward conduct in reaction to her brother and Fanny's intrusion is clearly congruent with her internal emotional suffering. Thus, according to the psychotherapeutic principles that I outline above with regard to Elinor, we may presume that Marianne gains some emotional or psychological benefit as a result of her emotionally expressive behaviour. However, as with Elinor, in order to assess Marianne's response in terms of EI, it is necessary to be able to ground her behaviour within some form of rationale, or set of personal values. I will take a different approach towards this purpose in Marianne's case. Earlier in the current chapter, I note the alignment that Marilyn Butler draws between *Sense and Sensibility* and Edgeworth's 'Letters of Julia and Caroline'.²¹⁹ Butler's view is, of course, partly based on her perception of a parallel between the character of Marianne and Edgeworth's Julia, a comparison that will serve to illuminate the foundation of Marianne's behaviour. The comparison reveals that, far from the mindless emotionality in which Julia engages, Marianne's approach emerges out of a considered rationality that warrants further exploration in EI terms. I begin with a look at Julia's position as it relates to the present discussion.

The very first line of Letter 1 of 'Letters of Julia and Caroline' states, 'In vain, dear Caroline, you urge me to *think*; I profess only to *feel*.'²²⁰ This opening remark expresses the antithesis of emotional intelligence. Edgeworth's italicising of the words 'think' and 'feel' marks the two qualities as oppositional and separable, and it is inconceivable within EI to isolate the operation of

²¹⁹ Maria Edgeworth, 'Letters of Julia and Caroline', in *Letters For Literary Ladies*, first published 1795. I refer to the 2nd rev. edn, ed. and intro. by Claire Connolly (London: Orion Publishing Group, 1993). This publication includes 'Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend, upon the Birth of a Daughter', pp. 1-14, and 'Answer to the Preceding Letter', pp 15-38.

²²⁰ See Edgeworth, *Letters For Literary Ladies*, p. 39 for this and the following quotation drawn from the same letter. (All italics are Edgeworth's).

thought from the process of feeling as Julia professes to do. As the letter continues, it is interesting to note Julia's belief that any reflection on her feelings would inevitably diminish the intensity of those feelings:

*"Reflect upon my feelings! Analyse my notions of happiness! explain to you my system!" My system! – But I have no system: that is the very difference between us. My notions of happiness cannot be resolved into simple, fixed principles. Nor dare I even attempt to analyse them; the subtle essence would escape in the process: just punishment to the alchemist in morality! [...]. "Reflect upon my feelings!" - Dear Caroline, is it not enough that I do feel? – All that I dread is that *apathy* which philosophers call tranquillity."*

In fact, Julia does provide a reason for her unwillingness to employ rationality when, a little further on in her letter, she expresses her conviction that moderation of her emotional sensitivity would render her less charming to men. However, even then, her fear of the rational leads her to resist using the term 'system', preferring to call her reasoning 'sentiments'.

While the notion that it is possible to feel without thinking is explicit in Edgeworth's portrayal of Julia, rationality is inextricably linked with emotionality in Marianne. Marianne differs from Julia in two crucial aspects from an EI perspective. Firstly, as discussed previously in this chapter, Marianne knows that it is possible to use her mind either to decrease, or to increase, her awareness and experience of her emotional state; she is just determined not to learn how to decrease them. Secondly, where Edgeworth shows Julia to be fearful of reason, barely able even to acknowledge that her own choices arise out of rational thought, Austen reveals that Marianne's decision to privilege her emotions is incontrovertibly founded on a 'system', and that this system is one that patently brings reasoning to the fore:

Marianne abhorred all concealment where no real disgrace could attend unreserved; and to aim at the restraint of sentiments which were not in themselves illaudable, appeared to her not merely an unnecessary effort,

but a *disgraceful subjection of reason* to common-place and mistaken notions. (I:11, 63-64. My italics)²²¹

In this one sentence, the author shows not only the involvement of rationality in Marianne's choice of behaviour, but also the value of rationality itself for Marianne and the nuanced, rationalised terms on which she determines the extent of her open emotional expression. Marianne's emotionality stems from 'a considered view, not an abdication of reason.'²²² She reasons about the appropriateness of emotional expression *and* she reasons about the appropriate use of reason. The words, 'disgraceful subjection of reason' convey a high regard for rationality on Marianne's part. For her, it is wasteful and inappropriate to apply as significant a capacity as reason to the attainment of ends that she regards to be mindless and erroneous: that is, to suppress or conceal emotions that are in themselves perfectly natural in order to comply with arbitrary, socially-imposed conventions. To recognise that Marianne's action comes from a system clarifies the rationale behind the character's conduct. Marianne prizes openness of emotional expression, however we now see that it is not that she refuses to be taught how to govern all her emotions in all circumstances. It is rather that she refuses to learn to govern her emotions 'where no real disgrace could attend unreserved' and when her feelings are 'not in themselves illaudable'. In the terms in which I discuss the character of Elinor in the section above, the congruence between Marianne's values and her behaviour appears to be more straightforward and sustained than it is in Elinor's case. Marianne's refusal to subdue or disguise her emotions, or to engage in the 'common-place' lies and emotional manipulations which are such a ubiquitous feature of the social interactions that take place around her, is perfectly allied to her internal abhorrence of deceit and the concealment of her emotions. From a psychotherapeutic EI point of view, the accord between her behaviour and her inner personal principles enables Marianne to maintain a

²²¹ Marianne's consideration of natural and intuitive responses as more rational than blind obedience to 'common-place' conventional codes of conduct suggests the influence of Rousseau. See, for example, Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1971-72). I will return to the potential influence of Rousseau on Austen's work in Chapter Three.

²²² As noted by Waldron, see *Jane Austen and The Fiction of Her Time*, p. 67.

degree of inner psychological equilibrium even when she experiences intense emotional discomfort consequent upon external events.

In the light of this, it is interesting to consider what, for Marianne, would constitute a situation in which honesty and openness of feelings might bring about 'disgrace', and which emotions she would identify as 'illaudable'. If one perceives the words 'disgrace' and 'illaudable' to relate, for Marianne, to opinions of herself held by other people, then it is difficult to imagine any situation or instance in which she would feel ashamed of telling the truth or of revealing her genuine emotional reactions. Notwithstanding this, Marianne is clearly affected by her awareness of the effect that her behaviour may have on the people who matter to her and for whom she cares most profoundly: her mother and her sisters. When Elinor reminds her of how concerned her mother will be for her dreadful distress over Willoughby's rejection of her, Marianne experiences this realisation as "torture" (II:7, 211). Then, as Elinor continues to plead with Marianne to contain her wretchedness, Marianne tells Elinor that she would do more for her sister and her mother's sake than she would for her own. However, she continues, "But to appear happy when I am so miserable— Oh! Who can require it?" (II:7, 216). Much as she loves her mother and sister, Marianne is aware that to attempt to suppress or conceal her emotions would be more difficult and painful for her than it is to fully experience and express how she feels. She perceives that her state will become unbearable if she were to add the deep unease of incongruence between inner experience and outward appearance to the agony of her grief. Marianne rationalises the fact that the increase in her suffering must be disproportionate to any ease the concealment of her misery could provide to anyone else, and so she is unable to conceive how anyone could ask it of her.

In this respect I reflect upon A. C. Bradley's remark on Austen that 'We remember Johnson in those passages where she refuses to express a deeper concern than she feels for misfortune or grief, and with both there is an occasional touch of brutality in the manner of the refusal'.²²³ One might apply Bradley's view to, for example, Austen's apparently contemptuous description

²²³ A. C. Bradley, in Southam, *The Critical Heritage, Volume 2*, p. 234.

of Mrs. Musgrove's overly-affected 'large, fat sighings over the destiny of a son, whom alive nobody had cared for.'²²⁴ However, here it seems to me that, through Marianne, Austen shows an equal refusal to express a *lesser* concern than she feels. In this respect it is crucial to highlight the distinction between emotional affectation, such as that displayed by Mrs. Musgrove, and authentic expression of real emotion. If one assumes that Austen follows Johnson in his intolerance for inappropriately affected displays of emotion and 'tenderness' for expressions of genuine and natural emotions, as I suggest earlier in this chapter, then my interpretation of Austen's position in her portrayal of Marianne is tenable only if one considers that Marianne is expressing the anguish of heart-break that she feels fully in reaction to a genuinely heart-breaking circumstance. In this regard I concur with, for example, Emily Auerbach, for whom Marianne's suffering is 'raw and real', and George Moore who, writing about the party scene in which Willoughby avoids Marianne's desperate approaches towards him, perceives that 'Miss Austen gives us all the agony of passion the human heart can feel', and that 'it is here that we find the burning human heart in English prose'.²²⁵ Marianne is genuinely devastated, and it is Elinor's attempts to prevail upon her sister to subdue her distress, and, in doing so, possibly exacerbate her suffering with the discomfort of incongruence, that may be seen to be somewhat brutal.

Austen's placing of her enquiry into the relationship between thought and emotion within the intimate relationship between Elinor and Marianne is exemplified in the scene to which I refer above. Here the author sets up an exploratory dialectic between the contrasting approaches of the two characters. Elinor is accustomed to concealment and the associated incongruence, and she conceives of the possibility of this for Marianne when she asks her sister to consider the effect of her emotionality on other people and to repress it for

²²⁴ *Persuasion*, I:8, 73. I discuss the view of this scene as demonstrating Austen to be unempathetic and judgemental in the Introduction.

²²⁵ Auerbach, in *Jane Austen: New Edition*, p. 253; George Moore, from *Avowals* (1919), repr. in Southam, *The Critical Heritage, Vol 2*, pp. 272-277 (p. 276). For me, Moore's view is convincing as he draws a comparison between Marianne's suffering and the pain that most, if not all of Austen's readers will have experienced at some time in their own lives. He writes, 'We all know how terrible these disappointments are, and how they crush and break up life, for the moment reducing it to dust' (p. 275).

their sake. On the other hand, Marianne fears the potential anguish brought about by incongruence between internal experience and external expression, and she expects that her sister will have some understanding of this too as she wonders aloud how her sister, or anyone else, could ask her to conceal her misery. From an EI perspective, Austen has set up an irresolvable dilemma here. It is irresolvable because both Elinor's and Marianne's positions are authentic and both have validity. Crucially, Austen leaves Marianne's question, "Oh! Who can require it?", unanswered. Thus it becomes a rhetorical question which, it seems to me, the author invites her readers to ponder for themselves.

The focus of my discussion above has been on the consequences of Elinor's and Marianne's contrasting modes of behaviour and expression on their own psychological and emotional states and well-being. In that discussion, and previous sections of this chapter, I demonstrate Austen's insight into individuals' internal psychical dynamics from an EI perspective. In the following section, I highlight the author's keen awareness of the intricacies of people's interpersonal psychological interactions as I look at her portrayal of the effects of the emotions and behaviour of each of the characters on other people, most importantly on each other and on their mother. My analysis of this revolves around Austen's conception of the quality which we now term 'empathy'. It is clear from the etymology of the word 'empathy' that the term did not exist at the time of Austen's writing (as I discuss in Chapter One). However, I perceive that Austen's understanding of the way in which people experience the emotional states of others, and the ways in which they process and act upon that experience, is in close keeping with modern psychotherapeutic conceptions of the emotional phenomenon that we now term 'empathy'. On this basis, I will refer to 'empathy' in the following discussion. Austen's incorporation of empathy into her portrayal of the characters of Elinor and Marianne not only introduces even greater complexity into the natures of both characters, it also reveals the quality to be an important

element in the self-developmental process of each of them, especially in the case of Marianne.²²⁶

Elinor's and Marianne's empathy

As I explain above, the quality of empathy is regarded as a foundational element of emotional intelligence, and both Elinor and Marianne possess this quality. Elinor, for example, feels empathetically for Colonel Brandon when he enquires of her as to the state of affairs between Marianne and Willoughby. Austen writes that his words, 'which conveyed to Elinor a direct avowal of his love for her sister, affected her very much. She was not immediately able to say anything, and even when her spirits were recovered, she debated for a short time, on the answer it would be most proper to give' (II:5, 197). Elinor is not only deeply affected by Colonel Brandon's speech to the point of speechlessness, but thinks carefully about her response. Further, when he departs, Elinor is left 'with a melancholy impression of Colonel Brandon's unhappiness, and was prevented even from wishing it removed, by her anxiety for the very event that must confirm it' (II:5, 198). Elinor's melancholy is an empathetic reflection of Brandon's feelings, and not an experience of her own, since her personal reaction to the attachment between Marianne and Willoughby is one of anxiety and not unhappiness. Likewise, Austen shows Marianne's capacity for empathy during Edward's visit to Barton Cottage. In one scene, she notices and draws attention to the ring that he is wearing which, unbeknownst to her, contains a lock of Lucy Steele's hair. Austen writes: 'Marianne spoke inconsiderately what she really felt—but when she saw how much she pained Edward, her own vexation at her want of thought could not be surpassed by his' (S&S, 1:18, 113). Here Marianne's own feelings of curiosity are quickly replaced with her empathetic awareness, not of Edward's pained discomfort as such, but with his annoyance at the thoughtlessness on her part that gives rise to his embarrassment.

Scenes such as these, drawn with such specificity by the author, indicate the capacity that both Elinor and Marianne have for refined empathy, and this

²²⁶ On empathy and sympathy in the fiction of the Nineteenth Century, see Rae Greiner, *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

aspect of emotional intelligence in the two sisters is thrown into sharp relief when one notes, in comparison, the lack of empathy in characters who seem to have no emotional awareness of other people's suffering. John and Fanny Dashwood and Mrs. Ferrars fall into this category, and even warm and hospitable Mrs. Jennings, who has awareness of emotionality in others but misinterprets it. While Mrs. Jennings pities Marianne, at one point the reproach of Marianne's tears is 'entirely lost' on her. (II:9, 230) Apart from Mrs. Dashwood, to whom I will return shortly, the only other explicitly empathetic character is Colonel Brandon. Austen writes explicitly of Colonel Brandon that he 'was on every occasion mindful of the feelings of others' (I:12, 72). The contrast between Colonel Brandon and John Dashwood in this respect is highlighted when John struggles to understand Colonel Brandon's motive for assisting Edward with a living at Delaford, since he regards the Colonel as a man of 'sense'. He puts Brandon's behaviour down to the "vast deal of inconsistency in almost every character" (III:5, 334). However, Colonel Brandon is behaving entirely consistently with empathetic awareness, and thus within the ambiguous definition of the term 'sense' that Austen employs throughout the novel.

It is in the context of the intimate sibling relationship between Elinor and Marianne that Austen's understanding of the subtle aspects of empathy comes most powerfully to the fore, as I show in previous sections with regard to the underlying psychological dynamics within the characters. Notably, Austen demonstrates the empathy that each of the characters feels for the other to be self-transformative, as it leads to the adoption by each of the characteristic behaviour of the other. Thus, when Elinor finds Marianne grief-stricken on receipt of Willoughby's letter, she joins her sister with a matching outpouring of tears:

Elinor drew near, but without saying a word; and seating herself on the bed, took her hand, kissed her affectionately several times, and then gave way to a burst of tears, which at first was scarcely less violent than Marianne's.

Importantly, Elinor has no knowledge of what has happened to provoke Marianne's distress at this point, and therefore there is nothing that prompts her to weep other than Marianne's weeping. Of course Elinor knows that Marianne knows something that she herself does not. However, she does not yet know what it is that Marianne knows that is causing her to be so upset. At this moment Elinor's constraint in emotional expression is superseded simply by an instantaneous and spontaneous experience of shared feeling, which is the essence of empathy. It is interesting to note too that, in these initial moments, Elinor has no inclination to prevent Marianne from the unrestrained expression of her anguish. Austen writes, 'Elinor, who knew that such grief, shocking as it was to witness it, must have its course, watched by her till this excess of suffering had somewhat spent itself' (II:7, 208). It is only when Elinor becomes aware of the specifics of Marianne's circumstances that her awareness of how Marianne feels, and therefore what she needs, is obscured by her recognition of how she herself would feel, and what she herself would need, under the same circumstances. Elinor then begins to encourage Marianne to restrain herself as her own tendency towards emotional control, propriety and pride begin to override her purely emotional response to Marianne's distress. Crucially, however, to have empathy requires a person to be able to open themselves to emotional experience and here we witness, for the first time, Elinor's natural, unmediated, unconstrained emotional self.

Likewise, we see Marianne empathising deeply with Elinor and, in her empathy, taking on Elinor's mode of behaviour. This occurs while Elinor writes to their mother to inform her of Marianne's plight. As Elinor herself might do in Marianne's place, Marianne watches in controlled, quiet stillness: 'Marianne [...] remained fixed at the table where Elinor wrote, watching the advancement of her pen, grieving over her for the hardship of such a task' (II:9, 231). Marianne's empathy here is revealed in the way in which she mirrors every aspect of Elinor's emotional state and behaviour. For close to fifteen minutes, Marianne is 'fixed at the table' as Elinor is. Her watching of the movement of the pen mirrors Elinor's moving of it, and she grieves, not for her own circumstances, but out of her awareness of the 'heavy heart' with which Elinor undertakes the chore (II:9, 230).

It is a knock at the door that brings Marianne back into her own emotional reality and leads her to act in accord with her own needs and manner again.

In the Introduction I note critical recognition of the influence on Austen of Adam Smith, and Smith's ideas are evident in her treatment of empathy here. Like Austen, Smith did not use the word 'empathy' itself. However, in his influential essay, 'The Theory of Modern Sentiments', Smith's description of the quality that he terms 'sympathy' matches that which we would now apply to the concept of empathy. With reference to sympathy, Smith writes, 'The passions, upon some occasions, may seem to be transfused from one man to another, instantaneously, and antecedent to any knowledge of what excited them in the person principally concerned'. Further, he states, 'Sympathy, [...] enlivens joy and alleviates grief. It enlivens joy by presenting another source of satisfaction; and alleviates grief by insinuating into the heart almost the only agreeable sensation which it is at that time capable of receiving'.²²⁷ In the moments of pure empathy that the sisters share before they return to their habitual modes of conduct, they offer each other the exact, and the only, reaction that could be of help. This principle underlies the centrality of the empathetic stance in Rogerian therapy, as I outline in Chapter One of the thesis, and it is fascinating to notice the essence and purpose of this quality so finely observed within Austen's portrayal of the relationship between Elinor and Marianne.

To explore the nuances of Austen's characterisations in relation to empathy a little further, one might contrast the empathetic source of Marianne's behaviour in the scene above with that which causes her to adopt Elinor's restrained manner again later in the novel when Marianne learns the degree of Elinor's unhappiness caused by her concealed knowledge of Edward's engagement to Lucy Steele. At this point, Marianne's primary emotions are of guilt and self-reproach for having initially minimised her sister's attachment to Edward. When she conceals her emotions relating to Elinor's situation from other people, this is not an empathetic matching of Elinor's control over emotionality, rather it is in keeping with a

²²⁷ See Joseph Black and James Hutton eds, *Essays of Adam Smith*, 6th edn (1759. London: Alex. Murray & Co., 30 Queen Square, WC., 1872), pp. 11 and 14. Austen's interpretation of the empathetic experience of emotion between individuals departs from negative views of the sharing of emotional experience that obtained at the time, see Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*, and others cited above in the current chapter in sections dealing with eighteenth to nineteenth century views on emotions.

promise that she has made to Elinor because of her guilty feelings. In this case, precisely because Austen is *not* presenting another example of empathy on Marianne's part here, we learn more about the nature of Elinor's character and observe further subtle aspects of Austen's understanding of empathy. To clarify, I note that in the moment of Elinor's revelation of her circumstances to Marianne, Austen states that Marianne 'listened with horror, and cried excessively', while Elinor's report was 'clear and simple', and 'not accompanied by violent agitation, nor impetuous grief.' Austen further describes Elinor as 'the comforter of others in her own distresses, no less than in theirs; and all the comfort that could be given by assurances of her own composure of mind [...] was readily offered' (III:1, 296). From these reflections it appears that Austen wishes her readers to admire Elinor's conduct. Yet, the author then undermines readers' appreciation of Elinor when she shows that Elinor is capable of coolly, and possibly even cruelly, manipulating her sister: 'In such a frame of mind as she [Marianne] was now in, Elinor had no difficulty in obtaining from her whatever promise she required; and at her request, Marianne engaged never to speak of the affair to any one with the least appearance of bitterness' (III:1, 300).²²⁸ From my perspective, Austen's perception is in close accord with the principles of EI when she raises the notion that the ability to recognise another's feelings does not necessarily lead to a constructive use of that skill. To assess the degree to which awareness of other people's emotions is emotionally intelligent, it is necessary to consider the purpose to which that awareness is employed. To the extent that Elinor takes advantage of the guilt that Marianne feels to corner her into an agreement to constrain the expression of her emotions, Elinor's awareness of Marianne's feelings of guilt could not be regarded as entirely empathetic, nor indeed at all emotionally intelligent.²²⁹

Austen's representation of empathy resonates yet further with modern-day EI conceptions of the quality in her illustration of the way in which, even when a person's intent is for the care of others, firstly the effect may be the opposite to

²²⁸ I observe Elinor's less than straightforward interactions with Lucy Steele and other characters too earlier in the current chapter.

²²⁹ See Simon Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy. A New Theory of Human Cruelty* (London: Allen Lane, 2011) for a conceptualisation of empathy which requires that a person acts in the interests of the other person of whose emotions one is aware, and not to use that awareness to further one's own ends.

that intended, and secondly, this outcome may not be immediately apparent. To illustrate this point, I return to the scenes in the novel that concern Willoughby's and Edward's departures from Barton Cottage, to which I refer earlier in this chapter. In the immediate aftermath of Willoughby's unexpected departure, Austen writes that Marianne's overt distress gives 'pain every moment to her mother and sisters' (I:16, 96). However, when Edward leaves, because of Elinor's conduct 'her mother and sisters were spared much solicitude on her account' (I:19, 121). In the light of this, one might reasonably conclude that Austen favours Elinor's behaviour in this instance since, unlike Marianne, Elinor apparently demonstrates empathetic care for her mother and sisters. However, the picture is not quite so clear when one looks ahead to the later consequences of Elinor's reactions to events.

During the scene in which the family mistakenly believe that Edward has become married to Lucy Steele, Mrs Dashwood realises that Elinor has been suffering as much as her sister, but that she, their mother, had been led to underestimate the depth of Elinor's feelings for Edward. Austen writes that Mrs Dashwood 'feared that under this persuasion she had been unjust, inattentive, nay, almost unkind to her Elinor', and that her preoccupation with Marianne's more overt turmoil had 'led her away to forget that in Elinor she might have a daughter suffering almost as much, certainly with less self-provocation, and greater fortitude' (III:11, 403). Again, by virtue of the fact that this statement ends the final paragraph of the chapter, it strikes me that Austen leaves a question to be considered here as to what effect this realisation has on Mrs. Dashwood. Austen's poignant phrase, 'her Elinor', touchingly emphasises the maternal attachment and concern that Mrs. Dashwood feels for Elinor. As this is followed by strongly self-critical words such as 'unjust', 'inattentive' and even 'unkind', it seems clear that Austen intended to convey a moving impression of Mrs. Dashwood's painful feelings of guilt and regret. Thus, in the short-term, while Elinor protects her mother from unhappiness, she also deprives her of the opportunity to offer her daughter the support and consolation which Mrs. Dashwood wished she had provided. In the longer term, Mrs. Dashwood suffers in a different way but arguably more deeply than she might have if Elinor had expressed her anguish

more openly at the time. At this point it is too late for Mrs. Dashwood to attempt to ease Elinor's past grief and, by my reading, this leaves her with the discomfiting feeling of helplessness in the knowledge of her child having been hurt.

Of course, this is not the outcome that Elinor intends for her mother, just as it is not Marianne's intention to bring herself nearly to the point of death, and in doing so frighten and distress her mother and sister. As I state earlier in this chapter, from a psychotherapeutic point of view, Elinor's and Marianne's modes of behaviour emerge from the different ways in which they seek to meet their own emotional and psychological needs. Both characters manage to achieve this for the most part, using their capacity for emotional intelligence as it is defined within the four levels of the four-branch model of EI. As I indicate during my discussion in the sections above, the degree of congruence that each achieves between their internal states and the ways in which they express themselves outwardly is a key element in the analysis of their emotional intelligence. While it appears that Marianne's character emerges as generally the more effective in this element of EI, neither of the characters achieves total congruence, since even Marianne is at odds with herself to some extent when she is torn between her need fully to express her emotionality and her awareness that in doing so she brings concern to the people for whom she cares. For me, however, the quality that they both possess in equal measure, as well as the self-awareness that I discuss earlier in this chapter, is empathy. This quality connects the two characters intimately with each other and with their mother, albeit not always entirely successfully as both characters take their approaches to extremes when they find themselves in very challenging circumstances.

We see that the extreme of Elinor's behaviour leads her to isolate herself in her suffering, which exacerbates her own anguish and leads both her mother and Marianne ultimately to experience the painful helplessness of exclusion. The extreme manifestation of Marianne's approach puts her own life at risk, and involves all who care about her in the dreadful anticipation of bereavement. Crucially however, and in line with the third and final factor in the assessment of EI that I indicate earlier in this chapter, Austen allows both

characters to become aware of the limitations and dangers of their customary modes of behaviour, and both to change and develop as a result of this self-awareness.

Transformation in Marianne

As I state earlier in this chapter, for me the key influencing factor in Marianne's developmental process is her capacity for empathy. Marianne's empathetic awareness of the consequences of her conduct are explicit when the character openly and passionately articulates the extent to which she understands the immensity of the emotional upheaval that her illness has caused those dear to her, and how devastating the consequences would have been for them had she not recovered: "Had I died,—in what peculiar misery should I have left you, my nurse, my friend, my sister! [...] —How should I have lived in *your* remembrance!—My mother too! How could you have consoled her!" (III:10, 391-392). The emotional tone of Marianne's declaration here suggests to me that, through her keen empathetic quality, in this moment she feels within herself even the hypothetical distress that her mother and sister would have suffered had they lost her. It is this high degree of empathetic awareness in Marianne that Austen shows to be the impetus behind Marianne's determination to bear in mind the emotional well-being of others, as well as her own physical health, more carefully in the future. Where Tanner, for example, sees that 'something valuable has been lost', and that Marianne has become an 'automaton' that 'submits to the plans of its relations and joins the social game', I perceive that the change in Marianne comes about, not in submission to the 'social game', but through the developmental process of self-reflection with which she engages. She thereby does not lose, but gains something valuable.²³⁰ From an EI perspective, Marianne gains an enhanced awareness both of herself and of other people that brings with it a much wider range of possible emotional, psychological and behavioural responses to the inevitably multifarious experiences that life brings.

²³⁰ Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen*, re-issued edn (First published 1986. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 101.

My argument here also contrasts with Helena Kelly's observation that Marianne 'plays an alarmingly passive, even sacrificial role' in her marriage to Colonel Brandon.²³¹ Kelly concentrates on Austen's depiction of the gratitude that Marianne's family feels towards Brandon, and finds that Marianne subjugates herself to the pressure that they place upon her to marry him as his 'reward' (III:14, 429). My view differs from this as I focus on Austen's own reference to the notion of sacrifice with regard to Marianne when she writes that, in marrying Colonel Brandon,

Instead of falling a sacrifice to an irresistible passion, as once she had fondly flattered herself with expecting,—instead of remaining even for ever with her mother, and finding pleasures in retirement and study, as afterwards in her more calm and sober judgement she had determined on,—she found herself at nineteen, submitting to new attachments, entering on new duties, placed in a new home, a wife, the mistress of a family, and the patroness of a village. (III:14, 429-430)

For me, it is clear from this that Austen views Marianne's marriage not as a sacrifice, but as an escape from a sacrifice. The sacrifice that Marianne escapes is that of the possible scope of her future life to a youthful conviction that there is only one form of love that can be given to only one man in only one way. This conviction, if she remained committed to it, would narrow the horizons of her existence, not only practically, but also, from my psychotherapeutic EI perspective, emotionally and psychologically. There is a note of irony in Austen's portrayal of Marianne's declaration of her intent to adopt behaviour which is the direct opposite of that which she has displayed up to this point, that is her determination to "mix in society [...] only to shew that my spirit is humbled, my heart amended, and that I can practise the civilities, the lesser duties of life, with gentleness and forbearance", and to check her thoughts of Willoughby "by religion, by reason, by constant employment" (III:10, 393).

²³¹ Helena Kelly, *Jane Austen: The Secret Radical* (London: Icon Books, 2016), p. 115. For negative readings of Marianne's marriage, see also Marvin Mudrick who observes that, even though Marianne 'represents an unacknowledged depth of her author's spirit', Austen is not able openly to acknowledge the value of Marianne's qualities, and so the character 'must be humiliated and destroyed', Mudrick, *Jane Austen: Irony as Defence and Discovery*, p. 91, and Gilbert and Gubar whose position I discuss further in Chapter Three.

However, while Marianne might not be able to go quite as far as she imagines, surely even to attempt to do so would simply lead to the adoption of another set of inflexible, self-limiting rules. From this viewpoint, for Marianne to be able to 'discover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most favourite maxims', far from representing a loss or a sacrifice, enables her to expand and gain mastery over her repertoire of emotional and psychological experiences, as well as of her life choices. In therapeutic terms, this is a perfectly apt reflection of a positive and 'extraordinary' developmental process towards greater emotional intelligence, one which, as I indicate earlier in this chapter, I suggest Austen may have hoped her readers would recognise and emulate. (III:14, 429)²³²

Transformation in Elinor

The transformation in Elinor's character is less dramatic than that witnessed in Marianne, and the process by which it occurs less explicitly presented by Austen. Nevertheless, Elinor's character does change through the course of the novel and an exploration of the development of the character from a therapeutic EI perspective may contribute to a greater understanding of the nature of the character's developmental process, as well as further illustrating the subtlety of Austen's perceptiveness with regard to issues relating to psychology and emotionality.

It is clear from the examples that I highlight above and earlier in this chapter that Elinor has a capacity for empathy with other people. I note again, particularly, both the empathetic weeping that she shares with Marianne on receipt of Willoughby's letter, and the moments in which she and her mother are joined in strained silence on hearing the report of Mr. Ferrars' marriage to Lucy Steele. In the former instance, Austen shows Elinor to be as capable as Marianne of pure emotional connection with others and of the open expression of corresponding emotionality. Therefore, in the latter, as we watch mother and

²³² My reference here is to Austen's declaration that 'Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate' (*Sense and Sensibility*, III:14, 429). By 'mastery' I mean choice and capacity rather than necessarily control. The full experience and expression of emotional states as well as their restraint represents mastery if they are allowed by self-aware choice as opposed to a framework of rules, even if those rules are self-imposed, as Marianne's had been.

daughter with their appetites 'equally lost', and sitting 'long together in a similarity of thoughtfulness and silence', it seems reasonable to suppose that Austen intended the inference that Elinor is as aware of her mother's discomfort as Mrs. Dashwood is of her daughter's. (III:11, 402) In this context I am struck by a proposition made by Frank McLynn in his examination of the Stoic tradition which proscribes self-pity.²³³ McLynn writes: 'Stoics were caught in the coils of their own doctrine: if sorrow is not allowed for one's own misfortunes, logically it cannot be felt for those of others.'²³⁴ While one may speculate as to the degree to which Austen's writing was influenced by the principles of Stoic philosophy, McLynn's proposition that in order to feel compassion for others one must be able to feel the same for oneself is an interesting one in relation to Elinor from my perspective since the model of EI would support his observation. While it is easy to locate the source of Marianne's empathy within her own fully lived experience of pain, throughout the novel it is only with the painful emotional states of *other* characters that Elinor allows herself to engage fully. To do this, Elinor must have a feeling-based conception of suffering, and this, as McLynn's logic proposes, and which the EI model would maintain, can only emerge from her awareness of her own painful emotionality. Yet Austen provides Elinor with numerous rationalisations for the suppression of her own discomfort or distress, and the character uses these rationalisations in her attempts to protect her mother and Marianne from their experience of anxiety or unhappiness too. The rationalisations to which I refer here are duty, care for others, discretion, prudence and, following my discussion earlier in this chapter, I would add personal pride to the list.

²³³ Frank McLynn, *Marcus Aurelius: Warrior, Philosopher, Emperor* (London: Vintage Books, 2010). Numerous commentators on Austen's work and life identify the influence of Stoic ideas in Austen's writing. See also, for example, Alessa Johns, 'Jane Austen the Stoic: Channelling Elizabeth Carter and the Bluestocking Ethos', *Women's Writing*, 21:4 (2014), 444-463. See also, Norma Clarke, *Dr. Johnson's Women* (London: Hambledon, 2000) and, for a more general discussion on the Stoic position in relation to emotionality, see Margaret Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

²³⁴ McLynn, p. 541. See also Helene Moglen's summary of Laurence Sterne's view of Sentimentalism when she writes: 'Sentimentality, according to Sterne's view, is a self-conscious stage in the development of the empathetic process', Helene Moglen, *The Philosophical Irony of Laurence Sterne* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 1975), p. 100.

These are certainly factors that influence Elinor's behaviour in relation to her emotions. However, I observe further that Elinor maintains her emotional reserve during the period of Marianne's illness, when Marianne herself is unconscious and there is no character who it seems would benefit from her concealment. Yet, it is only when Marianne starts to show signs of recovery that Elinor begins to dare to allow herself to experience and to express her feelings: 'at last, with an agitation more difficult to bury under external calmness, than all her foregoing distress' she 'ventured to communicate her hopes.' Even in this release, Elinor warns herself against the full experience of her own emotionality and, as she does so, it becomes evident that, duty, care for others and so on aside, Elinor is simply afraid to engage fully with her own internal feelings. She is afraid of her fear, and even more afraid of her hope. There is a poignancy in Austen's description of Elinor's inability to maintain completely controlled restraint over her emotions in this situation when she writes, 'But it was too late. Hope had already entered; and feeling all its anxious flutter, she bent over her sister to watch.' Finally, only when she is confident that Marianne is on the mend and therefore sure that it is safe to do so, she allows the 'tears of joy' to flow. (III:7, 355) Later, we observe the one other moment in which Elinor expresses fully her own emotional state, that is in the moment she realises that it is Robert and not Edward who has been married to Lucy Steele. Here again, her tears are 'tears of joy' (III:12, 408). In both of these scenes of high drama, Elinor is able to let go of her tight rein on her emotions and grant herself emotional release on her own behalf only once she perceives that all will be well. This is a distinctive example of the impeccable consistency in Austen's portrayal of her characters, consistency which emerges out of her extraordinary perceptivity of the subtle idiosyncrasies of human nature, which she manifests in her characterisations. I note earlier in this chapter the psychotherapeutic principle that people's behaviour is directed towards the fulfilment of their needs. It is clear that Austen sees this, as Elinor's behaviour is patently and consistently self-protective. However, the self-protective approaches that people adopt can, at times, be in some ways self-defeating and even threatening to themselves and their relationships, and Austen shows this too, equally consistently, to be an outcome in Elinor's case.

From a four-branch EI perspective, the emotions inform the effective functioning of the individual. Therefore, to open oneself to unpleasant feelings as well as to pleasant ones, to engage with those emotional states, and even deliberately to magnify them, as Marianne and her mother are wont to do, enhances all aspects of the individual's experience of themselves, of other people, and of their lives in general. On this basis alone, the level and development of Elinor's emotional intelligence is limited. From a broader EI perspective, and, indeed, a wider therapeutic perspective, one is keenly aware of the extent to which Elinor's approach leads her to become isolated, not only from herself, but from those closest to her, who could, to paraphrase Adam Smith, enhance her happiness or ease her grief if she allowed them to share those emotional experiences with her. Rachel Brownstein notes that Elinor's view of the self is 'social, not isolated'.²³⁵ I would agree that this is Elinor's view of the self. My view, however, is that, paradoxically, Elinor's self is intensely and painfully isolated, and that, as a result, those most intimately caring of her are hurt too by their inability to reach her and share in either her sorrow or her joy. Even in the latter scene to which I refer above, it is only when Elinor has left the room and closed the door on Edward and her family that she is able to let herself weep in relief and happiness at Edward's news. The others left behind are confused, and Edward in particular, who wishes to ask Elinor to marry him is: 'so uncomfortable' and 'in need of encouragement and fresh air' (III:13, 409). The EI model is a paradigm of high functionality both within the individual and of the individual in relationship with others. Therefore, Elinor's need to protect herself emotionally is at odds with the goals to which the model of EI would aspire to enable individuals to achieve.²³⁶

²³⁵ Rachel M. Brownstein, 'Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice', in Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 43.

²³⁶ See Eileen Kennedy-Moore and Jeanne C. Watson, 'How and when does emotional expression help?', *Review of General Psychology*, 5:3 (Sept. 2001), 187-212 for a review of psychological research into the purpose and outcomes of emotional expression. There are three key research findings within Kennedy-Moore's review that are especially relevant here: 1. People who are very distressed are often frightened by the intensity of their emotions. They fear that they will be overwhelmed and fall apart if they express their feelings. 2. The expression of emotion eases distress by dissolving the fear of the distress. 3. An individual is more likely to benefit from help if others know that they are in distress. The authors conclude that 'The paradox of distress expression is that

Nevertheless, as I state at the beginning of this section, Elinor does change and develop over the course of the novel. Throughout, we watch Elinor become empathetically drawn into the emotional experiences of other characters, which, almost despite herself, inevitably connects her with her own emotional self. In the two instances to which I refer above, we see the actions of those for whom she feels the greatest affection bring her to the awareness, experience and expression of yet deeper inner emotional processes. I perceive that all of these experiences gradually lead Elinor to begin to open herself up internally to her own feelings, and to feel a greater need to express them outwardly, even if still only when she perceives that it is safe to do so.

As with critiques of Marianne's transformation that I discuss in the previous section, certain commentators perceive the transition in Elinor's character towards greater emotionality to be detrimental to the strength of the character, and therefore to undermine Austen's success in achieving her purpose for the novel. I refer earlier in this chapter to De Rose and Jenkyns for whom Elinor's growing emotionality represents a 'weakening' of her 'type', just as Marianne's capacity for moderated rationality weakens her 'type'. However, from the perspective of the therapeutic model of EI, it is not the contrast between Elinor and Marianne but the complexity and development of the psychological and emotional functionality of each of the characters that is the central point of the novel. From this viewpoint, rather than engaging in a debate around the relative moral values of emotionality and rationality, Austen is far more concerned to explore in her novel the ways in which the qualities of thought and emotion relate to each other within the psychology of human beings, and how the nature of the relationship between the two qualities relates, in turn, to the nature of the self, and of self-awareness and self-development. I perceive that Austen illustrates both the contrasts and the similarities between the characters of Elinor and Marianne equally to this end. Finally, the EI model highlights Austen's key concern with, and deep understanding of, the negotiation by individuals between the rational and feeling elements of their own psyche and those aspects of the psyches of other

expression of negative feelings is both a sign of distress and a possible means of coping with that distress', p. 205.

people, in other words, of the complex psychological dynamics that underlie individuals' interpersonal relationships.

CHAPTER THREE

AUTONOMY IN JANE AUSTEN

while this state lasts, the person may call himself happy; not possessing an imperfect happiness, poor and dependent, but a complete felicity, perfect and full, which leaves no wish or void in the soul. (Jean-Jacques Rousseau)²³⁷

In the preceding chapters of this thesis I explain Carl Rogers' definition of autonomy, the conditions that are necessary both intra-personally and interpersonally for the development of an individual's autonomy, and the effects of the possession of autonomy, or lack of autonomy (heteronomy), on an individual's psychological and emotional state. Lack of autonomy creates a dissonance between one's external behaviour or expressions of thought and/or emotion and one's instinctive drive towards maturity and independence. This dissonance causes the individual to experience stress which may be damaging to the individual's well-being. In contrast, the individual who possesses a high level of self-aware and congruent autonomy experiences an inner ease, the essence of which is captured in Rousseau's reflection quoted above.

Like Trilling, I observe an 'affinity' between Rousseau and Austen in the value that they both place on self-awareness, self-definition, self-directedness and self-sufficiency.²³⁸ In *Reveries of The Solitary Walker*, Rousseau further articulates the outcome of self-aware autonomy as the 'sentiment of existence' which 'stripped of any other emotion, is in itself a precious sentiment of contentment, and of peace which alone would suffice to make this existence sweet and dear'.²³⁹ Here Rousseau describes a state in which there is no emotion felt other than the experience simply of being, and which therefore

²³⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions of Rousseau*, ([1782] abr. edn (London: Holyoake & Co., 1857), p. 170.

²³⁸ See Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*.

²³⁹ Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, eds, *The Collected Writings of Rousseau: Reveries of the solitary walker, Botanical writings, and Letter to Franquières* (Lebanon, NH: The Dartmouth College Press, 2006), p. 46. See also, R.D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1968), p.98. For further comments on this quotation, see Lawrence D. Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and The Problem of the Good Life* (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), pp. 23-24.

bestows a profound sense of inner peace. In the Introduction to his translation of *Reveries*, Russell Goulbourne observes that ‘Whereas in the *Confessions* Rousseau seeks to explain himself to others, in the *Reveries*, by contrast, he makes a point of addressing only himself, since all he seeks, [...], is to understand himself.’²⁴⁰ Rousseau’s *Reveries* therefore reflects his individual quest for the self-awareness, absent of the perceptions or judgements of other people, which is at the heart of Rogers’ conception of autonomy, and that Austen’s writing clearly shows to be her own.²⁴¹

In the previous chapter I look at the issue of autonomy inasmuch as the concept is encompassed within the context of EI. In the current chapter, I explore Austen’s conceptualisation of, and appreciation of, autonomy in and of itself. The scenes and characters that I explore in the following sections also reveal close resonances between Austen’s psychological understanding and other specific features of the different models of psychotherapy that I present in Chapter One of this thesis. Below, I look at Catherine Morland, Charlotte Lucas and Lady Catherine de Bourgh (in juxtaposition with Elizabeth Bennet) from a Rogerian Client-Centred perspective, and Mary Crawford from a TA point of view. For my fifth and final analysis, I present my interpretation of the character of Mrs. Smith in the light of the model of CBT. I begin with Catherine Morland, and the scene in which Catherine refuses to abandon a social arrangement with Eleanor Tilney in order to accompany Isabella and John Thorpe, and her brother James, on a carriage ride to Clifton.

3.1. Catherine Morland refuses a carriage ride

There is one scene in particular in which I perceive that Austen draws attention to the autonomous nature of the character of Catherine Morland. This is the scene that involves Catherine’s refusal to abandon the arrangement she has

²⁴⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of The Solitary Walker*, trans. and intro. by Russell Goulbourne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. xiii.

²⁴¹ Trilling replaces the word ‘existence’ with ‘being’ when he states: ‘The sentiment of being, it need scarcely be said, is the criterion by which Jane Austen judges the quality of the selves she brings into her purview’ (p. 73). Trilling acknowledges that there are no direct references to Austen’s reading of Rousseau. However, as Alan Richardson points out, it is important and illuminating to identify and acknowledge resemblances between Austen’s portrayals and ‘analogous representations in the early psychological thought of the period, whether or not one can establish conclusively that Austen had read such accounts’ (see the Introduction to this thesis, p. 8).

made to go for a walk with Eleanor Tilney in order to accompany Isabella and John Thorpe, and her own brother, James, on a trip to Clifton instead.²⁴² During this episode, Catherine's self-aware autonomy is manifested by her determinedly empathetic assertive responses to the patently aggressive approaches adopted by the other three characters involved, in particular Isabella and James, in their attempts to persuade her to comply with their plan. It is notable that Austen unfolds this scene over the course of five pages when the exchange depicted within it could have been covered within a paragraph or two by means of a brief, if argumentative, conversation between the characters involved. This indicates the importance to Austen of her portrayal of Catherine's self-aware autonomy, and of that character's preparedness to maintain and express her autonomy even under duress.

Austen outlines in remarkable detail the different types of approach that Catherine's three companions use, and the degree of pressure that these strategies place on Catherine. The way in which Austen gradually increases the tension over the course of the scene reveals not only the strength of Catherine's determination to remain true to her autonomous self. It also highlights the ways in which the author's conception of the subtleties of interpersonal relationship dynamics closely matches the way in which these interactions might be understood and explained by modern-day psychotherapists as variously passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and empathetic assertive. The passive form of communication is evinced by people who seek the approval of others and behave in submissive and compliant ways to maintain that approval. The aggressive form is adopted by individuals who need to be in control of other people and behave in a domineering and hostile manner in order to achieve that control. The passive-aggressive form is used by those who wish to control others but are simultaneously fearful of disapproval and thus they adopt subtle manipulations to achieve their own ends. Finally, the empathetic assertive form which is manifested by people who act independently of the need either to control others or to win other people's approval. The empathetically assertive individual is able to behave according to their own

²⁴² *Northanger Abbey*, I:13, 97-101.

wishes and values, while taking account of the wishes and values of others.²⁴³ I analyse Catherine's refusal of the carriage ride with Isabella, John and James in some detail below to illustrate this observation.

The scene in question emerges out of coincidentally simultaneous yet conflicting conversations. Catherine talks with Eleanor Tilney and arranges to go for a walk with her on the following day. In the same few minutes, Isabella, John and James decide amongst themselves that they, along with Catherine, will go on an excursion to Clifton, also on the next day. As far as those three characters are concerned, 'Catherine only remained to be apprized of it.' Clearly, the use of the word 'apprized' is significant here. It does not occur to any one of the three characters that it might be necessary to enquire about Catherine's availability, or indeed desire to join the party. As far as they are concerned, they need only to inform her of the plan and all will be settled. Their mode of communication is an aggressive style: 'her agreement was demanded', with the expectation of an acceptance on Catherine's side. However, 'instead of the gay acquiescence expected by Isabella, Catherine looked grave, was very sorry, but could not go'. Catherine had allowed herself to be deceived out of her agreement to walk with Eleanor on the previous week, had been distraught as a result, and this time, 'it was quite determined, and she would not, upon any account, retract' (I:13, 97).²⁴⁴ Catherine's response to her brother's and friends' demand of her embodies the principles of self-aware empathetic assertiveness. Her statement, and the tone and manner by which she communicates her reply, reflect both the clarity of purpose and the awareness of the feelings of other people which together constitute empathetic assertiveness. Her 'grave' expression and apology express her anticipation of their disappointment as

²⁴³ See the Introduction to this thesis for a more detailed comparison between assertiveness and aggression and relevant references.

²⁴⁴ Following the incident on the previous week to which I refer here, Austen ends the chapter with a wry, authorial comment: 'And now I may dismiss my heroine to the sleepless couch, which is the true heroine's portion; to a pillow strewed with thorns and wet with tears' (I:11, 89). Of course, in this illustration Austen parodies the portrayal of the heroines of Gothic romances that were popular at the time, that Catherine enjoys, and to which her imagination is drawn during her visit to Northanger. Austen's particular reference in *Northanger Abbey* is to Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), however there are numerous examples of the form with which readers of *Northanger Abbey* would have been familiar, for example, Radcliffe's, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Italian, or The Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1797), as well as those of other authors, for example, Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).

well as her own regret. Furthermore, Catherine makes no demands on the others. She simply states her own position with no attempt to influence their plans or actions.

In an interaction between two equally assertive, autonomous individuals, the recipient of such a clear and empathetic response would be open to the possibility of a rejection of their own plan and would respond with equal honesty and empathy. For example, they might declare their unhappiness that their design will not come to fruition as they had hoped while at the same time acknowledging the awkwardness of the refuser's position. However, Austen has already indicated that the initial approach from Isabella and the others is not assertive but aggressive, and they maintain their aggressive stance in their reply:

But that she *must* and *should* retract was instantly the eager cry of both the Thorpes; they must go to Clifton tomorrow, they would not go without her, it would be nothing to put off a mere walk for one day longer, and they would not hear of a refusal. (I:13, 97-98. Austen's italics)

Unlike Catherine who simply declares her own intentions without either commenting on the others' plans or making any attempt to encourage them to change those plans, Isabella and John unempathetically minimise Catherine's scheduled walk with Eleanor as 'mere', and the potential postponement of it as 'nothing' in an attempt to manoeuvre Catherine into compliance with their own wishes. The words '*must*' and '*should*' in the Thorpes' reaction to Catherine's refusal deny the potential for an outcome other than the one that they desire, and Austen's use of italics indicates the author's wish to emphasise the pressure under which the Thorpes are placing Catherine, and thereby to indicate the significance of Catherine's continued resistance. It is additionally noteworthy that Austen uses the words 'must' and 'should' so emphatically here, since modern psychotherapeutic interventions frequently involve examinations of the nature and effects of people's past and present experiences of 'must' and 'should' messages in their interactions with others. In the interests of enhancing an individual's degree of autonomy, therapeutic processes often seek to enable

individuals who have a tendency to respond in a passive way to such forms of aggressive communication to work towards the adoption of more autonomous assertive responses, such as those demonstrated by Catherine Morland.²⁴⁵

One might give the Thorpes the benefit of the doubt at this point and consider that perhaps they are not aware of the disturbing effect that their aggressive approach will have on Catherine. However, when Isabella sees that ‘Catherine was distressed, but not subdued’, her lack of empathy becomes evident. Despite Catherine’s plea for Isabella not to urge her further, ‘The same arguments assailed her again; she must go, she should go, and they would not hear of a refusal.’ The word ‘assailed’, the repetition of Isabella’s ‘must’ and ‘should’, and ‘they would not hear of a refusal’, all effectively conjure a sense of a relentless onslaught that Catherine continues to withstand. Then, suddenly, Austen instigates a shift in the focus of the argument as Isabella continues: “‘It would be so easy to tell Miss Tilney that you had just been reminded of a prior engagement, and must only beg to put off the walk till Tuesday’” (I:13, 98). It is now clear that, to this point, Isabella has understood the central question underlying the dispute to be whether Catherine is willing to sacrifice Eleanor’s good opinion. Isabella perceives that Catherine is not prepared to do this and so she changes tack. She presents Catherine with a solution whereby she could postpone the walk, and at the same time keep on good terms with Eleanor by offering a perfectly reasonable, albeit untrue, explanation. Again, Catherine displays the clear and direct style that is characteristic of assertive communication. In three short, succinct statements, she states that she would not: ‘No, it would not be easy. I could not do it. There has been no prior engagement’ (I:13, 98). Catherine’s response makes it clear that Isabella has been mistaken. For Catherine, the altercation has not been primarily about her commitment to the arrangement she has made with Eleanor and her fear of losing Eleanor’s approval of her should she renege on that commitment. Rather, the dispute has addressed Catherine’s deeper commitment to herself and to her own core values, one of which is honesty.

²⁴⁵ See Chapter One of this thesis for more extensive explanations of the theoretical and practical psychotherapeutic aspects of this issue.

Up to this point, we have observed Catherine withstand Isabella's straightforward aggression and her misguided suggestion that Catherine make a dishonest excuse to Eleanor. Now Isabella confronts Catherine with passive-aggression as she disingenuously flatters Catherine, declares her love for her, and calls upon Catherine's loyalty to those whom Catherine herself loves.

Isabella does so:

in the most affectionate manner; addressing her by the most endearing names. She was sure her sweetest, dearest Catherine would not seriously refuse such a trifling request to a friend who loved her so dearly. She knew her beloved Catherine to have so feeling a heart, so sweet a temper, to be so easily persuaded by those she loved.

Isabella's exaggerated flattery shows that she is fully aware of the potential seductiveness of this appeal. As I discuss earlier in the current chapter and elsewhere in this thesis, people's need for the approval of others is a powerful factor in their decision-making processes and their behaviour. In the passage cited above, Isabella explicitly raises the friendship between herself and Catherine to the level of a loving relationship with the intention to provoke greater anxiety and fear of loss within Catherine if she were to continue to deny Isabella. Further, Isabella declares her perception of Catherine's 'feeling' nature and sweetness on the assumption that Catherine would submit to Isabella's will and prioritise her good opinion. Still Catherine does not give in: 'Catherine felt herself to be in the right, and though pained by such tender, such flattering supplication, could not allow it to influence her' (I:13, 98). Here again, Austen emphasises the autonomy of Catherine's position. Catherine feels that she is right, and it is her own view of herself and her need to sustain her own approval of herself that motivates her, over and above the need for the good opinion and approval of others, even of those who declare themselves to be 'beloved' of her.

Austen's note that Catherine was 'pained' by Isabella's approach is important here. Throughout the interactions that I discuss above, and over the course of the further challenges that Catherine comes to face from both Isabella

and John Thorpe, and even her brother, Austen is careful to remind the reader that it is difficult for Catherine to resist those challenges. She states of Catherine, 'At one moment she was softened, at another irritated; always distressed, but always steady' (I:13, 100). In the previous chapter of the novel, Austen's parodic portrayal of the situation in which Catherine finds herself and her tearful state on her 'pillow strewed with thorns and wet with tears' at the end of the day is entertaining and amusing (I:11, 89). Here, however, while one may detect an element of the Gothic romance within the scene, Austen straightforwardly attributes a clearly identifiable psychological strength to Catherine that marks her as genuinely heroic in an everyday human sense.²⁴⁶ Catherine's determined resistance would be unremarkable if it was easy to be 'steady' in these circumstances. It is heroic because it is so difficult to achieve. As the conflict continues to unfold, Austen shows her heroine battling to protect and maintain her autonomy in the face of mounting pressure, even to the point of escape from physical restraint. From a psychotherapeutic perspective, I observe how the psychological insight that informs Austen's portrayal of the increasing difficulty of Catherine's predicament matches, with near-exact precision, the interactional elements that a modern-day psychotherapist might anticipate. In the discussion to follow, I continue to identify and discuss these elements.

When Isabella's appeal to Catherine's need for her love and approval proves to be unsuccessful, Austen writes that Isabella then tries 'another method' (I:13, 98). With these two words, Austen subtly and succinctly demonstrates that Isabella is motivated by neither a loving care for Catherine, nor a genuine desire for Catherine's company. If there had been any doubt up to this point, Austen now makes it entirely apparent that what Isabella needs is simply to gain control over Catherine, and thus to win the battle. The next 'method' that Isabella employs to this end is to accuse Catherine of neglect, of having "grown cold and indifferent", and of causing her to feel "cut [...] to the

²⁴⁶ Rachel Brownstein observes that in this scene 'The tropes of stock romance are parodied as, for instance, the requisite separation of the lovers is effected by Isabella Thorpe and her brother John, who physically restrain Catherine, each holding on to one arm, when she struggles to follow Henry and his sister down the street.' See Rachel M. Brownstein, 'Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. by Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster, p. 38.

quick” (I:13, 98). This passive-aggressive ploy is intended to drive Catherine into compliance through guilt, and fear of disapproval. When this fails too, Isabella attempts yet another strategy. As Austen expresses it, she ‘applied her handkerchief to her eyes’ (I:13, 99). The author clearly intends her readers to realise, by her description of Isabella’s action without reference to feeling, that Isabella is not genuinely upset or weeping, she is simply employing yet another passive-aggressive technique. In contrast, Catherine’s pain and distress are authentic, yet she remains firm. Just as the character of Catherine embodies empathetic assertiveness, Isabella’s character constitutes the essence of aggression in both the pure and passive forms of that behaviour.

However, the most challenging test, and therefore the most revealing of the degree of Catherine’s self-aware autonomy, comes about when Catherine’s brother, James, intervenes. At this point, although Catherine has begun to suspect Isabella’s motives, James is in thrall to Isabella and does not see through her artifice. Unable to bear Isabella’s apparent tearfulness, James challenges Catherine firstly with: “I shall think you quite unkind, if you still refuse.” Difficult as it has been for Catherine to remain firm in her refusal in the face of Isabella’s criticism and manipulation, from a psychotherapeutic view this intervention from her truly beloved brother must be even more difficult to bear.

Austen’s own perception of this is evident too as it is only in relation to James’ comments that the author reveals explicitly the fear of loss of approval in Catherine when she states that Catherine is ‘anxious to avoid his displeasure’ (I:13, 99). James’ statement also triggers for the first time a response from Catherine other than the straightforward demurral with which she has countered Isabella’s efforts. However, this is not to surrender and agree to change her arrangement with Eleanor, but again in the spirit of empathetic assertiveness, to suggest a compromise plan that would satisfy all concerned. The other characters shout down this proposal and submit Catherine to further passive-aggressive ‘supplications’ and aggressive ‘reproaches’, which Catherine continues to resist. James then declares: “I did not think you had been so obstinate, Catherine [...] you were not used to be so hard to persuade; you were

once the kindest, best-tempered of my sisters.” (I:13, 99 and 100) With this, James reinforces his threat to withdraw his approval from his sister, and still Catherine maintains her position:

“I hope I am not less so now,” she replied, very feelingly; “but indeed I cannot go. If I am wrong, I am doing what I believe to be right.” (I:13, 100)

Within this brief response, Austen shows Catherine’s autonomy to be exceptionally well-developed as she clarifies all the distinct aspects of the character’s sense of self, and of her self-efficacy and self-esteem. Catherine’s reply reveals that her autonomy does not rest on a conviction that what she is doing is right. She is determined to do what she believes to be right and is prepared to take responsibility if she is wrong. Catherine demonstrates also that her actions do not, and will not, depend upon another person’s view of her. She will do what she believes to be right even if that leads her brother to think her unkind. Finally, and most notably, Catherine recognises that, if she is a kind person, her determination to hold fast to her values does not negate that kindness, nor does it transform her from a person who is ‘kind’, into a person who is ‘obstinate’, even if the values called into play require that she declines to act in accordance with the wishes of other people. From a psychotherapeutic point of view, Catherine’s ability to persist in her refusals while simultaneously maintaining her self-perception as a kind and good-hearted person is a remarkable and sophisticated achievement.²⁴⁷

It is unusual to apply the term ‘sophisticated’ to Catherine Morland. In 1882, Margaret Oliphant enumerated all of the qualities of Catherine that would be noted, with varying points of focus, by later critics of the character. Oliphant describes Catherine as, ‘a picture of delightful youth’ with her ‘simplicity, absurdity, and natural sweetness’, however, she notes also ‘the fine instinct which runs through (Catherine’s) simplicity’. Oliphant observes further that, while Austen ‘makes that innocent creature ridiculous’, still Catherine is ‘never

²⁴⁷ One of the major barriers to people’s adoption of assertive rather than passive approaches in their interpersonal interactions is their fear that they will necessarily become, or be perceived by others to have become, uncaring and controlling of other people (again, see my Introduction for references relevant to the issue of assertiveness). Thus, in this aspect of Austen’s portrayal of Catherine, I perceive another striking instance of a resonance between Austen’s psychological insight and features of modern psychotherapeutic understanding.

wrong in instinct and feeling, notwithstanding all her amusing foolishness.'²⁴⁸ While critics acknowledge a certain degree of honesty and sense of self in Catherine, they seem commonly to express this perception either with a tone of gentle amusement in view of the character's overarching naiveté or 'foolishness', or, as Mary Lascelles suggests, with an intimation of tension between Catherine's naiveté and her courage and sense of self. Of course, Catherine is naïve in terms of the way that she engages with the intricacies of urbane social intercourse. Nevertheless, I perceive self-aware autonomy to be Catherine's singular characteristic, and it is in this sense that I view the character of Catherine to be far more sophisticated than her worldly co-characters, and in a way that is far more important.²⁴⁹

It is significant that Austen took such pains to articulate and illustrate Catherine's autonomous nature in such specific and careful detail. The strategies that James, and Isabella and John Thorpe employ are those that any of Austen's readers may experience or have experienced and, given people's strong need for approval in general, most often with less ability to resist and stand their ground than they will perceive Catherine to possess. As they read they may compare the way that Catherine handles the situation in which she finds herself with the way in which they themselves would feel and respond in similar circumstances, and perhaps begin to think about how they would wish

²⁴⁸ Margaret Oliphant, *The Literary History of England in the end of the Eighteenth Century and Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, 3 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., 1882), III, pp. 228-229. For an overview of views that echo some or all of Oliphant's descriptions of Catherine, see Southam, ed., *Jane Austen: Northanger Abbey and Persuasion. A Selection of Critical Essays*. I note particularly also Mary Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art*, p. 63, for her description of Catherine as a 'wise child', Thomas Keymer, 'Northanger Abbey and *Sense and Sensibility*', Keymer, Thomas and Jon Mee, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature: 1740-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), for an examination of Catherine primarily in relation to the Gothic elements of the novel, and John Mullan, *What Matters in Jane Austen* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012) pp. 181-182, also p. 266 for his perception of Catherine as Austen's 'most innocent blusher'.

²⁴⁹ In contrast, Marvin Mudrick states, 'whatever value or autonomous feeling the action even begins to suggest for Catherine is immediately drowned in the author's irony', *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery*, p. 53. More recently, Beth Lau analyses Catherine from a similarly opposite perspective in relation to Theory of Mind (on which see Introduction and Chapter One of this thesis) in, 'Catherine's Education in Mindreading in *Northanger Abbey*' in Beth Lau, ed., *Jane Austen and the Sciences of the Mind* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 37-57. Lau states that Catherine 'resembles autistic individuals who lack a Theory of Mind mechanism, and like them, she is easily deceived and manipulated by unscrupulous individuals' (p. 39). For a reading of Catherine as possessing a strong sense of self, attributed to the influence of Lockean philosophical principles in Austen's writing, see Jocelyn Harris, *Jane Austen's Art of Memory*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989).

to resolve such conflict in the future. They may develop an intention to repudiate the kinds of manipulative behaviour displayed by the Thorpes and James, and proceed instead to allow other people to make their own choices according to their own desires and values. This is a learning process for the reader and, whether or not Austen intended it to be, possibly even a therapeutic one.

In the Introduction to this thesis, I reflect on my perception that Austen's writing may engender a therapeutic transformation in the reader by 'intangling' them in characters' situations and dilemmas rather than by delivering lessons through more didactic means.²⁵⁰ The fact that Austen unfolds the scene in question almost in real time suggests that she intended readers to feel emotionally involved while Catherine experiences the event. Catherine's tension and distress increase so gradually and intensely that by the time she finally breaks free from her companions the reader can hardly help but experience great relief with and for her. It is through the deep engagement with this scenario that Austen's technique induces that readers' self-awareness may be enhanced, and their behaviour affected accordingly. One may observe the same method of 'intangling' in *Mansfield Park* as Fanny Price maintains her refusal to marry Henry Crawford in the face of multiple appeals, aggressive threats and passive-aggressive ploys over the course of six chapters.²⁵¹ This lengthy exposition extends from the moment of Henry's proposal to her after having informed her of his efforts in the interests of her brother's promotion, thus passive-aggressively 'conferring an obligation, which no want of delicacy on his part could make a trifle to her', to Sir Thomas Bertram's final aggressive 'medicinal project upon his niece's understanding', that of sending her back to her parents' home in Portsmouth where 'a little abstinence from the elegancies and luxuries of Mansfield Park, would bring her mind to a sober state'.²⁵² Therapeutic intent or otherwise on Austen's part notwithstanding, the possession or otherwise of self-aware autonomy and concomitant issues of communication and relationships with other people are clearly important

²⁵⁰ I refer here to Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin*, p. x.

²⁵¹ *Mansfield Park*, II:13 to III:6.

²⁵² *Mansfield Park*, II:13, 248 and III:6, 425.

aspects of human psychology and behaviour for Austen, and one that she seemingly wished readers to explore and consider in great depth and detail.

In my analysis above of Catherine Morland's behaviour, I illustrate ways in which Austen reveals Catherine's high level of personal autonomy through both the words and the actions of the character, and I draw attention especially to Catherine's verbal self-reflection in this respect. This element of Austen's portrayal is significant from a psychotherapeutic perspective since a person's autonomy is not necessarily discerned most effectively by the scrutiny of a person's behaviour, but rather through insight gained into the intent or internal psychological process that underlies that behaviour.

My primary focus in the next two sections of this chapter is on *Pride and Prejudice*, with particular attention to Charlotte Lucas and Lady Catherine de Bourgh. I propose that my reading of Charlotte and Lady Catherine contributes to existing critiques with a more nuanced, and in some respects quite different interpretation of these two characters. From an empathetic and non-judgmental psychotherapeutic viewpoint, Charlotte emerges as a character whose ultimate contentment rests on her high level of self-aware autonomy in spite of her apparent submission to external pressures, while Lady Catherine, who imposes social conventions on others and demands the submission of others to her own will, manifests all of the painful inner discomfort and anxiety that a Rogerian therapeutic approach would predict from one who lacks autonomy. Thus, I perceive each of these characters to be both more complex in themselves and more important to the psychological impact of the novel as a whole than commentators have so far recorded. I begin with my analysis of Charlotte in the following section.

3.2. Charlotte Lucas marries Mr. Collins

If an individual's actions were to be judged to be autonomous only when the individual behaves contrary to external expectations and demands, then it is easy to identify Elizabeth Bennet's refusal to marry Mr. Collins, against all social, economic and maternal pressure to accept him, as an autonomous act. In the same light, Charlotte Lucas' acceptance of Mr. Collins would be evidence of

Charlotte's heteronomy since her decision is apparently motivated purely by social and economic considerations, regardless of her own personal lack of attraction to or affection for him. Such an evaluation of the heteronomous nature of Charlotte's actions is supported to some extent by Austen's use of free indirect speech to produce a near-authorial comment on marriage as 'the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune' (I:22, 138). It is not only economically pragmatic for Charlotte to accept Mr. Collins, it is also the only socially morally correct course of action for Charlotte to take. The pragmatism of Charlotte's engagement to Mr. Collins is the focus of Ruth Perry's discussion of the implications of the marriage with regard to the necessity for Charlotte to engage in sexual relations with a husband whom she neither desires nor even particularly likes. Perry concludes that, while one might abhor Charlotte's decision on the grounds of the presumably unwelcome sexual element of the marriage, since Elizabeth Bennet finds her friend to be surprisingly content at Hunsford, 'we are not allowed to imagine that Charlotte Lucas has allowed her "excellent understanding" to lapse.'²⁵³ There is no implication here that, over and above Charlotte's pragmatism, her decision to marry Mr. Collins is an autonomous one. However, from Perry's viewpoint, the comfortable outcome for Charlotte of the marriage justifies the means and vindicates the character's intelligence.

Other critics have cast a less forgiving light on Charlotte's seeming lack of autonomy. For example, Mudrick categorises Charlotte as one of Austen's 'simple people' who lack self-awareness and are incapable of choice. As a result, Mudrick judges the character's decision to accept Mr. Collins to be degrading.²⁵⁴ In a similar vein, Wendy Craik writes that 'Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins shows that her moral sense is deficient', and describes the character as an 'acute and rational person warped into moral irresponsibility [...] by

²⁵³ See Ruth Perry, 'Sleeping with Mr. Collins', in *Jane Austen and Co.: Remaking the Past in Contemporary Culture*, ed. by Suzanne R. Pucci and James Thompson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 213-228 (p. 214). Perry's chapter first published as an article in *PERSUASIONS*, 22 (2000), pp. 119-135

<<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number22/perry.htm>> [accessed 12.10.16].

²⁵⁴ Mudrick writes, 'Under pressure Charlotte denies her choice while making it, degrades herself to the level of a fool in marrying one'. See *Irony as Defense and Discovery*, p. 123. In the Introduction to this thesis I note that Mudrick places Lady Catherine de Bourgh too in the category of the 'simple people'.

materialism'.²⁵⁵ Katie Trumpener goes as far as to see Charlotte as a tragic figure, identifying the character as an exemplar of 'the understated, unsentimental thread of tragedy in Austen's work: [...] married to a fool to be married at all'.²⁵⁶ A yet more condemnatory critique of Charlotte is presented by Tiffany Potter who draws on Seth Grahame-Smith's portrayal of Charlotte as a stricken zombie in his novel *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* to illustrate her perception of the character.²⁵⁷ She writes:

Austen's most heartbreaking depiction of marriage [...] has always been that endured by Charlotte Lucas, who accepts a marriage to the obsequious social striver Mr. Collins because she knows that she has a social script to follow, and she dares to imagine for herself 'only a comfortable home'. [...]. Charlotte's sacrifice to unmentionable social and economic demands is reconsidered in Grahame-Smith's adaptation where Charlotte marries Collins because she knows that she has been 'stricken' and will soon become ill herself. With nothing to lose, Charlotte chooses to combine the metaphorical death-in-life of an obviously bad marriage with the literal living death of a zombie.²⁵⁸

Grahame-Smith's depiction of Charlotte's loss of her dignity and even of her humanity in her marriage to Mr. Collins is gross and disgusting, and Potter considers his description of the character's gradual decay to be a metaphor that aptly reflects her view of Charlotte as a woman who is 'bound by conventions of conduct: what can be done and said and what cannot', and who subjects herself to a loveless marriage for purely economic and socio-political reasons.²⁵⁹

More recently, Woodruff Smith presents a similar, albeit less disturbingly illustrated view of Charlotte's apparent heteronomy in the light of

²⁵⁵ W. A. Craik, *Jane Austen: The Six Novels* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1965), pp. 65 and 77.

²⁵⁶ Katie Trumpener, 'The Virago Jane Austen', in Deidre Lynch, ed., *Janeites: Austen's Disciples and Devotees* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 140-165 (p. 157).

²⁵⁷ Tiffany Potter, 'Historicising the Popular and the Feminine', in *Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Tiffany Potter (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 17-28. Potter refers to Seth Grahame-Smith, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2009).

²⁵⁸ Potter, pp. 17-18.

²⁵⁹ Potter, p. 16. Potter's quote from *Pride and Prejudice* is taken from the scene in which Charlotte explains to Elizabeth her motivations for accepting Mr. Collins' proposal, see *Pride and Prejudice*, I:22, 140. I discuss Potter's interpretation of Charlotte's words below in the current section.

a nineteenth-century 'map of respectability' which 'regularly favours the route of moral autonomy over economic rationality when the two are clear alternatives'.²⁶⁰ From this point of view, Smith perceives that Austen portrays a lack of respectability in Charlotte as the character prioritises the attainment of financial security over adherence to autonomous choice, while Elizabeth Bennet remains respectable by virtue of her refusal to do likewise. Smith further reflects on the incorporation in the nineteenth century of the ideal of self-respect within the concept of respectability, and concludes that Charlotte sacrifices her self-respect as well as her morality and respectability in her acceptance of Mr. Collins. In this regard I note Smith's comment on Charlotte's fear that she will lose the good opinion of Elizabeth, 'whose rejection of Charlotte would injure her self-regard', all of which serves to magnify the character's loss of morality and sense of self-worth.²⁶¹

As I state above, Austen's reference to marriage as 'the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune' lends some weight to critiques which perceive Charlotte as heteronomous, and a reading from a psychotherapeutic perspective would concur with critics' assumption that a marriage choice based on heteronomous motivations would be likely to result in unhappiness for the character (although, as I clarify below, not with their consequently negative judgements on the character's morality or worth). Yet, economic practicality and social morality are not the only reasons that Austen gives for Charlotte's actions. Austen identifies another motivating factor behind the character's acceptance of Mr. Collins: Charlotte states, "I am not romantic you know. I never was." With these two brief statements the author shows that the character is acting entirely with self-awareness and in accord with her own nature and values. Charlotte continues with, "I ask only a comfortable home" (I:22, 140). There is no suggestion in her concise explanation that she would take the same step to attain her desired home even if her nature *had* been romantic. Therefore, for me, Charlotte's brief statement reveals the character's decision to be an autonomous one. I should re-emphasise at this point the

²⁶⁰ Woodruff D. Smith, *Respectability as Moral Map and Public Discourse in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2018), p. 13.

²⁶¹ Smith, *Respectability as Moral Map*, p. 13.

central principle of the non-judgmental approach within modern-day psychotherapy, which holds that there is no measure of moral worth attached either to autonomy or to the lack of autonomy. Rather, the value of autonomy lies in the psychological wellbeing that the autonomous state confers on an individual, and in the potential for personal development that the self-awareness inherent within the autonomous state enables for the individual. As I proceed to clarify my views on the self-aware autonomy that I identify in the character of Charlotte, and the importance that I perceive Austen to attach to it, my intention is not to defend the character's moral standing on account of her autonomy, but to illuminate further the aspects of modern psychotherapeutic conceptions with which Austen's character portrayals resonate.

There are two key points that I would highlight with respect to the issue of Charlotte Lucas' autonomy. The first relates to Woodruff Smith's reflection cited above on Charlotte's fear of losing Elizabeth's approval of her, since this would 'injure her *self-regard*'. Certainly, Austen states that for Charlotte, 'The least agreeable circumstance in the business, was the surprise it must occasion to Elizabeth Bennet, whose friendship she valued beyond that of any other person', and furthermore that Charlotte realises that Elizabeth would be likely to judge her harshly (I:22, 138). However, I perceive a distinct parallel between the way in which Austen illustrates Charlotte's autonomous response to this dilemma and the author's demonstration of Catherine Morland's autonomy during the carriage-ride refusal scenario that I explore, above. Austen registers Charlotte's discomfort at the potential loss of Elizabeth's affection just as she notes Catherine's distress in response to the disapproval of her friends and brother. However, like Catherine, Charlotte's resolve remains firm. In the face of Elizabeth's outrage, even though Charlotte experiences 'a momentary confusion', she quickly composes herself, and carefully and concisely attempts to reassure Elizabeth. Again, like Catherine, Charlotte knows her own nature, she knows what her own values are, and she will sacrifice neither to gain the approval of another person, not even that of her dearest friend. By this reading, Charlotte's fear is not that Elizabeth's disapproval will undermine her self-regard, but that it will damage the close relationship between them. Far from

indicating Charlotte's heteronomy, the fact that the character experiences such an anxiety and still maintains her position attests to the strength of her autonomy.²⁶²

The second point that I observe with regard to Charlotte's autonomy is the voice in which Austen relates the self-awareness that underpins that autonomy. I note above that Austen presents the socio-economic justifications for Charlotte's acceptance of Mr. Collins in the near-authorial voice of free indirect speech. However, when Charlotte discloses to Elizabeth the news of her engagement, both Charlotte and Elizabeth are focused on the central concern of Charlotte's individual personal happiness. In this context it is in direct speech that Austen expresses Charlotte's assertion that she is not and never was romantic. This produces a more alive and intimate conveyance of Charlotte's personal self-knowledge, and the self-aware and self-evaluative autonomy that drives her behaviour, and the reader may gauge the congruence of her reflections by attending to both verbal and non-verbal cues at first hand. The composed, articulate and self-assured way in which Charlotte tells Elizabeth of her wishes and intent substantiates a key point of this scene which is that the outward appearance of conformity of Charlotte's decision does not negate the fact that Charlotte's acceptance of Mr. Collins' proposal to her is a self-aware, autonomous choice on her part.

Despite the clues to Charlotte's self-aware autonomy that I discuss above, for the most part critics interpret Charlotte's choice as heteronomous and conclude that therefore the character deserves pity, censure, or both. The role of Elizabeth as a mediator of response to Charlotte's marriage suggests that Austen not only expected this reaction, but also intended to elicit responses of this kind from her readers so that she might lead them to explore the subtler aspects of autonomy. My view here is that Austen employs the character of Elizabeth to illustrate, and thus to model, a gradual shift in response to

²⁶² I note in the Introduction to this thesis Alan Richardson's recommendation to bear in mind possible influences on Austen's work. Here I perceive that Charlotte's stance encompasses an aspect of Dr. John Gregory's advice to his daughters in Gregory, *Legacy to His Daughters*. Gregory writes, 'In matters of business, follow the advice of those who know better than yourselves, and in whose integrity you can confide: but, in matters of taste, that depend on your own feelings, consult no one friend whatever, but consult your own hearts' (p. 184).

Charlotte's course of action from appalled disgust to a more open-minded and non-judgmental acceptance. To begin with, Elizabeth persists in her conviction that Charlotte has 'sacrificed every better feeling' despite Charlotte's reassurance that her decision is comfortably in line with her own personality and desires (I:22, 141). Elizabeth is able to comprehend Charlotte's acceptance of Mr. Collins only from the perspective of her own personal value system at this point. Elizabeth herself would have to sacrifice her feelings in order to marry Mr. Collins, thus, regardless of Charlotte's measured and dignified explanations, Elizabeth cannot help but see her friend as having disgraced herself. I observe that Elizabeth's initial reactions are reflected in Tiffany Potter's patent resistance to Charlotte's clear statement of her natural wish for a home. Where Charlotte states, "I ask only a comfortable home", Potter reads that a comfortable home is all that Charlotte 'dares to imagine for herself', as I quote above. Interestingly too, in the 2005 cinematic adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, the character of Charlotte states "We can't all afford to be romantic" in place of Austen's "I am not romantic you know".²⁶³ In each of these examples the distortion of Austen's words and meaning negates the author's actual depiction of Charlotte as autonomous in ways that bring to mind Freudian defence mechanisms such as denial and projection.²⁶⁴

Austen then employs two strategies to direct Elizabeth towards a view of Charlotte that recognises the autonomy of that character's actions, and to encourage Elizabeth to take a less self-centeredly judgmental view of her friend. First, Jane Bennet counters Elizabeth's complaints about Charlotte's behaviour with: "My dear Lizzie, do not give way to such feelings as these. You do not make allowance enough for difference of situation and temper." As Jane continues to refer to Charlotte's 'prudence' and 'steady character' she indicates clearly that, from a different perspective, Charlotte has abandoned nothing of

²⁶³ *Pride and Prejudice*, dir. by Joe Wright (Focus Features, Universal, Working Title Films, 2005).

²⁶⁴ See John Wiltshire, *Recreating Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) for an in-depth exploration of novel and screen adaptations of Austen's work from a psychoanalytic point of view. Wiltshire writes, 'I consider the various versions of the novels not as piracies, but – all things considered – as coherent readings of the original books, which by their public, objective existence, can throw unique light on the process of reading', (p. 7). Wiltshire draws attention to instances of sublimation and projection, amongst other Freudian defence mechanisms, in the recreations of Austen's novels that he discusses.

her own character in her acceptance of Mr. Collins (II:1, 153).²⁶⁵ Like Catherine Morland who remains sweet-tempered even though she refuses to capitulate to her brother and friends, Charlotte remains 'sensible and intelligent' notwithstanding her apparently misguided determination to marry Mr. Collins (I:5, 19).²⁶⁶ Then, Elizabeth visits Charlotte at Hunsford and finds that her friend is surprisingly 'cheerful'. She is struck by 'Charlotte's evident enjoyment' of the comfort of her home, and finally is brought to 'meditate upon Charlotte's degree of contentment, to understand her address in guiding, and composure in bearing with her husband, and to acknowledge that it was all done very well' (II:5, 177-179). Elizabeth is persuaded at last that she was mistaken to evaluate Charlotte's decision in the light of her own wishes and values. The change in Elizabeth's attitude is firmly established for the reader when she encounters Mr. Darcy's slightly mocking tone in relation Mr. Collins' good fortune in his marriage to Charlotte. Now Elizabeth practically echoes her sister Jane's earlier reflections on Charlotte's marriage as she credits Charlotte with "excellent understanding", and acknowledges without reservation: "She seems perfectly happy [...], and seen in a prudential light, it is certainly a very good match for her" (II:9, 200). Thus, Austen brings Elizabeth's views around a full circle. In so doing she not only restores Elizabeth's faith in her friend for story-telling purposes, she also communicates to her readers a process whereby they might re-calibrate their own understanding of the meaning of autonomy with the recognition that the expression of autonomy may take different yet equally valid forms.

I turn now to Lady Catherine. From a Rogerian perspective, in complete contrast to Charlotte, Lady Catherine is deeply heteronomous despite her ability to impose her will on others and, as a result, experiences a needful anxiety which is quite the opposite of Rousseau's 'sentiment of contentment,

²⁶⁵ It is interesting to recall here Austen's widely recorded withdrawal of her acceptance of the marriage proposal made to her by Harris Bigg in 1802 once she had reflected on her lack of love for him, and her letter to her niece Fanny in which she warns 'Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection', *Letters*, 109, 18th - 20th November 1814, pp. 290-294, (p. 292). Austen reflects her own personal values in Elizabeth's position, and simultaneously demonstrates through Jane Bennet her non-judgemental acceptance of the authenticity and validity of the very different set of values manifested by Charlotte.

²⁶⁶ Austen describes Charlotte as 'sensible and intelligent' when she first introduces the character early in the novel.

and of peace which alone would suffice to make this existence sweet and dear'.²⁶⁷

3.3. Lady Catherine de Bourgh: authority without autonomy

Lady Catherine has most commonly been viewed as a character whose unpleasant nature is exaggerated to the point of caricature for comic effect. It is also noteworthy that critiques of Lady Catherine invariably link the character with Mr. Collins, as though the two were to be seen as a comic duo with neither having any individual significance. For example, Reginald Farrer writes, 'As for Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine, whom some are ungrateful enough to call caricatures, it must definitely be said that they are figures of fun, indeed', rescued from becoming farcical by 'a youthful sheer delight in their absurdity which gives to them an objective ebullience not to be found in more richly comic studies such as Lady Bertram and Mr. Woodhouse'.²⁶⁸ For Reuben Brower, Lady Catherine and Mr. Collins are 'the 'fools' which [...] are indispensable for any piece of fiction.'²⁶⁹ Somerset Maugham also views the two characters closely together in his observation: 'There is perhaps some exaggeration in the drawing of Lady Catherine and Mr. Collins, but to my mind little more than comedy allows', as does D. W. Harding whose observation: 'Lady Catherine in the shrubbery, forbidding Elizabeth to become engaged to Darcy, touches the heights of caricature for us' follows immediately from his note about readers' view of Mr. Collins as a caricature.²⁷⁰ Thus, critiques have commonly regarded Lady Catherine and Mr. Collins to be practically inseparable as comedic characters.

Where Lady Catherine has attracted significant attention in her own right, the character's 'caricatured' imperiousness and arrogance has been interpreted as a manifestation of Austen's dislike and contempt for her. Harding is one critic who takes this view as he writes: 'one of Jane Austen's most

²⁶⁷ See citation above in this chapter.

²⁶⁸ Reginald Farrer, 'Jane Austen', *The Quarterly Review*, 228:452 (July 1917), 1-30 (pp. 17-18).

²⁶⁹ Reuben Arthur Brower, *The Fields of Light: An Experiment in Critical Reading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 174.

²⁷⁰ W. Somerset Maugham, 'Jane Austen and *Pride and Prejudice*', in *A Truth Universally Acknowledged: 33 Reasons Why We Can't Stop Reading Jane Austen*, ed. by Susannah Carson (London: Penguin Group Particular Books, 2009), pp. 70-82 (p. 80). D. W. Harding, 'Character and Caricature in Jane Austen', in Southam, ed., *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*, pp. 83-105 (p. 89).

successful methods is to offer her readers every excuse for regarding as rather exaggerated figures of fun people whom she herself detests and fears.²⁷¹ This is the stance taken by Gilbert and Gubar in their highly influential work.²⁷² For these critics, women writers in the nineteenth century presented 'Images of enclosure and escape, fantasies in which maddened doubles functioned as asocial surrogates for docile selves'.²⁷³ In other words, according to Gilbert and Gubar, women writers of that time wished to rebel against the patriarchy within which they were confined and to express their rebelliousness both in the act of writing and in its content; however they could not escape their deeply ingrained willingness to conform to the expectations of the patriarchal paradigm and their desire to be accepted within it.

Gilbert and Gubar observe that, to resolve this dissonance, these writers invoked female characters who could behave in ways, or take positions, that were contrary to those permitted by society, and at the same time rendered those characters either hateful or 'maddened' by their aberrance from the social norms. Further, they placed these aberrant characters in immediate juxtaposition with other female characters whose position and demeanour would educate and encourage women readers to accept their allotted place and duties. Gilbert and Gubar place Austen firmly in this category of women writers, along with Maria Edgeworth, as they state:

We can see Austen struggling after *Northanger Abbey* to combine her implicitly rebellious vision with an explicitly decorous form as she follows Miss Edgeworth's example and writes in order to make herself useful, justifying her presumptuous attempts at the pen by inspiring other women with respect for the moral and social responsibilities of their social duties.²⁷⁴

With regard to the character of Lady Catherine in particular, they write:

²⁷¹ See D.W. Harding, 'Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen', *Scrutiny*, VIII:4 (March 1940), 346-362, p. 352.

²⁷² Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1984). See also Kaplan, *Jane Austen Among Women* (1994).

²⁷³ Gilbert and Gubar, p. xi.

²⁷⁴ Gilbert and Gubar, p. 153.

Opposed to the very basis of patriarchy, the exclusive rights of male inheritance, Lady Catherine quite predictably earns the vilification always allotted by the author to matriarchal power. She is shown to be arrogant, officious, egotistical and rude as she patronises all the other characters in the novel.²⁷⁵

Thus, Gilbert and Gubar perceive the unpleasantness of Lady Catherine's personality to be an inevitable and foreseeable outcome of Austen's wish to express her own subversive opinions and her simultaneous compulsion to be seen to reject and deride those views and thus engender similar detestation and scorn for the character in her readers.²⁷⁶

It would be difficult to disagree with Gilbert and Gubar's portrayal of the way in which Lady Catherine behaves towards others throughout *Pride and Prejudice*. However, I would argue that the nature of Lady Catherine's character is not intended to reflect any deep distaste on Austen's part for Lady Catherine's matriarchal power, nor is it a warning against it on a social gender-political level. I perceive that the way that Austen conducted her own life, and the reactions that she ascribes to her key female characters to the constraints of their dependence on men, make her frustration with the enforced submission of women to patriarchal dominance quite evident. Thus I concur with commentators such as Margaret Kirkham, who consider that Austen was in sympathy with the 'rational feminism of the Enlightenment' and that she shared many of the political views expressed by Mary Wollstonecraft.²⁷⁷ However, I observe an even greater affinity between Austen and Wollstonecraft in the

²⁷⁵ Gilbert and Gubar, p. 172. The reference here is to Lady Catherine's rejection of the inevitability of inheritance of estates through the male line: 'Lady Catherine then observed, "Your father's estate is entailed on Mr. Collins, I think. For your sake," turning to Charlotte, "I am glad of it; but otherwise I see no occasion for entailing estates from the female line"' (*Pride and Prejudice*, II:6, 185).

²⁷⁶ As I state in the Introduction to this thesis, Gilbert and Gubar's view is shared by Deborah Kaplan who perceives Austen to employ 'qualifying strategies' to obviate 'unrestrained' or 'unconventional' behaviour in her female characters, see Kaplan, *Jane Austen Among Women*, p. 190. For Kaplan, Lady Catherine's social status and arrogance, and Elizabeth Bennet's 'aggressive' style of communication only when in the company of men, place these characters outside the community of women.

²⁷⁷ Margaret Kirkham, *Jane Austen: Feminism and Fiction* (London: The Athlone Press, 1997), p. xii. See also Claudia Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*, and Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen*. I refer to Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, and A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, (1792), edn. ed. by Janet Todd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

context of Wollstonecraft's rebuff to Rousseau's caution that to increase women's knowledge and intellectual rigour would diminish their power over men.²⁷⁸ Of her intention for the empowerment of women by means of education, Wollstonecraft states, 'I do not wish them to have power over men, but over themselves'.²⁷⁹ In this brief and simple assertion, Wollstonecraft presaged a (if not *the*) core principle underlying modern models of personal development: self-empowerment.

For Wollstonecraft, the primary requirement for all effective human functioning and interaction, for men as well as for women, in both intimate and wider social relationships, was mastery over the self. I consider that this is the position that Austen takes, as Auerbach reflects:

Without ever writing a line of political treatise as Wollstonecraft had done, Austen offers an equally revolutionary argument for educating both men and women to be whole human beings. Only then can they live in harmony and fulfilment.²⁸⁰

From this perspective, the nature of Lady Catherine does not manifest a complex internal psychological conflict within Austen, but rather serves to illustrate Austen's perceptions of what it means to be a 'whole human being', and what it means not to be so.²⁸¹ To understand Austen's characterisation of Lady Catherine, we need therefore to look in a more subtle and nuanced way at how Austen portrays the character herself on an individual level. From this viewpoint, in *Lady Catherine*, Austen shows that it is possible to possess a great capacity to wield authority and at the same time entirely to lack individual personal autonomy. The pain that Lady Catherine experiences at the end of the novel, and, I would suggest, throughout, attests to Austen's perception that,

²⁷⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile ou de L'éducation* (1762). See *Emile or Treatise on Education*, transl. by William H. Payne (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1926), and Denise Shaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom and Judgement* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014).

²⁷⁹ Wollstonecraft, p. 133.

²⁸⁰ Auerbach, in *Jane Austen: New Edition*, p. 266.

²⁸¹ While I focus primarily on the female characters within Austen's novels in this thesis, it is important to note the reciprocity with which Austen's male and female characters enable one another's personal development towards greater 'wholeness'. Kirkham emphasises this point as she writes of Austen's 'careful balance' in her portrayal of the influence that her male and female characters have on each other. See Kirkham, *Jane Austen: Feminism and Fiction*, p. 40.

over and above any social, economic or political constraints, it is lack of personal autonomy, to not be 'whole' as a human being, that has the potential to lead to the greatest emotional suffering. In this I observe again a close affinity between Austen's recognition of the centrality of autonomy to a person's well-being and the conceptualisation of autonomy that underpins Rogers' Client-Centered model of psychotherapy.

I begin my discussion of Lady Catherine in this respect with an overview of the way in which Austen introduces the character. I then look more closely at Lady Catherine in comparison with Elizabeth Bennet, since Austen's juxtaposition of the two characters serves to illuminate Lady Catherine's lack of autonomy and the implications of that state on her psychological and emotional well-being. It is interesting also to examine Lady Catherine's behaviour in the light of that of Mr. Darcy. Although the two characters occupy comparable social and economic positions, they conduct themselves very differently. This serves to demonstrate that Lady Catherine's behaviour is a function of her character rather than of her status.

Austen makes the nature of Lady Catherine's character clear to the reader long before she appears in person. Austen introduces both Lady Catherine and Mr. Collins in Chapter 13 of Volume I in the letter from Mr. Collins to Mr. Bennet in which he proposes his first visit to the Bennet family at Longbourn. Mr. Collins describes himself in this letter as 'distinguished by the patronage of the Right Honourable Lady Catherine de Bourgh' (I:13, 70). Mr. Collins' use of Lady Catherine's full title makes very clear to readers as well as to the Bennets that Mr. Collins considers that deference is due to Lady Catherine on account of her elevated social status. Mr. Collins strongly implies that this deference should be paid to Lady Catherine not only by himself but by others too when, without an enquiry as to the suitability of the dates of his visit to those upon whose hospitality he will impose, he assures Mr. Bennet that he will be able to visit Longbourn without any inconvenience as Lady Catherine would not object to his absence. Thus, along with the residents of Longbourn, readers are left in no doubt that Lady Catherine is a woman who is accustomed to having her wishes considered as the highest priority.

This impression is reinforced when Mr. Collins arrives on the scene and refers repeatedly to the grandeur of Lady Catherine's estate, to the demands that she places on his conduct, and to his unquestioning obedience to her every whim. He interprets Lady Catherine's dominance over him as 'affability and condescension', and uses the words 'condescended to' to describe his impression of Lady Catherine's interference in personal aspects of his life. It is interesting to highlight the ambiguity in the eighteenth-century meaning of the words 'condescension' and 'condescend' with which Austen patently engages here. Johnson defines 'condescension' as 'voluntary humiliation, descent from superiority', and 'to condescend' as 'to depart from the privileges of superiority by voluntary submissions, to sink willingly to equal terms with inferiors, to soothe with familiarity'.²⁸² Clearly, these are the admirable characteristics that Mr. Collins wishes to convey of Lady Catherine. However, in *Rambler*, the word 'condescensions' is used to denote a belittling and disdainful attitude, and thus to convey the more pejorative connotation of the word that we now nearly exclusively apply to the term.²⁸³ Thus, with the use of just this one concept, Austen simultaneously substantiates the unpleasantness of Lady Catherine, and shows Mr. Collins to unwittingly establish her officiousness while he himself is oblivious to it. This multi-layered presentation of the two characters informs my closer analysis of the relationship between them later in this section. For now, I note that it is not until Chapter 6 of Volume II that we eventually meet Lady Catherine during Elizabeth Bennet's first visit to Charlotte and Mr Collins in the company of Charlotte's young sister Maria and father, Sir William Lucas.

²⁸² Johnson, *Dictionary*, p. 234.

²⁸³ Johnson describes possible responses to a friend who has become newly wealthy: 'when he is received with ceremony, distance and respect are inculcated; if he is treated with familiarity, he concludes himself insulted by condescensions', *Rambler*, 4:172 (Nov 1751), p. 66. Further, in correspondence to 'Mr. Rambler', we find: 'my old friend receiving me with all the insolence of condescension at the top of the stairs, conducted me to a back room, where he told me he always breakfasted when he had not great company', *Rambler*, 4:200 (Feb 1752), p. 205. See Lawrence Lipking, *Samuel Johnson: The Life of an Author* (Cambridge, Mass., & London: Harvard University Press, 1998) and Freya Johnston, *Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking 1709-1781* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) for further discussions of this point. The *OED* has both the positive definition of 'to condescend': 'To come down or bend, so far as a particular action is concerned, from one's position of dignity or pride; to stoop voluntarily and graciously; to deign', as well as the negative connotation: '*Now*, usually, Making a show, or assuming the air, of condescension; patronising' (*OED's italics*). There seems to be little doubt that the negative definition is, as Freya Johnston notes, 'recognizably on Lady Catherine's turf'; see Johnston, p. 187.

The length of time that Austen takes to develop our sense of Lady Catherine is significant. The author deliberately and carefully establishes the character's reputation over sixteen chapters through further accounts delivered by Mr Collins, and by Mr Wickham who describes the character to Elizabeth as 'dictatorial and insolent' (I:16, 94). Thus, at the point at which the party approaches Rosings, we are not surprised to read that, 'Such formidable accounts of her Ladyship, and her manner of living, quite frightened Maria Lucas', and that, 'When they ascended the steps to the hall, Maria's alarm was every moment increasing, and even Sir William did not look perfectly calm'.²⁸⁴ However, as the group arrive at the entrance to the house, Austen turns our attention to Elizabeth and, through that character's reactions, suggests that a response other than apprehension might be more appropriate:

Elizabeth's courage did not fail her. She had heard nothing of Lady Catherine that spoke her awful from any extraordinary talents or miraculous virtue, and the mere stateliness of money and rank, she thought she could witness without trepidation. (II:6, 182)

Here the purpose of Austen's prolonged build-up of readers' impression of Lady Catherine becomes clear. The wry humour that Austen conjures with the juxtaposition of the words 'mere' and 'stateliness', and of both with the word, 'trepidation', provides a succinct and effective counterpoint to the anxiety that the author has developed over the several chapters that lead up to this visit. The amusement with which Austen explains Elizabeth's position makes any unquestioning fearfulness of Lady Catherine due solely to her wealth and hierarchical position appear, after all, to be a little ridiculous. It is natural to be drawn into a sense of awe when confronted with a vision of such immense wealth and so apparently powerful a character. Yet Austen plainly questions the validity of that almost instinctive response when, within the same sentence, she compares the respect-worthiness of external signifiers of status such as 'money and rank', with that of internal qualities which she clearly deems to be more worthy of appreciation and esteem.

²⁸⁴ Freya Johnston's observation regarding 'a figurative sense of superiority manifesting itself in physical elevation' is apt here. See Johnston, p. 187.

That said, I perceive that the few lines in question above have yet greater significance in that they represent more generally that which we know and do not know about Lady Catherine. We know *what* Lady Catherine is. She is an aristocrat, the owner of a great estate, and she is domineering and imperious in her relationships with others. All that we know of the character is in the externality of the trappings associated with her status and the arrogance of her behaviour which is sanctioned by that status. However, we do not know *who* Lady Catherine is. We have no insight into that character's internal psychological or emotional life. We have no idea of what Lady Catherine thinks, or of what moves her, or what her personal values are. We have very clear revelations of what others think of her and how they respond to her 'stateliness of money and rank', however we do not know how she herself feels about that social and financial position or about the way she interacts with others. We have no sense of the degree to which her style of living and manner accord with the person she wishes herself to be and how she would like to live her life, as distinct from the impression and impact that her lifestyle and behaviour make on other people. For example, we are given no indication as to whether Lady Catherine derives any inner joy from the luxurious comforts of her home, or even just pleasure from her beautiful surroundings that is independent of other people's admiration or appreciation of them.

There is no question that it is to the inner psychological workings and emotionality of her major characters that Austen gives her readers greatest access.²⁸⁵ However, in this thesis I illustrate ways in which Austen explores and reveals the deeper natures of more minor characters, for example, up to this point, Mrs. Dashwood and Charlotte Lucas, and in a later section of this chapter, *Persuasion's* Mrs. Smith. So the fact that we have no knowledge at all of the internality of a character whose presence is palpable throughout the novel is meaningful, and, for me, is the crux of Austen's presentation of, and purpose for, the character of Lady Catherine. The lack of any mention of Lady Catherine's inner self suggests an absence, or at least a paucity of self-generated inner life.

²⁸⁵ See Hardy, *A Reading of Jane Austen*, and Wood, *The Broken Estate* for discussions on this point.

Of course, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and the fact that we are not shown any aspect of Lady Catherine's experience of her own inner self cannot necessarily be taken as evidence that she has no such experience. However, as I demonstrate below, as we watch Lady Catherine in action and observe the character's relationship with herself and her interactions with other people at first hand, it becomes clear that the reason we know only what, and not who Lady Catherine is, is because Lady Catherine herself knows only what but not who she is. She understands herself only in relation to her social status and other people's responses to her insofar as these relate to her position of authority and her ability to impose her will upon them. This characterisation is the essence of Mudrick's and Woloch's assessments of Lady Catherine. However, from a psychotherapeutic perspective, Lady Catherine's dependency for her sense of self on other people's validation of her social and economic position renders her neither simple as Mudrick suggests, nor comic, as Woloch observes.²⁸⁶ The psychotherapeutic view would agree on principle with Mudrick that we cannot submit Lady Catherine to moral judgement because she is unaware and has 'only the illusion of choice'.²⁸⁷ However, this does not mean that she does not warrant more in-depth analysis of any kind.²⁸⁸ Secondly, from a Rogerian Client-Centered standpoint, Lady Catherine's lack of self-aware autonomy is hardly cause for amusement as this heteronomous state will be a constant source of anxiety and unhappiness for her. I demonstrate below the ways in which Austen shows this to be the case for Lady Catherine and explain how this leads to my reading of the character as one who should engender an element of compassion, much as her superficial behaviour is amusingly distasteful. First, I explore some aspects of Austen's presentation of Elizabeth as an autonomous individual since Elizabeth's rich internal life serves to highlight Lady Catherine's lack of the same.

²⁸⁶ Mudrick, *Irony as Defense and Discovery*; Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*.

²⁸⁷ Mudrick, p. 123.

²⁸⁸ I would apply this point to all the characters whom Mudrick judges to be 'simple', such as Mrs. Bennet, Lydia, Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley, as well as those from other Austen novels whom one might place in the same category as Lady Catherine in terms of that character's lack of self-awareness, for example Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram, Sir Walter Elliot, Mrs. Elton, Mrs. Ferrars and General Tilney.

Austen provides the reader with many examples of situations in which Elizabeth's emotions and behaviour emerge as expressions of her own self-generated, deeply held values, in other words, as manifestations of her autonomy. These are revealed most powerfully in her refusals.²⁸⁹ However, it is equally possible to perceive the vitality and influence of Elizabeth's inner self by noting other occasions on which Austen shows her, in different ways, to act determinedly according to her personal values rather than yield to the expectations of others or seek to win their approval.

We see it, for example, when Elizabeth receives news that Jane Bennet has become ill during Jane's first visit to Netherfield Park. This scene highlights the authenticity of Elizabeth's love and care for Jane and her desire to act on those feelings, regardless of the impression such action may make on others. The author describes Elizabeth as 'feeling really anxious', and it is this emotion that arises purely from Elizabeth's internal and individual valuing of her sister, and nothing else, that drives her resolution to walk to Netherfield to see Jane. The exchange that results between Elizabeth and her mother serves to establish Elizabeth's primary motivation, not only in this instance but in all others that follow in the novel:

"How can you be so silly", cried her mother, "as to think of such a thing, in all this dirt! You will not be fit to be seen when you get there."

"I shall be very fit to see Jane—which is all I want."

This succinct interaction delineates perfectly the distinction between heteronomous and autonomous responses to a situation. Mrs Bennet's attention is entirely upon how other people might judge the condition of Elizabeth's dress when she arrives at Netherfield dishevelled from her walk. The drive to conform to socially imposed standards is deeply ingrained in Mrs Bennet. The word 'cried' indicates the immediacy and forcefulness of her

²⁸⁹ See Judith Lowder Newton, *Women, Power and Subversion: Social Strategies in British Fiction, 1778-1860* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013). For Lowder Newton, Elizabeth's rejection of Mr. Darcy's first proposal establishes her as 'the most powerful character in the book' and allows Austen to fully expose Darcy's economic and social standing 'without diminishing the autonomy of the heroine', and the character's refusal to capitulate to Lady Catherine's demands is 'another spirited assertion (of her autonomy)' (p. 83).

reaction so that her response seems to be almost a reflex as opposed to a conclusion arrived at after due consideration. Further, she does not accuse Elizabeth of silliness for her proposal to walk to Netherfield, but for the mere thought of it. Mrs Bennet is unable even to conceive of the possibility that a strong inner desire to attend to a beloved sister who is suffering might appropriately overwhelm any possible concerns of social impropriety and therefore give rise to a plan that apparently fails to take those societal considerations into account.

In contrast, Elizabeth's focus is simply on her awareness of what matters to her, and on what she needs to do to satisfy the demands of her own values, regardless of what others might think and in complete contravention of the demands of social decorum. Her intent and reason could not be more clearly expressed. Yet even her father who, we are given to understand, has a close affinity with and admiration for Elizabeth, seems to struggle to be convinced that she can be wholly genuine in her apparent disregard for the good opinion of the residents of Netherfield Park:

"Is this a hint to me, Lizzy," said her father, "to send for the horses?"

"No, indeed. I do not wish to avoid the walk. The distance is nothing when one has motive; only three miles. I shall be back by dinner." (I:7, 35)

Two suppositions underlie Mr Bennet's question. The first is that Elizabeth must, in truth, harbour some concern for the state of her appearance upon her arrival at Netherfield. The second is that she would find it difficult or awkward to ask directly for the use of the horses, and so might use an outrageous proposal to walk there in the hope that her father would guess her actual wish to ride. However, by virtue of her autonomous nature, Elizabeth is able, even compelled, to state her values and intentions in a straightforwardly honest and open manner. It is in this way that Elizabeth determines her own actions, and

assertively communicates her thoughts, emotions and decisions throughout the novel.²⁹⁰

One is able equally to perceive the vitality of Elizabeth's inner self when one notices the many things that she relishes and enjoys in her life, and her tendency towards ironic amusement for which her self-awareness is a pre-condition. Austen begins to reveal this aspect of Elizabeth's character very early on in the novel where we see her able to find a comical element in Mr. Darcy's rejection of her as a dance partner. Elizabeth responds to Mr. Darcy's ungracious remark, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*", by recounting the event 'with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in any thing ridiculous' (I:3, 12. Austen's italics). Austen ascribes the liveliness, playfulness and delight in the ridiculous to Elizabeth's 'disposition'. They are not characteristics displayed to achieve a particular response from other people, nor are they dependent upon the reactions of others. They are simply demonstrations of what *she is like*; that is, of *who* she is. Elizabeth is offended by the rudeness of Mr. Darcy's comment and consequently determines never to dance with him again. However, she has a strong selfhood and a clear awareness of that selfhood, neither of which is shaken by Mr. Darcy's opinion of her. This leaves her free to reflect on his behaviour as ridiculous, and thus to be amused by it.

We see Elizabeth's inner nature revealed again towards the end of her prolonged stay at Netherfield during her sister Jane's illness. While Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy, Miss Bingley and Mrs Hurst are out walking, it becomes apparent that there will not be room for all four on the path. An alternative route is suggested by Mr. Darcy and the four could have continued together along this way, however at this point Austen removes Elizabeth from the party. Thus the author creates an opportunity for readers to watch Elizabeth while she is completely alone, and thereby to note the independence of the character's inner emotional life from the observance or opinion of others. Austen writes of

²⁹⁰ One might compare Elizabeth with Mary Crawford in this respect. In the following section of the current chapter of this thesis, I explore Mary's communicative approach from a Transactional Analysis perspective, from which viewpoint one may imagine that Mary would make a proposal of this nature precisely with the aim of eliciting such attention from her father.

Elizabeth, 'She then ran gaily off, rejoicing as she rambled about, in the hope of being at home in a day or two' (I:10, 58). With no-one there to witness her, Elizabeth feels and expresses to herself a joyfulness that springs purely from within as she anticipates the coming together of all that she personally holds to be of greatest value: the well-being of her family, and her home. The examples that I provide are just two of many instances in which, as John Wiltshire states of Elizabeth, 'her smiles invite the reader into a private self-hood'. As I note above, it is Elizabeth's 'private self-hood' that allows her to smile, even when the immediate circumstances surrounding her are not as she would wish, and in the absence of any validation of her worth from other people.²⁹¹

In direct contrast to this, we have no idea what might lead Lady Catherine to feel happiness, comfort or contentment with something simply because it is in harmony with her internally derived needs, desires or values. Indeed, Wiltshire identifies just one example of Lady Catherine smiling, that is, 'Lady Catherine's "gracious" or obviously condescending smile when her guests dutifully praise her hospitality'.²⁹² This is Wiltshire's reflection on an episode during the first visit by Elizabeth and her companions to Rosings Park. In this scene, the group are seated for dinner in the company of Lady Catherine who 'seemed gratified by their excessive admiration, and gave most gracious smiles, especially when any dish on the table proved a novelty to them' (II:6, 184). In less than one sentence, Austen illustrates and clarifies the sources of Lady Catherine's motivation and gratification: the praise and admiration that she receives from the others, and the discomfiture of others that reinforces her sense of superiority over them. There is no suggestion that Lady Catherine's guests enjoy the unfamiliar dishes that they are served, only that the dishes are unfamiliar to them, and it is from this that Lady Catherine takes her pleasure.²⁹³ Graciousness is a manifestation of the desire, or at least the willingness, to be aware of the needs and feelings of other people, and to act according to that awareness to ensure their ease and comfort, and to enable them to maintain their own self-esteem. Gracious behaviour is thus the outward demonstration

²⁹¹ Wiltshire, *The Hidden Jane Austen*, p. 55.

²⁹² Wiltshire, *The Hidden Jane Austen*, p. 55.

²⁹³ Notably, this is in direct opposition to Johnson's definition of 'condescend' which I provide earlier: 'to sink willingly to equal terms with inferiors, to soothe with familiarity'.

of the inner qualities of humility and of empathy.²⁹⁴ Wiltshire's use of inverted commas around the word 'gracious' clearly acknowledges Austen's ironic implication that any appearance of grace in Lady Catherine is just that, an appearance, a superficial performance that reveals nothing of a congruent inner quality. Lady Catherine's self-esteem is upheld by the diminishment of that of others, and her apparent graciousness is, in fact, a patronising form of condescension designed to achieve that effect.

A useful comparison might be drawn here with the genuine grace with which Mr. Darcy invites Mr. Gardiner 'with the greatest civility' to fish on his Pemberley estate, 'as often as he chose, [...], offering at the same time to supply him with fishing tackle, and pointing out those parts of the stream where there was usually the most sport' (III:1, 282). The words 'gracious' and 'condescending' are noticeably missing from Austen's presentation of Darcy's interaction with Mr. Gardiner, and thus Mr. Darcy's behaviour is portrayed with none of the ambiguity and consequent irony with which the author she describes Lady Catherine. Mr. Darcy opens his estate to Mr. Gardiner, not to impress or overawe the visitor with the immensity of the property and thus boost his own self-esteem, but to give pleasure to, and enhance the self-esteem of, his guest. Thus, Mr. Darcy's graciousness is genuine, and no less so for being a product of the gradual development of his authentic, self-aware respectfulness towards others.

Once we have met Lady Catherine in person, it is possible to monitor the numerous ways in which the character reveals the depth of her personal insecurity and dependence on others for her sense of self. Within the first few moments we learn that 'She was not rendered formidable by silence; but whatever she said, was spoken in so authoritative a tone, as marked her self-importance' (II:6, 183). There are two aspects of this statement about Lady

²⁹⁴ Johnson defines the word 'gracious' as 'merciful, benevolent, condescending' and 'having grace and kindness; acting with grace and kindness', with 'grace' itself defined in terms such as 'kindness' and 'pleasing dignity'; Johnson, *Dictionary*, p, 462. Graciousness is defined similarly in the *OED* as 'Kindness, generosity, considerateness; courtesy, politeness, esp. to someone of a lower (social) status (sometimes implying condescension)'. Again, there is ambiguity in the meaning of 'condescension', however, again there is little doubt that the negative definition of the term 'condescending' applies to Austen's portrayal of Lady Catherine.

Catherine that are notable. Firstly, there is an emphasis on the alternative to the authoritative tone with which Lady Catherine speaks. That is, silence. In a review of research into the roles of speech and silence in the development of inter-relational power dynamics, John Biguenet finds that power may be exercised by either. However, he concludes that ‘At the highest levels of authority, the latter may be preferred.’²⁹⁵ If that is the case, there is a sense in which Lady Catherine’s ‘authoritative’ tone might actually undermine the command that she wishes her presence to establish. The difficulty with silence, however, is that it is open to different interpretations, and it seems that Lady Catherine is not sufficiently secure in her own selfhood to risk any such ambiguity.

Again, comparison with the character of Mr. Darcy in this respect will illustrate the point. By and large, Mr. Darcy’s silence is taken to be a sign of arrogance and conceit, and there is undoubtedly some element of this involved. Darcy himself admits as much to Elizabeth when they are reconciled at the end of the novel. Yet, earlier he offers a different explanation for his manner to Elizabeth: “I certainly have not the talent which some people possess,” said Mr. Darcy, “of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done” (II:8, 197). Thus it emerges that Darcy’s silence is, to some extent, the result of a form of social incompetence of which he himself is fully aware, and which leads him to appear to hold himself aloof. No-one else could know this without his explicit clarification, yet Mr. Darcy is secure enough in his knowledge of himself, and his position, to tolerate other people’s possible misapprehension of his conduct. Lady Catherine’s vocal insistence on her authority reveals her lack of the same strength of sense of self.

Secondly, I note that Austen uses the phrase, ‘as marked her self-importance’ rather than, ‘as marked her importance’. The term ‘self-importance’ suggests *feeling* important as opposed to ‘importance’ which is indicative of *being* important. To feel important is dependent on the validation

²⁹⁵ John Biguenet, *Silence* (New York & London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p. 96. Biguenet makes this point with reference to Charles de Gaulle: ‘Nothing enhances authority more than silence’, *Le Fil de L’épée*, 1932.

of others. To be important is not. There is no question that Lady Catherine is important. She moves in social circles of great consequence and, within the novel's social structure, she does have a position of responsibility towards, and influence over other people's lives and livelihoods on her estate. While her role is greatly facilitated if those who are dependent on her are compliant with her decisions and instructions, the position that she holds is, in itself, not reliant on other people's fearful and obsequious obedience. Yet this is what Lady Catherine needs for the nourishment of her sense of importance as a person; that is, to feel important. As the first visit to Rosings progresses, we watch Lady Catherine ceaselessly dominate the conversation and impose her will upon the others, giving her instructions and opinions 'on every subject in so decisive a manner as proved that she was not used to have her judgement controverted', even in matters concerning Charlotte's management of her private household (II:6, 185).

Lady Catherine's overbearing imperiousness is patently clear and well-documented. However, from my perspective, a careful analysis of the precise and subtle indicators of her characterisation is warranted since I perceive her to be as significant as the major characters whom critics have read more closely. This exploration is necessary also to illustrate my reading of Lady Catherine as a character who elicits, and I think is intended to elicit, some degree of compassion. From a Rogerian perspective, the character's behaviour shows her to be so lacking in autonomy that she has developed barely any sense of self or inner resource that would enable her to attain any level of contentment, or even to maintain a degree of emotional equilibrium, in the absence of external validation. The foundation upon which she builds her emotional and psychological stability could be shaken at any moment because that foundation depends upon something over which she can never be completely in control: the thoughts, opinions and conduct of other people. From this viewpoint, Lady Catherine's arrogant demeanour and constant demand for other people's admiration and compliance is driven by persistent, deeply rooted fear: the fear that she would fall apart without these forms of substantiation from others. From a psychotherapeutic perspective, this state of

being is profoundly uncomfortable and the persistent quest for the ease of that discomfort from outside sources is exhausting. Thus, it is more disturbing than amusing to witness the manifestation of both the anxiety and the search for its remedy in Lady Catherine's unremitting pursuit of attention and validation.

This therapeutic standpoint highlights Austen's portrayal of the relentlessness of Lady Catherine's claims upon people's recognition. For example, one observes the way that she is compelled to interrupt a conversation between Elizabeth and Colonel Fitzwilliam: "What is that you are saying, Fitzwilliam? What is it you are talking of? What are you telling Miss Bennet? Let me hear what it is" (II:8, 194). Again, by contrast, Mr. Darcy is able to contain his own curiosity and remain silent. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Darcy himself and Elizabeth are interrupted by Lady Catherine 'who called out to know what they were talking of' (II:8, 197).²⁹⁶ She openly aggrandises her own appreciation of, and talents for, music: "There are few people in England, I suppose, who have more true enjoyment of music than myself, or a better natural taste. If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient", as well as the unrealised potential of her daughter, Anne. (II:8, 194). When she fails to have Elizabeth postpone her departure from Rosings with the Lucases, she cannot restrain herself from attempting to interfere with their perfectly adequately prepared travel arrangements, and thus to reassure herself that her knowledge and influence would be indispensable to the safety and comfort of their journey; "Where shall you change horses?—Oh! Bromley, of course.—If you mention my name at the Bell, you will be attended to" (II:14, 235). The redundancy of Lady Catherine's overbearing intrusion in this instance is subtly and amusingly implied when Elizabeth and the Lucases eventually find the two most scatter-brained and frivolous of the Bennet sisters already comfortably settled at the inn, and with a meal set out, without the need for recourse to any

²⁹⁶ My perception of the intense neediness underlying Lady Catherine's interruptions is reflected in Andrew Davies' adaptation of the novel for the BBC television series (*Pride and Prejudice*, dir. by Simon Langton, BBC, 1995). The actor who plays the part of Lady Catherine smacks her hand down on the arm of her chair in her agitation as she calls out to the others, "I must have my part in the conversation!" This displays not only the neediness of Lady Catherine, but also the discomfort that her neediness affords her. The psychological complexity within Austen's presentation of the character is not in evidence in a later adaptation (*Pride and Prejudice*, dir. by Joe Wright, Universal Studios and Scion Films, 2005) as the actor in the role of Lady Catherine monotonously barks instructions and criticisms towards her guests.

reference to a connection with Lady Catherine. These are just a few of the many demonstrations of the efforts to which Lady Catherine is driven to maintain her sense of self. However, it is in the direct juxtaposition of Lady Catherine with Elizabeth Bennet that Austen most explicitly indicates Lady Catherine's vulnerability.

During the first substantial exchange between Elizabeth and Lady Catherine, we observe Lady Catherine's shock as Elizabeth firmly expresses her own opinions, and she is so 'astonished' when Elizabeth, at least initially, declines to comply with her demands to know her age that 'Elizabeth suspected herself to be the first creature who had ever dared to trifle with so much dignified impertinence' (II:6, 187). Of course, it is for amusement that Austen extends the reach of Lady Catherine's imperious authority beyond human beings to encompass all 'creatures', and then, shortly afterwards, even to the weather: 'The party then gathered round the fire to hear Lady Catherine determine what weather they were to have on the morrow' (II:6, 188). However, it is Lady Catherine's insistence on having her own curiosity regarding Elizabeth's age satisfied that is described as 'impertinent' rather than Elizabeth's quite blunt refusal to provide the answer. Austen is clearly critical of Lady Catherine's ungracious and judgmental interrogation of her new guest. Yet, in the disquiet that accompanies Lady Catherine's reaction to Elizabeth's direct and self-assured responses to her enquiries, the author also exposes Lady Catherine's vulnerability: no-one has ever before refused, countered or questioned her, and it was always just a matter of time before the bedrock of her emotional security was shaken by someone such as Elizabeth. Lady Catherine's reluctance to let Elizabeth go when she wishes to leave Hunsford suggests she has begun to develop a tolerance for another individual's autonomy, to enjoy something other than unqualified admiration, and to experience that as something of a relief. However, the exchanges between Lady Catherine and Elizabeth at Rosings are only minor skirmishes. Lady Catherine's intolerant aggression, driven by her vulnerability, comes powerfully and explicitly to the fore during the much more significant battle between the two characters in the garden at Longbourn.

Claire Tomalin says of the encounter between Lady Catherine and Elizabeth at Longbourn: 'Not only is the scene intensely dramatic in itself, as every adaptor for stage and film knows; it also serves to keep the flag of excitement flying right to the end.'²⁹⁷ There are certainly substantial elements of both drama and excitement in the passage, and the confrontation between two individuals who have very different backgrounds, personalities and agendas is effective at the surface level of entertainment. However, at a deeper level within an engrossing dialogue between two fictional characters, I perceive Elizabeth and Lady Catherine to be symbolic representations of autonomy and heteronomy respectively. The form of the exchange that takes place between the characters, the ways in which each of them expresses herself, and the nature of the *denouement* of the argument, all perfectly model a Rogerian view of autonomy and heteronomy, and the ways in which each would be outwardly manifested.²⁹⁸ To paraphrase Elizabeth's own reflections towards the end of the encounter, Lady Catherine insults and threatens Elizabeth personally, and her family, in every way possible to gain Elizabeth's acquiescence to her demands. Yet Elizabeth does not respond in kind. She strongly challenges Lady Catherine's manner and contentions, and questions the legitimacy of her interference, however she makes no attack on Lady Catherine at a personal level.

One may compare, for example, Lady Catherine's insults to Elizabeth: "Obstinate, headstrong girl! I am ashamed of you!" (III:14, 394), "I expected to find a more reasonable young woman", (III:14, 395), and, "Unfeeling, selfish girl!" (III: 14, 396), with Elizabeth's criticism, not of Lady Catherine personally, but of her comments and behaviour: "Allow me to say, Lady Catherine, that the arguments with which you have supported this extraordinary application, have been as frivolous as the application was ill-judged" (III:14, 395-396). Lady Catherine uses threats and emotional blackmail: "You will be censured,

²⁹⁷ Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life*, p.165.

²⁹⁸ My reading stands in stark contrast with that of Kaplan discussed earlier in the Introduction to this thesis, and to that of Gilbert and Gubar, for whom 'As dreadful as she seems to be [...] Lady Catherine is herself in some ways an appropriate mother to Elizabeth because the two women are surprisingly similar.' The authors base this assertion on their perception that, in the scene under discussion, both Elizabeth and Lady Catherine express their opinion openly and 'speak authoritatively of matters on which neither is an authority.' See Gilbert and Gubar, p. 172.

slighted, and despised, by everyone connected with him” (III:14, 394); “You are determined to ruin him in the opinion of all his friends, and make him the contempt of the world” (III:14, 397); and, in desperation, “Are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted?” (III:14, 396). In contrast, Elizabeth offers measured responses to the specific elements of Lady Catherine’s charges: “Whatever my connections may be,” [...] “if your nephew does not object to them, they can be nothing to *you*”, and, “Supposing him to be attached to me, would *my* refusing his hand make him wish to bestow it on his cousin?” (III:14, 395. Austen’s italics). Elizabeth also demonstrates a firm declaration of autonomous intent, in which she poses no threat to Lady Catherine, but simply states her commitment to her own happiness, “without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me” (III:14, 396). Elizabeth at no point attempts to compel or even persuade Lady Catherine to do other than that character chooses. Even at the height of Elizabeth’s distress as the confrontation concludes, she does not remonstrate with Lady Catherine to return into the house with her. When her mother questions her as to why the visitor did not come in, Elizabeth replies simply that, “She did not choose it,” [...] “she would go.” (III:14, 397).

At a superficial level it appears that Lady Catherine is the more commanding participant in the conversation by virtue of her wealth, position, and forcefulness. However, by the current reading, Elizabeth is the more powerful of the two from the very start. Crucially, it is during this encounter between Lady Catherine and Elizabeth that Austen brings Lady Catherine’s vulnerability explicitly to the reader’s attention, and she does so with meticulous precision. I refer to the moment at which Lady Catherine states:

You are to understand, Miss Bennet, that I came here with the determined resolution of carrying my purpose; nor will I be dissuaded from it. I have not been used to submit to any person’s whims. I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment.

Elizabeth replies: “*That* will make your ladyship’s situation at present more pitiable; but it will have no effect on *me*” (III:14, 394. Austen’s italics). It is the

word 'pitiable' that is important here. Notably, Elizabeth does not describe Lady Catherine as 'pitiful', which is a quality intrinsic to a person and an attribute certainly not applicable to Lady Catherine, but as 'pitiable', which indicates the potential response of another towards her. Lady Catherine intends her statement – that she is unused to facing contradiction and disobedience – to indicate her right to knowledge of, and authority over, Elizabeth's personal affairs. In fact, it reveals her fundamental weakness. As I observe above, Lady Catherine's equilibrium is founded on the compliance of other people and she has developed no resource to maintain it in the absence of that external validation. During the course of the confrontation in the garden, Lady Catherine gradually loses her equilibrium in the face of Elizabeth's assertive refusal to comply, and, when Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy finally marry, her agony spills out into a letter so abusive that 'for some time all intercourse was at an end' (III:19, 430). In the terms that I use earlier in this discussion, she falls apart. This has been an inevitable outcome for Lady Catherine since the moment we were first introduced to her in awestruck tones by Mr. Collins. James Wood writes: 'It is by noticing people seriously that you begin to understand them; by looking harder, more sensitively, at people's motives, you can look around and behind them, so to speak.'²⁹⁹ From a psychotherapeutic perspective, when one looks 'around and behind' Lady Catherine, one sees that Lady Catherine's discomfort is not caused by Elizabeth's contrary responses and actions. In fact, neither Elizabeth herself nor anything she does is the cause of Lady Catherine's anguish. Elizabeth is simply the catalyst for the revelation of Lady Catherine's fragility, and it is this fragility that leads, ineluctably, to the character's emotional suffering. An analytic and empathic approach to Lady Catherine allows one to get a sense of the painful neediness that underlies and drives her overbearing behavior, and, in consequence, to feel compassion for her.

As I explain in Chapter One of this thesis, self-aware personal autonomy is the central focus within all of the models of psychotherapy that inform this thesis. However, the different models take varying views on the way in which autonomy is developed and on the external expressions of autonomy and

²⁹⁹ James Wood, *The Nearest Thing to Life*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 2015), p. 51.

heteronomy. In the section to follow I present my interpretation of Mary Crawford in relation to autonomy from the perspective of Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis (TA) model of psychotherapy.³⁰⁰

3.4. The character of Mary Crawford from a TA perspective

Mary Crawford is one of Austen's most complex, multi-layered characters and this is reflected in certain critics' observations. For example, Trilling finds on his first reading of *Mansfield Park* that:

Mary Crawford is conceived—is calculated—to win the charmed admiration of almost any reader. She is all pungency and wit. [...]. She is downright, open, intelligent, impatient. Irony is her natural mode, and we are drawn to think of her voice as being as nearly the author's own as Elizabeth Bennet's is.³⁰¹

However, Trilling's perception of Mary changes upon the second reading of the novel, as he explains:

on a first reading of *Mansfield Park*, Mary Crawford's speeches are all delightful, they diminish in charm as we read the novel a second time. We begin to hear something disagreeable in their intonation: it is the peculiarly modern bad quality which Jane Austen was the first to represent—insincerity.³⁰²

Comments by D. A. Miller likewise reflect the ambiguity of the nature of the character, and readers' mixed responses to her. Miller writes of Mary that she is 'a self whose whereabouts (in every but the geographical sense) are in question', and that 'Our fascination with Mary Crawford springs from the absence of full terms to grasp her'.³⁰³ In the following discussion I illustrate how one may observe the character of Mary Crawford in the light of the structured explanatory framework of Eric Berne's model of Transactional

³⁰⁰ See Chapter One pp. 69-78 of this thesis for my full explanation and illustration of Berne's Transactional Analysis formulation.

³⁰¹ Lionel Trilling, *The Opposing Self: Nine Essays in Criticism* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1995), p. 213.

³⁰² Trilling, *The Opposing Self*, p. 220.

³⁰³ D. A. Miller, 'Good Riddance: Closure in *Mansfield Park*', in *Mansfield Park and Persuasion*, ed. by Judy Simons (Houndsmills, Hants.: Palgrave, 1997), pp. 37-48 (p. 38, p. 41).

Analysis (TA), and I demonstrate the way in which Berne's concept of the 'ego states' enhances our reading of the character's complex nature.

To recap briefly, Berne's TA model defines three separate ego states which constitute the elements of an adult's personality: the Adult, the Child and the Parent. The Adult ego state relates to an individual's present adult experience, while the Child and Parent ego states preserve vestiges of the individual's past experiences. Thus, even in adulthood, a person retains aspects of their personality that were formed during their childhood. In communication with other people, the Adult ego state of an individual expresses autonomous thoughts and feelings which are congruent with their present-moment adulthood. An adult who is being influenced by their Child ego state may express neediness or dependency that is incongruent with their adulthood in order to gain parent-like attention in the form of comfort and guidance from others. Equally, an adult who is acting from their Child ego may behave mischievously, or they might take risks with their own safety, to attract attentive criticism or reprimand. An individual who is directed by their Parent ego state may scold, instruct, or comfort other adults as if those adults were children. It is important to re-emphasise the point that I make in Chapter One that no one of the ego states is wholly beneficial or entirely detrimental. The Adult ego state is necessary to enable an individual to analyse and evaluate objectively the situations that they encounter, and to function effectively according to their current needs. As I state in Chapter One, the Parent ego state holds capacities for nurturing others that may inform and enhance the adult's ability to care for others, not least for their own children. Finally, the Child ego state brings spontaneity, playfulness and creativity and 'charm' to the individual's personality.

TA dissects communicative transactions between people to reveal the dominant ego state within each individual at any one time. In Chapter One, I provide an illustrative example of an analysis of transactions which involves an exchange between three women: Camellia who is provoked to tears by her Child ego, Holly who responds in her Parent ego state to comfort Camellia's Child, and Rosita whose Adult ego remains dominant throughout the sequence.

In this section I explore a passage that highlights the operation of the Child ego state within Mary Crawford. From a TA perspective, the dominance of this ego state within Mary is the source of the character's captivating appeal. However, it is also indicative of her vulnerability and lack of self-aware autonomy which, in turn, drive her tendency to be deceitful and manipulative.

The transactions that I analyse here take place in exchanges between Mary, Fanny Price, Mrs. Grant and Edmund Bertram in the garden of the Parsonage, home of Mr. and Mrs. Grant.³⁰⁴ It is Autumn, and Mary and Fanny are seated together outside when Mrs. Grant and Edmund appear in the garden and approach them. As Edmund and Mrs. Grant draw near, Mary proposes to Fanny, "Well, shall we join and disappoint them of half their lecture upon sitting down out of doors at this time of year, by being up before they begin?" (II:4, 246). This is a curious proposition. It assumes that two adults, Edmund and Mrs. Grant, would deem it appropriate to reproach another two adults, Mary and Fanny, for sitting outdoors in the cold weather. In fact, if it were to occur to Edmund and Mrs. Grant to contemplate Mary and Fanny's actions at all in this regard, they would presumably suppose that the two grown women are as able as they would be themselves to determine whether it is wise to sit outside. One could imagine that Edmund and Mrs. Grant might give a telling-off to two *children* who have been warned not to sit out in the cold and who do so anyway because they do not have the maturity to take care of themselves, or because they wish to attract attention in the form of a reprimand. From this point of view, Mary's proposal to Fanny places herself and Fanny figuratively in the position of such children, and Edmund and Mrs. Grant in the role of their parents.

If the four characters had then met each other with conventional greetings, one could interpret Mary's initial suggestion to Fanny as simply a playful comment which an adult might make in a light-hearted moment. However, when Edmund and Mrs. Grant arrive, rather than with any customary reception, Mary challenges them straight away with: "Well," [...], "and do not you scold us for our imprudence? What do you think we have been sitting down

³⁰⁴ *Mansfield Park*, II:4, 246-248.

for but to be talked to about it, and entreated and supplicated never to do so again?" (II:4, 247). With these words Mary continues to adopt for herself and Fanny the position of children who need parent-like direction and protection, who deserve to be told off when they defy instructions and who must be implored not to put themselves in danger. It is the incongruity that Austen frames between Mary's adulthood and the way in which the character appears to be determined to be treated as a child that invites an interpretation of Mary's remarks to her friends from a TA perspective. Further, it is possible to observe a remarkable similarity between the ways in which Edmund and Mrs. Grant react to Mary's exclamation and those that might be predicted and/or explained in TA terms.

To begin with, a TA point of view would see Mary's opening remark to Edmund and Mrs. Grant as a transactional stimulus which is an explicit demand for attention driven by Mary's Child ego state. I note above that one would not expect Edmund and Mrs. Grant to scold or plead with two perfectly capable adults. Interestingly, it is clear that Mary herself does not expect this because she does not wait for it to happen. In TA terms, Mary's Adult ego anticipates Edmund's and Mrs. Grant's likely approach appropriately. So, with her Child in control, Mary confronts Edmund and Mrs. Grant with their failure to castigate herself and Fanny before they have had a chance to say anything at all. One may compare Mary with Camellia who, in Berne's case study, begins to cry in response to Rosita's approach to her. Berne's interpretation of Camellia's behaviour is that Camellia's Child needs to bring about the kind of reassurance that she might expect to receive from a consoling parent. Clearly, Mary is not looking for such comfort from Edmund and Mrs. Grant. On the contrary, she implicitly accuses them of neglect when they do not immediately 'scold' her and attend to her further with pleas and entreaties. If one keeps in mind children's tendency to require attention even if that attention involves criticism or reprimand, then one can see that while Camellia's and Mary's methods differ, the impetus behind the behaviour is the same; that is the Child within each of them that craves attention.

There is an important difference between Mary and Camellia however. While Camellia's crying is a spontaneous reaction to Rosita's question, Mary tells Fanny what she is going to do. Thus, in effect, Mary reveals that her attempt to instigate a reaction from her companions is a consciously aware act in both senses of the word: action and performance. It is an act in the sense that it is an intentional piece of behaviour. It is also an act in the sense that it is a pretence. When Mary and Fanny entered the garden, they had no notion of sitting outside in order to provoke a rebuke from Edmund and Mrs. Grant, whose arrival they could not in any event have predicted. The appearance of Edmund and Mrs. Grant pushes Mary into her Child ego, and it is from her Child state that Mary disingenuously purports that concern and rebuke from Edmund and Mrs. Grant had been the two women's intention. In the light of this analysis, TA would describe Mary as the 'agent' in initiating a 'game'. Berne outlines many forms of the games that people play in their interactions with other people to satisfy their own psychological needs.³⁰⁵ The inter-relational dynamics invoked by Mary compare closely with the processes that are involved in the game that Berne calls 'The Alcoholic'. The agent of this game is an alcoholic who brings about and then complains of the pain of a severe hangover in order to gain attention. The needs that drive this kind of behaviour arise from an individual's vulnerable and dependent Child ego. As Berne explains, 'The transactional object of the drinking, aside from the personal pleasures it brings, is to set up a situation where the Child can be severely scolded [...] by any parental figures in the environment who are interested enough to oblige.'³⁰⁶ Berne's word 'oblige' here emphasises the intentionality of the alcoholic's conduct, and Berne's term, 'parental figures', refers to adults whose Parent ego state will be triggered by the alcoholic's self-damaging actions. Any adult whose Parent ego is open to be moved by the alcoholic's vulnerable Child will either take the alcoholic to task, or soothe and nurse them.

³⁰⁵ See Berne, *Games People Play: The Psychology of Human Relationships*.

³⁰⁶ Berne, *Games People Play*, p. 66.

If this happens, the agent of the game has achieved the 'pay off', which is the nurturing attention that they need.³⁰⁷

The description of the 'The Alcoholic' game may be generalised to describe and explain the behaviour of people who engage in any form of conduct that brings about unpleasant or damaging consequences for themselves and then make their suffering apparent to other people. This was not Mary's and Fanny's intention when they decided to sit outside, however when Mary claims that it was, she exploits the dynamics that are codified with the 'The Alcoholic' game to achieve the same results. That is to elicit angry rebukes, or at least equally attentive defensive excuses and rationalisations, from the Parent egos of Mrs. Grant and Edmund in response to what is effectively an accusation of the neglect of their children. Sometimes an agent of the game is aware that their primary need is for attention, and they know that the way that they operate is geared to enable them to fulfil that need. It is the aim of TA in therapy to bring people to this point since the individual is then well placed to bring their Adult understanding to bear on their psychological needs, and to move towards the development of more mature psychological as well as physical independence, in other words, towards greater autonomy. Often however, and most usually at the start of therapy, the behaviour of the agent of such a game is compulsive. In other words, the individual cannot help but adopt these forms of behaviour because they are not aware of the underlying impetus for their actions. Mary Crawford falls into the latter category. Mary is not conscious that her approach to Edmund and Mrs. Grant emerges compulsively out of her need for attention even though her provocation of them is conscious and deliberate.

If either Edmund or Mrs. Grant are, to use Berne's phraseology, 'parental figures [...] who are interested enough to oblige', and thus respond to Mary's transactional stimulus as she intends, then Mary would have achieved the 'pay off' in TA terms. Edmund obliges fully, and I examine his responses shortly. I

³⁰⁷ Looking back to my analysis of Elizabeth Bennet in the section above, I observe there that one might compare Elizabeth's behaviour with Mary's. While it would never occur to the autonomous Elizabeth deliberately to suggest that she might put herself at risk in order to gain the use of her father's carriage, one imagines that Mary would not hesitate to instigate such a 'game' in similar circumstances.

look first at Mrs. Grant however, and note that one may detect the influence of the Parent ego in that character's initial reply: "They cannot have been sitting long," [...] "for when I went up for my shawl I saw them from the staircase window, and then they were walking" (II:4, 247). While the Adult is certainly present in Mrs. Grant's rational assessment of the facts of the situation, there is a suggestion that she would have reproached Mary and Fanny if she had noticed that the two women had been sitting for longer. Mary then expresses further dismay at her companions' apparent lack of concern in an attempt to exacerbate their feelings of guilt as she exclaims: "Upon my word," [...] "you are two of the most disappointing and unfeeling kind friends I ever met with! [...]. You do not know how much we have been suffering, nor what chills we have felt!", and she directs her indictment of neglect more directly towards Mrs. Grant: "you, Mrs. Grant, my sister, my own sister, I think I had a right to alarm you a little." However, Mary's exaggeration of her own and Fanny's suffering, and the hint of emotional blackmail in her inappropriate attribution of responsibility for the women's welfare to Mrs. Grant, has the opposite effect from that which Mary intended. Rather than drawing Mrs. Grant's Parent out further, Mary's pointed denouncement triggers Mrs. Grant's Adult, which is in firm command as Mrs. Grant states: "Do not flatter yourself, my dearest Mary. You have not the smallest chance of moving me. I have my alarms, but they are quite in a different quarter". In her Adult state Mrs. Grant is aware of her real personal concerns – the survival of her plants in the frost and the likelihood that a turkey she wishes to serve to her husband might not keep until she is ready to dress it – and like Rosita with Camellia in Berne's example, she declines to continue to play the game with Mary. Mrs. Grant's refusal to play the Parent to Mary's Child pulls Mary eventually into her own Adult ego state, and the Child ego's foot-stamping resentment with which Mary makes that enforced transition is evident in the sarcastic and dismissive tone in which she counters Mrs. Grant: "The sweets of housekeeping in a country village!" said Miss Crawford archly. "Commend me to the nurseryman and the poulterer" (II:4, 247-248).³⁰⁸

³⁰⁸ As I explain in Chapter One of this thesis, the transition between childhood and adulthood

While Mary fails to win the 'pay off' in her game with Mrs. Grant, she is more successful with Edmund. To begin with, there is an undeniably parental tone in Edmund's defensive rationalisation: "Perhaps I might have scolded," said Edmund, "if either of you had been sitting down alone; but while you do wrong together I can overlook a great deal" (II:4, 247). Here Edmund conveys the impression that he feels himself to be in a paternal position in relation to Mary and Fanny, that he therefore has the authority to judge the women's behaviour, in this instance as 'wrong', and that he has the right to choose to overlook their misbehaviour. All of this indicates that Edmund's response comes from his Parent ego. The spuriousness of the excuse that Edmund gives here for his apparent lack of care, that the two women were together, reveals that he had given the matter no rational consideration at all in his Adult state. When pushed into his Parent state, he had simply been compelled to invent any explanation with which to vindicate his alleged dereliction of duty. One is reminded of Holly who rushes to comfort Camellia in Berne's case study. As with my comparison between Mary and Camellia, the form of Edmund's reaction to Mary is not the same as that of Holly's to Camellia because the stimulus is different. However, the source of both Edmund's and Holly's responses is the same: the nurturing Parent within each of them. Shortly afterwards Edmund appears to feel compelled to present a more convincing excuse for having allegedly neglected his child: "And really," added Edmund, "the day is so mild, that your sitting down for a few minutes can be hardly thought imprudent. Our weather must not always be judged by the Calendar. We may sometimes take greater liberties in November than in May" (II:4, 247). Edmund's continued attempts to exonerate himself from guilt even though he has done nothing wrong show that he is more open to Mary's provocations than Mrs. Grant, and there is even a hint of desperation in Edmund's latter extended rationalisation. This is not surprising as Edmund is in thrall to Mary and thus more sensitive to her needs and keen to gratify her.

embodies a shift from dependence to independence which is potentially frightening. This is the reason for the dominance of the Child ego state in adulthood, and for the frequent reluctance with which the transition is made.

A reading from a TA perspective enables a deeper and more subtle understanding of the character of Mary Crawford. Mary is self-absorbed and attention-seeking throughout the novel. Her communications are frequently ambiguous and therefore confusing and unsettling to the other characters. She is also, by turns, charming, engaging, deceitful and manipulative. She is complicated. However, in response to Miller's observations cited above, one may locate precisely the character's 'whereabouts' and provide the exact terms by which to describe and define her through Transactional Analysis. Many of the qualities and propensities that characterise Mary originate from the Child ego within her personality. As such, these features are all symptomatic of an individual who has not fully realised the transition from dependent childhood to independent and autonomous adulthood.³⁰⁹ From a therapist's viewpoint, Mary's behaviour emerges compulsively, and thus not at all from an unwillingness but rather an inability to act according to her needs and values in a mature, straightforward and assertive way. She is so occupied in the protection of her Child ego and in her efforts to meet its needs that she loses sight of, or perhaps more accurately, does not develop fully formed values as an adult.³¹⁰ For myself, as a therapist, the ability to locate the 'whereabouts' of Mary's character in this way makes her all the more intriguing. Primarily however, my interest in presenting an analysis of Mary from a TA point of view is to illuminate another aspect of Austen's penetrating observation of the complexities of human psychology, and of the subtle ways in which the personality of an individual may be discerned through careful observation of their interactions with other people.

For the concluding section of this chapter, I turn to *Persuasion* and the character of Mrs. Smith. It is fitting that I focus a final brief discussion in the

³⁰⁹ If one looks at Fanny Price from this TA perspective, one observes a complete contrast with Mary in that Fanny's behaviour emerges consistently from her adult ego. This explains Fanny's lack of sparkling charm in comparison with Mary, however it also explains the autonomous nature of the character of Fanny. As Colm Toibín writes, 'Fanny Price, so ostensibly dull and powerless and passive', emerges as 'deeply drawn and deeply powerful within the silence of her own consciousness', and with 'a sort of autonomy that [...] allows her to move from being an outsider to taking over the narrative and, indeed, taking over generally'; Colm Toibín, *New Ways to Kill Your Mother. Writers and Their Families* (London: Viking, 2012), p.10

³¹⁰ Trilling's interpretation of Mary's behaviour is not far off the mark from a TA point of view, as he writes: 'Mary Crawford's intention is not to deceive the world but to comfort herself; she impersonates the woman she thinks she ought to be' (Trilling, *The Opposing Self*, p. 220).

thesis on this character. It was in my reading of *Persuasion*, and particularly the first encounters with Mrs. Smith, that I became aware of a close resemblance between modern psychotherapeutic approaches and Austen's perceptions of psychological processes and the means by which psychological well-being might be maintained.

I refer to Anne Elliot's initial two visits to Mrs. Smith.³¹¹ Prior to the first meeting, Anne is informed of the many hardships that Mrs. Smith has endured over the previous two years, and therefore Anne understandably expects that her former school friend will be 'suffering' (II:5, 165). However, during the first of the two visits under discussion, Anne is surprised to find her friend 'cheerful beyond her expectation' in spite of her past difficulties, her present significantly reduced living circumstances and her compromised physical health (II:5, 166-167). On the second visit, Anne discovers how Mrs. Smith achieves her contentment. At this point, the explanation that Austen gives for Mrs. Smith's mental well-being is one that all but exactly matches that which a modern-day psychotherapist would be likely to express in terms of the concept of 'resilience'. Further, Austen ascribes to Mrs. Smith the use of a number of methods that bear a remarkable resemblance to techniques and strategies that are encompassed within the repertoire of CBT for the avoidance of stress and depression and the maintenance of resilience.³¹²

Although the term 'resilience' was in use in the context of human psychology toward the end of the eighteenth century, Austen does not use the word itself and, of course, the CBT terms that would now be applied to the practices that aim to develop an individual's resilience would not have been in the author's vocabulary.³¹³ Therefore, as has been the case throughout this thesis, it is with Hayles' notion of constrained constructivism and Richardson's qualified identification of resonances in mind that I illustrate striking similarities between current psychotherapeutic views on resilience and

³¹¹ *Persuasion*, II:5, 165-170.

³¹² See Chapter One of this thesis for full explanations of CBT and the therapeutic techniques followed by CBT practitioners.

³¹³ See *Persuasion*, p. 378, note 4 for references to the use of the word in relation to mental states by Thomas Holcroft (1792) and William Godwin (1799).

Austen's description of Mrs. Smith's psychological flexibility and the measures by which she achieves that.

3.5. The resilience of Mrs. Smith

The *OED* defines resilience as 'the quality or fact of being able to recover quickly or easily from, or resist being affected by, a misfortune, shock, illness, etc.; robustness; adaptability'. This is the meaning which is generally applied to the term, albeit with slight variations, in the field of psychotherapy. In my own publication, *Coaching for Resilience*, I draw a distinction between 'strength' and resilience:

[Resilience] is not the same as strength, which enables you to remain calm, unaffected, or 'stony' in the face of life's difficulties and challenges. Rather it is that you are moved emotionally by those difficulties — you feel pain, anxiety, fear, sadness, even despair — then *can recover to your original state*.

I observe further that, 'At its best resilience enables a person to recover to an even more resourceful state'.³¹⁴ My own delineation of resilience as both distinct from, and more conducive to mental well-being than mere strength, is mirrored by the specificity of Austen's revelation that Mrs. Smith's unexpected contentment

was not a case of fortitude or of resignation only.—A submissive spirit might be patient, a strong understanding would supply resolution, but here was something more; here was that *elasticity of mind*. (II:5 167. My italics).

³¹⁴ Both quotations, Green and Humphrey, *Coaching for Resilience*, p. 12 (Green and Humphrey's italics). There is a substantial body of work that relates to resilience in the fields of psychotherapy and psychology. See, for example, *The Handbook of Adult Resilience*, ed. by John W. Reich, Alex Zautra and John Stuart Hall (New York & London: The Guilford Press, 2010), especially p. 4 for their definition of resilience and an overview of research issues relating to resilience, and George Bonanno, 'Loss, Trauma and Human Resilience: Have We Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive after Extremely Adverse Events?', *American Psychologist*, 59:1 (Jan 2004), 20-28. Bonanno writes that 'resilience is more than the simple absence of psychopathology', as resilient individuals 'generally exhibit a stable trajectory of healthy functioning across time, as well as the capacity for generative experiences and positive emotions', p. 20.

I note Austen's careful differentiation between 'fortitude' and 'elasticity of mind' in this quotation. Further, where I propose that resilience involves the willingness to experience emotional discomfort in response to difficulty, Austen writes, 'There had been a time, (Mrs. Smith told her), when her spirits had nearly failed.' Here, Austen explicitly shows that Mrs. Smith has not been unaffected by events, and thereby reinforces her view that it is flexibility rather than strength of mind that enables an individual to withstand the negative psychological effects of traumatic experiences, and not only to find some contentment within challenging circumstances, but to develop greater personal resource. In Mrs. Smith's case, this is revealed by her ability, to do 'a little good to one or two of the very poor families in this neighbourhood' despite her own unfortunate circumstances. (II:5, 168)³¹⁵

Having identified a state of mind analogous to modern perceptions of resilience, Austen proceeds to enumerate the elements that enable Mrs. Smith to achieve that state: a 'disposition to be comforted', along with the 'power of turning readily from evil to good, and of finding employment which carried her out of herself', all of which are recognisable as abilities, or strategies, that are now encompassed within CBT. (II:5 167) Austen illustrates the 'disposition to be comforted' in Mrs. Smith's reflections on her present state of health in comparison with her condition when she first arrived in Bath: 'Then, she had indeed been a pitiable object—[...]. She had weathered it however, and could truly say that it had done her good. It had increased her comforts by making her feel herself to be in good hands' (II:5, 167-168). Within my explanation of CBT in Chapter One of this thesis I define the 'permanent thinking style' which is manifested in people who believe that any suffering they experience will be unremitting, and they struggle to perceive change or improvement in their circumstances. People who have this thinking style also tend to predict a

³¹⁵ The psychotherapeutic reading that I present here offers a very different interpretation of Mrs. Smith's 'elasticity of mind' from those of, for example, Laura Mooneyham White, *Romance, Language, and Education in Jane Austen's Novels* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), and John Wiltshire, *Jane Austen and the Body, 'The picture of health'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Mooneyham White views Mrs. Smith as a 'Christian Stoic'; Mooneyham White, p. 156. Wiltshire relates Mrs. Smith's 'elasticity' to 'Emma's spirit', that is, to an interest and eagerness to be involved in the lives of other people which he views as a 'moral anomaly, that offends almost as much as it charms, but that ensures her survival, even in the most defeating conditions of personal deprivation; Wiltshire, p. 18.

negative future on the basis of negative experiences in the past. In contrast, people with a 'flexible thinking style' understand that everything changes and that one cannot ground one's expectations for the future on things that have happened in the past. Mrs. Smith models the flexible thinking style. She acknowledges the misery of her pain and isolation on arriving at Bath, and then is fully aware of the change, limited though it is, and welcomes the relief when it comes.

In Chapter One I identify two further forms of dysfunctional thinking styles that Aaron Beck defined within his concept of the 'cognitive triad': the personal style, in which people attribute negative events to their own actions or to some defect within themselves, and the pervasive style, through which people view everything and everyone in their lives in a pessimistic light. There is no indication of either of these styles in Mrs. Smith's account of her situation. Although we learn later in the novel that she was at least partially complicit in the destructive financial extravagance of her husband in company with Mr. Elliot, she is able to make appropriate attributions for her present situation to external factors, such as Mr. Elliot's betrayal of her husband's trust with regard to the executorship of his will. In addition, while 'She had seen too much of the world, to expect sudden or disinterested attachment any where', she nevertheless is receptive to the empirical evidence that at least one specific person, her landlady, 'would not use her ill'. From a CBT perspective, the 'flexible', 'external' and 'specific' thinking styles that Mrs. Smith adopts contribute to her resilience and are protective against more intractable unhappiness or even depression.³¹⁶

To illuminate this perspective, one might compare Mrs. Smith's cognitive styles to those of Anne's sister, Mary. Of this character, we learn that:

While well, and happy, and properly attended to, she had great good humour and excellent spirits; but any indisposition sunk her completely; she had no resources for solitude; and [...] was very prone to add to every other distress that of fancying herself neglected and ill-used. (I:5, 39)

³¹⁶ See Chapter One pp. 52-54 of this thesis for my explanation of the three dysfunctional thinking styles to which I refer in this section.

In this excerpt one is able to observe the pervasive thinking style. CBT practitioners are very attentive to the appearance of words such as ‘any’ or ‘every’ which do not allow for exceptions. Here we see that, for Mary, if any one thing is amiss then everything, whether real or imagined, is wrong, and she therefore easily descends into gloom. Later, when Mary is called upon to miss an evening at Kellynch Hall to take care of her sick child with Anne, she declares: “So! You and I are left to shift by ourselves, with this poor sick child—and not a creature coming near us all evening! I knew how it would be. This is always my luck!” (I:7, 60) Here Mary demonstrates a perfect example of the pervasive style (“always”) combined with personal attribution (“I knew how it would be” because it is always “my luck!”). Mary has so many of the advantages that Mrs. Smith lacks, yet she is unable to perceive and appreciate any of them when she is disappointed in a single respect, and she is frequently frustrated and miserable as a result. The contrast that Austen draws between Mary and Mrs. Smith is entirely consistent with a CBT view that, by virtue of her dysfunctional cognitive processing, Mary is far more vulnerable to unhappiness and mental ill-health than Mrs. Smith.³¹⁷

In the remainder of Austen’s reflection on Mrs. Smith’s resilience, I note two techniques that I identify as behavioural even though they involve a transformation of thought processes. The first is the ‘power of turning readily from evil to good’. This strategy certainly is a feature of the flexible and specific cognitive styles that Mrs. Smith adopts. However, the words that Austen uses, ‘turning readily’, bring another psychotherapeutic model to mind; the behavioural therapeutic model of ‘Neuro-Linguistic Programming’ (NLP), again explained in Chapter One of this thesis. Although the model of NLP engages with people’s thoughts, it is not concerned with the content of those thoughts. NLP practitioners are interested only in the way in which people experience, or in NLP terms, ‘represent’ their thoughts — that is, for example, whether people

³¹⁷ One might also detect a strong element of the child ego state in evidence in Anne’s sister’s personality here. As I state at different points in this thesis, it is not my intention to evaluate the different psychotherapeutic models which inform my analyses of Austen’s characters. Suffice to say that practitioners of CBT and of TA models impute different underlying causes for people’s behaviour, and psychological/emotional states. Both CBT’s dysfunctional attributional styles and TA’s inappropriately dominant ego states are seen to undermine the individual’s mental well-being. The theories on which the schools are founded indicate the most beneficial therapeutic intervention.

see images in their minds, or hear their thoughts as a sound, or a voice speaking to them. In NLP, once the representational form of an individual's thought becomes clear, therapeutic intervention involves the manipulation of the features of the representation of the thought or of the person's orientation in relation to the representation. So, for example, if a person sees a disturbing image in their mind as large, close and bright, they can mentally dim the light and move it away so that it is small and shadowy in the distance. This shift in perception very often eases any tension or anxiety brought about by the thought quickly, without the need to adjust any of the content or meaning of the thought. The notion of Mrs. Smith 'turning readily from evil to good' is reminiscent of another visual NLP strategy, that is to simply look away from a picture that depicts a disturbing image and towards another that presents a more pleasant one. Where cognitive therapy aims to re-draw the original picture, NLP suggests that one simply looks at something else.³¹⁸

The second of the latter two techniques that Mrs. Smith uses is 'finding employment which carried her out of herself'. Here I detect a resonance with another behavioural psychotherapeutic concept, which is the experience of 'flow'.³¹⁹ As I explain in Chapter One, Csikszentmihalyi applies the term 'flow' to the state that a person might achieve when they are so absorbed in a task or activity that they become unaware of the external environment, and often even of themselves. The idea that Mrs. Smith could be transported 'out of herself' by her engagement with a task resonates clearly with Csikszentmihalyi's observation that the condition of flow induces a 'loss of consciousness of the self'. Further, Csikszentmihalyi concludes that 'being able to forget temporarily who we are seems to be very enjoyable.'³²⁰ One may imagine how comforting it would be for Mrs. Smith to forget who she is for a while. In the recognition of the desirability of that temporary oblivion to her circumstances, the method by which it could be achieved, and in the actuality that outcome, Austen's

³¹⁸ Bandler and Grinder express this therapeutic method in explicitly behaviourist terms: "If what you are doing is not working, change it. Do anything else." See Bandler and Grinder, *Frogs into Princes*, p. 73.

³¹⁹ Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, Steps Toward Enhancing the Quality of Life*. See also, Martin E. P. Seligman, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 'Positive Psychology: An Introduction', *The American Psychologist*, 55:1 (Jan 2000), 5-14.

³²⁰ Both quotations, Csikszentmihalyi, p. 64 (Csikszentmihalyi's italics).

description of the third strategy used by Mrs. Smith is in close accord with Csikszentmihalyi's conception of 'flow'.

As well as the strong resonances between Austen's portrayal of Mrs. Smith's resilience and the aims and methods encompassed within the CBT school of psychotherapy that I outline above, I am struck also by the value that Austen places on the abilities demonstrated by Mrs. Smith. Barbara Hardy judges Austen's voice to be 'unexcited', and to have 'neutrality', 'steadiness' and 'a social tact and ease in understatement'. Hardy observes that this tone facilitates the impact of the author's irony and enables her 'most unobtrusively to present the private and public world'.³²¹ I concur with this view, so I find it significant that the author departs from her restrained tone when she reflects on Mrs. Smith's resilience. Through the use of free indirect speech, it is as though it is Anne who writes that Mrs. Smith's elasticity of mind 'was from Nature alone. It was the choicest gift of Heaven'. Yet with the superlative, 'choicest', and the reference to the highest possible sources of such a 'gift', Austen dispenses with neutrality and understated unobtrusiveness, and this gives the impression that this summation reflects her own deep appreciation of Mrs. Smith's cognitive skills and consequent capacity for resilience. (II:5, 167)

All of the points that I discuss above cover just a few pages of the novel. However, for me, the unusual irony-free fervency of Austen's tone in her concluding statement draws considerable attention to this brief segment, and leads me to regard the scene and the minor character of Mrs. Smith to be of importance to Austen's purpose.³²² While Mrs. Smith functions as a device to further the plot later in the novel, here she plays a vital role in the enhancement of Anne's understanding of internal sources of happiness. Austen attributes Mrs. Smith's resilience to Nature and to Heaven, yet the author's very specific elucidation of the skills that underlie Mrs. Smith's resilience indicates her

³²¹ Hardy, *A Reading of Jane Austen*, p. 35.

³²² A completely contrasting view of the importance of Mrs. Smith is succinctly expressed by Oscar W. Firkins who writes of the character that she is 'An old acquaintance of Anne whose perfunctory role in the story is adumbrated in the name of Smith', see O.W. Firkins, *Jane Austen* (New York, H. Holt, 1920), p. 118. See Mudrick, *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense*, p. 222, and Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 193 for similar reservations with regard to the significance and purpose of the character of Miss Smith.

recognition that these are very human psychological facilities which people who are not as psychologically gifted as Mrs. Smith might learn.

Most significantly for this thesis, the strategies and methods by which Mrs. Smith maintains her psychological well-being correspond to a striking degree with those that modern-day cognitive-behavioural psychotherapists would recommend. Although Austen did not have the benefit of the carefully wrought models now familiar to psychotherapists, she nonetheless demonstrates in Mrs. Smith, as in all of the characters on whom I focus in this thesis, a remarkable depth of psychological perceptiveness that the psychotherapeutic formulations with which her insights resonate serve to define and clarify.

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that a good formula to test the quality of a novel is, in the long run, a merging of the precision of poetry and the intuition of science. In order to bask in that magic a wise reader reads the book of genius not with his heart, not so much with his brain, but with his spine. (Vladimir Nabokov)³²³

My primary intention for this thesis has been to demonstrate the ways in which the theories and principles that underpin different twentieth-century psychotherapeutic approaches provide frameworks and concepts that facilitate the identification and definition of Austen's comprehensive insights into human nature and psychology. I wished also to show how my understanding of the principles and practices of modern-day psychotherapy has led me to interpret aspects of Austen's characterisations in ways that in some instances differ from existing perceptions, and at other times reinforce or enhance previous readings with explanatory analysis that is informed by the principles that underpin modern psychotherapeutic practice. Throughout the thesis I have drawn attention to the strong resonances that I have detected between the complex and subtle aspects of Austen's characters' emotions, thoughts and motivations, and the ways in which those elements of human experience are comprehended and explained within the major schools of psychotherapy.

The similarity between features of Austen's portrayals and the constituents of these psychotherapeutic formulations is frequently quite remarkable, and there is a rich seam of these resemblances throughout the author's novels which I have found to enhance my reading of all of her characters. My concern in consideration of the scope of the current thesis was to determine the way in which I could convey my readings and impressions most effectively. It would have been possible to focus briefly on numerous characters across the six novels in the light of each of the psychotherapeutic models that have informed this thesis. This strategy would have conveyed a

³²³ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*, ed. by Fredson Bowers (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1980), p. 6.

sense of the extent to which modern-day psychotherapeutic concepts permeate Austen's work, and it would have brought a wider range of Austen's characters into the purview of this thesis. However, the distinctiveness of Austen's psychological perspicuity lies in the layers of complexity that the author incorporates into her portrayal of the nature of her characters, and the psychotherapeutic formulations which form the background of my approach provide the means by which these layers may be identified and defined. I chose, therefore, to limit the breadth of my exploration, and to analyse in depth a small selection of characters and scenarios that I determined would fulfil the remit of this thesis most effectively. I chose also to focus on characters that I perceived to have attracted less penetrating attention than I observed them to warrant, or in respect of whom my interpretations differed from, or augmented most substantially, those presented within existing critiques. Further, I decided to concentrate largely on scenes that appear to be insignificant but which, from my perspective, contribute substantially to a greater understanding of the characters involved, as well as of Austen's extraordinary psychological insight and perhaps something of the author's intention.

The approach that I have taken has resulted in the absence from this thesis of many of Austen's characters and, in particular, the regrettable omission of a substantial analysis of any specific character from *Emma*. Austen's *Juvenilia*, *Lady Susan*, and the unfinished works, *The Watsons* and *Sanditon*, have likewise fallen outside of the scope of the current thesis.³²⁴ However, the constraints that I placed on the breadth of my analysis have enabled me to present a more finely detailed examination of the ways in which aspects of modern psychotherapeutic models may be discerned within Austen's work, and thereby to illuminate the many and nuanced psychological elements that are integral to Austen's characterisations as far as possible within the context of this thesis. The thorough explanations of the key psychotherapeutic paradigms and the intricate illustrations of Austen's characters that I have been able to offer as a result of my chosen structure and content provide the wherewithal for further explorations of each of Austen's works, and a wider range of her

³²⁴ See *The Novels of Jane Austen: VI Minor Works*, coll. and ed. by Robert Chapman ([1954] Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, repr. 1988).

characters from this perspective in the future. It may be interesting too to trace the development of Austen's psychological insights from indications of this contained within her *Juvenilia*. Austen produced her earliest pieces for the entertainment of her friends and family, and they are extremely amusing. Nevertheless, within the humour, one may detect the beginnings of Austen's interest in the reciprocal interaction between a person's thought processes on their emotions. There is an instance in *Catharine, or The Bower*, for example, in which Catharine is prevented by a toothache from attending a much-anticipated ball. Catharine is deeply disappointed, yet Austen states that:

she was not so totally void of philosophy as many Girls of her age, might have been in her situation. She considered that there were Misfortunes of a much greater magnitude than the loss of a Ball, experienced every day by some part of Mortality, and that the time might come when She would herself look back with Wonder and perhaps with Envy on her having known no greater vexation. By such reflections as these, she soon reasoned herself into as much Resignation & Patience as the pain she suffered would allow of [...].³²⁵

Here the young Austen describes the ameliorating effect of Catharine's rationalisation on the character's emotional state. The framework of the psychotherapeutic model of Emotional Intelligence, and the detailed analyses of Elinor and Marianne that I provide in Chapter Two of this thesis, establish a basis from which aspects of the *Juvenilia* such as this brief reflection on Catharine's part may be interpreted from a psychotherapeutic point of view.

In the previous chapter of this thesis, I note that my initial awareness of the resonance between Austen's psychological observations and modern psychotherapeutic understandings arose from my reading of Austen's portrayal of Mrs. Smith's resilience. Now, as I draw to the end of this thesis several years later, I notice a similar psychotherapy-related critical analysis of Mrs. Smith in Kay Young's chapter 'Resilience in Jane Austen', in Beth Lau's recent

³²⁵ Chapman, *The Novels of Jane Austen: VI Minor Works*, p. 208.

publication.³²⁶ It is particularly interesting to perceive the explicit involvement of psychotherapeutic notions in Young's proposition that Austen's illustrations of resilience lead her readers to become more resilient themselves. Young reflects that '[...] Jane Austen grows not just our powers of empathy, but our power to hope—the basis of resilience—[...]', and that 'The choicest gift of heaven is Jane Austen's gift to us'.³²⁷ Young's statement here touches on my acknowledgement in Chapter One of this thesis of the potential value of one aspect of Freudian theory in a critique of Austen's work.³²⁸ It is possible that Austen's novels might bring about therapeutic change within her readers by virtue of the operation of her storytelling on a metaphorical level. This is a notion that is derived directly from the Freudian concept of repression that I explain in Chapter One.³²⁹ Philip Barker expresses this position succinctly when he writes: 'A person may take a metaphor literally on a conscious level, while on the unconscious level perceiving its symbolic meaning. It is on this assumption that the clinical use of metaphorical communication is based.'³³⁰ Simply then, the telling of stories enables new ideas to be embedded at a subconscious level before they can be rejected at a conscious level.

It is not possible to know whether or not Austen had a deliberate intention to circumvent the unconscious minds of her readers and to communicate personally challenging ideas to them through the medium of her novels. However, as Lisa Zunshine suggests, it is hardly possible to interpret a text without the construal of an author's intentions, and, as I indicate throughout this thesis, the thread of psychotherapeutic principles within Austen's work suggests to me an intentionality on Austen's part to elicit personal change, or at least self-reflection on the part of her readers.³³¹ Having said that, my central intention for this thesis has been to illuminate and define

³²⁶ Kay Young, 'Resilience in Jane Austen', in *Jane Austen and the Sciences of the Mind*, ed. by Beth Lau, pp. 200-221.

³²⁷ Young, p. 217, p. 218.

³²⁸ I note this in addition to the process of 'intangling' to which I refer at times within this thesis.

³²⁹ One may recall Freud's explanation: '*the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious*', *Standard Ed.* (1914-16), XIV, 147 (Freud's italics).

³³⁰ Philip Barker, *Using Metaphors in Psychotherapy* (New York: Bruner/Mazel, 1985), p. 6.

³³¹ Lisa Zunshine, 'Cognitive alternatives to interiority', in *The Cambridge History of the English Novel*, pp. 147-162.

Austen's psychological insights from a psychotherapeutic viewpoint, and it is intriguing to distinguish, in Young's recent critique, the development of a field of exploration of Austen's work in which the perspective that I present in this thesis might play a part.

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