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“THE DEEPEST BLUSH”: BODILY STATES OF EMOTIONS IN JANE AUSTEN’S  
NOVELS

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Bachelor of Arts in English Literature

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at the

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“THE DEEPEST BLUSH”: BODILY STATES OF EMOTIONS IN JANE AUSTEN’S  
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**ABSTRACT**

During the eighteenth-century, philosophers gave primacy to rationality specifying that reason could and should control emotions; they observed a friction between thought and feeling, rational and irrational, emotion and cognition, mind and body, which competed and united in a way that influenced the eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century thought and experience on many sides. As an early nineteenth-century novelist, Jane Austen explores the relationship between emotion and cognition. I argue that Austen shows the importance of bodily experience of emotion in moral development. Deploying affect theory will illuminate Austen’s depiction of emotions as a mode of understanding of how the body becomes the place for knowledge and experience.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In her novels, Jane Austen examines the relationship between emotion and cognition—or mind and body. The term emotion is the modern term used for feelings; however, it was not always referred to as “emotions.” During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, feelings were viewed as morally disconnected, bodily, and involuntary feelings indicating any agitation or hindering mental competence. By the mid-eighteenth century, theorists, and philosophers such as Locke, Hume, and Spinoza began to view emotion in a way that is inclusive of the physical, the mental and the social. As an early nineteenth-century novelist, Jane Austen describes emotions through her novels that reflect the intimate lives of her female characters and highlight much of the social values practiced in the nineteenth century. Critics of Jane Austen’s fictions took interest in the way Austen perceived human emotions, morality, and social boundaries.

Much of mid-twentieth century criticism has focused on Jane Austen’s depiction of female moral identity, individuality, and the representation of the self. Gilbert Ryle follows earlier critics such as Richard Whately and Margret Oliphant in their analysis of Austen as a moralist. Ryle states that Jane Austen is interested in the theoretical problems

about human nature and conduct and is a moralist in the “thick sense” of the term (5). Ryle goes on to discuss Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Persuasion* to point out Austen’s Aristotelian perspective of moral identity. He analyzes Marianne’s character as the “heart” and Elinor’s character as the “head” to suggest that “they collapse into two-dimensional samples of abstract types” (6). Ryle correctly asserts that Elizabeth Bennet, in *Pride and Prejudice*, “combines a dangerous cocksureness in her assessments of people with a proper sense of her own worth” and “Darcy is ...haughty and snobbish, a true nephew of Lady Catherine de Burgh” (7). According to Gilbert Ryle, Jane Austen tuned in on theoretical question of “whether deep feeling is compatible with being reasonable” (8) and he concludes that “Jane Austen’s moral ideas are...ideas of the Aristotelian and not of the Calvinist patterns” (13). In other words, Austen does not depict her female protagonists with an either-or approach where a person is pulled up by reason or dragged down by passion; but she ascribes a perspective where both good and bad lie within a single entity.

Recent critics have interpreted character and emotion in a variety of ways in Austen’s novels. Thomas Williams focuses on Austen’s treatment of the specified emotion of jealousy to challenge critics who have deemed Jane Austen as a fully-fledged moralist. Williams explains that through jealousy, the female characters in Austen’s novels fall short of morality and it is, therefore; a reflection of Austen’s belief in a mixture of good and bad. Williams furthers his argument by weighing heavily on Daniel Farrel’s definition of jealousy. Using Farrel’s analysis of jealousy and envy, William’s objective is to propose that jealousy is allied with vice. He furthers his argument to say that “moral identities arise out of our rank and place in society; we do not create them ex



nihilum. Moreover, it is in our social interactions that we develop and display the virtues” (225-226). Williams also discusses Fanny Price in Austen’s *Mansfield Park* as an “outsider” to which she has an advantage of discernment; and “discernment requires disengagement” (226). Williams adds that as an “outsider” the character’s perception sharpens, and they have a clear-sight of their surroundings, and the people around them. He closes his argument with the notion that “discernment (cognitive) is the characteristic virtue of the “outsider,” jealousy is the characteristic vice” (227)—to suggest that “good character and acute discernment go hand-in-hand” (223). Mary Beth Garbitelli and Douglas Kries use Allan Bloom’s analysis of Jane Austen to suggest that Austen unites reason and passion under her “good conception of marriage” (33). They argue that Austen makes similar conclusion to that of Aristotle by uniting reason and passion into a romantic matrimony (34). Garbitelli and Kries astutely state that “Austen’s blending of emotional and intellectual elements is intended to unite and improve the entire person, so as to result in a better integration of Aristotelian friendship (35). Both Williams and Garbitelli and Kries make a similar analysis in that Austen understood the coexistence of reason and passion, mind and body.

Equally important, recent critics have delved into interpreting Austen’s novels with a Cartesian view of passion and reason to conclude that Austen favored reason over emotion. Matt Fisher interprets Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* to argue that Marianne Dashwood is the Lover or ‘of the body’ and Elinor Dashwood is the Connoisseur or ‘of the mind’. Using the fire screens section in the novel, Fisher points out that while Marianne Dashwood expresses the need for the “lover” and “connoisseur” to be united, Marianne behaves and admires as a “lover” or one with emotions that impede on her

rational thinking. Fisher disregards Marianne's emotional journey to growth and the crucial elements in Elinor's embodied emotions. In the scene where Elinor's drawings were discussed by the Ferrars and Mr. Dashwood, Fisher states that "Marianne's contribution to the conversation, however, reveals that even she cannot meet her own requirements for "connoisseurship" (217). Furthermore, he makes the distinction as separate entities when he postulates that "Marianne's music is focused more inward than outward...and Elinor's drawings, on the other hand, is a mimetic form that requires her to focus outward" (218). Matt Fisher acknowledges that Elinor's "connoisseurship" is "coldly rational" which is to say that Elinor seems impersonal—echoing the male's definition of rationality.

While many critics highlight the significance of the mind-body dualism and interaction in Austen's novels, no one has yet offered a holistic analysis of how Austen shows the interrelation and interconnected engagement of that relationship. I argue that Austen emphasizes emotion through the physical description of emotion such as blush and color so that emotion is not suppressed, repressed or tamed but felt and experienced as emotion surfaces on bodies. For Austen, emotion is important to feel and experience, thereby, suggesting that emotion plays a significant role in acquiring a moral identity. Austen's morally sensitive heroines—Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*, Fredericka in *Lady Susan*, and Elinor Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* often blush when they experience strong feelings of desire, shame, or embarrassment. For Austen, blush requires the utmost capacities of the mind and moral sensitivity; she, thus, uses blush to mitigate negative social impression rooted by contravention. Austen fuses characters' perception with their experience with emotion

suggesting holistically the different dimensions and processes of emotional experience thereby enabling a moral perception. Furthermore, with insights from Affect theory we recognize how Austen's physical description of emotion demonstrate the way in which embodied emotion serve as an impetus to obtaining knowledge, experience, and morality.

## CHAPTER II

### AFFECT THEORY

Affect theory is a theory that underscores the nonlinguistic potencies or *affects*. Many social theorists have explicated “affect” as an approach to history, culture and politics. While there is no consensus about the characterization of affect theory, affect is part and parcel of who we are and how we identify and relate with the world. Sara Ahmed suggests that emotions are key in defining “body boundaries” because they help to shape how we relate to each other, creating a cycle of affective actions and reactions (10). In other words, emotion transpires on bodies thereby creating relationships between people. Highmore’s vision of affect theory is appropriate and relevant to Jane Austen. His essay on affects and social aesthetics sheds light on the effects of cross-class and cross-culture encounters which helps us understand how Austen perceives emotion as a vital index to her characters and necessary to their moral development.

In his essay, Highmore explains that ‘affect’ is the “telltale heart” and that affect is the unspoken language that gives you away—or as he puts it “your personal polygraph machine” (118). Whether you make a choice to suppress your emotions, protest your emotions, or are unconscious of your emotions, who *you are* and *what you are*, according to Highmore, your affect will display bodily indicators such as blushing, the pumping of

the blood, glassy sheen in your eyes, posture and so forth (118). He elaborates on an approach of cultural inquiry that “privileges the body as a problematic locus for meaning, experience and knowledge” (119). Highmore’s concern is how the body relates to the outside world that transcends beyond the five senses. His thesis draws on critical studies of “emotions and affects, of perception, and the management of attention and on the studies of the senses, the sensorial, and the human sensorium” (119). Furthermore, Highmore proposes that cross-class and cross-cultural experiences are a complex entanglement of multi-sensory both socially and aesthetically.

The body is not isolated or separate from culture and society. Highmore elucidates that “*The body*, it seems, was all too often to be found in the body of the text. Yet a body free of the trappings (and traps) of discourse, of culture, might not be much of a human body at all” (119). Furthermore, he clarifies “affective experience” when he states:

we are *moved* by a sentiment; our *feelings* are hurt; I am *touched* by your presence. The interlacing of sensual, physical experience, with the passionate intensities of love, say, or bitterness makes it hard to imagine untangling them, allotting them to discrete categories in terms of their physicality or their ideational existence...could you possibly “feel” that you were in love if you couldn’t also feel your beating heart climbing into your throat or your palms sweat? Would I really be moved by a tragedy if I didn’t experience rivulets of tears trickling down my cheeks? ...the bundle of bees nesting in my stomach tell me I am anxious...the register of hot and cold, of warmth and frost, of passion and dispassion is an emotional and affective register. It is also, as is immediately suggested, a register of sensorial perception, and sensual expression (120-121).

Because Highmore suggests that the body is more connected than it is isolated, he describes the cross-modal study as “social aesthetics.” He uses the term “aesthetics” to expand and move beyond the limits that art theory have placed and misdirected.

Highmore mentions Baumgarten’s uneasiness about the “impressions received from the

senses, fantasies, emotional disturbances, etc. are unworthy of philosophers and beneath the scope of their consideration” (122). Highmore criticizes the narrowness of traditional perception of “aesthetics.” He states: “in the end this is what aesthetics becomes—a form of moral improvement—where the improvement is aimed at sensation, sentiment, and perception...here the artwork is a moral lesson, an aesthetic example to be mimicked and developed for the pursuit of the good and the true” (122). Other kinds of emotions and feelings are not recognized in this particular view of aesthetics because it is the “beautiful and the sublime” that fosters social propriety rather than anything more comprehensive and wide-ranging of emotions and feelings.

While traditional aesthetics use beauty to evaluate the “good and the true”

Highmore suggests that “taste” may provide a complete fullness in human experience.

Highmore explains:

Taste registers the imbrication of sense and status, of discernment and disdain, of the physical and the ideational. The very mobilization of the word “taste” to describe refined and discerning choice should alert us to the way that bodily sensorial life is implied in such judgments from the start...it might seem that the very idea of “taste” to signify discernment is already flirting with distaste by invoking the “lower” sense (smell and taste). One aspect of this distribution of sense (both cognition and sensation) is the way that seeing, and hearing are invoked in matters of ideational cognition, whereas “taste” is mobilizing the sensorial realms that are, in the end, impervious to rationalist dictates (124).

Highmore’s focus is on the “affective experience” as the complete union of the sensual, physical experience with the passion, love, say or bitterness rather than the singular evaluative means of “beauty” or the higher levels of emotions to reach a moral end (120).

Therefore, “taste” is that evaluative process of social aesthetics that fully accounts for “affective actions” and “reactions.” Highmore uses an example such as being humiliated in front of a loved one and therefore “I am bruised” (120). The statement is interpreted

both literally and metaphorically. On the physical level or literally, “I sit slightly slumped, more weary and wary”. And on the emotional level or metaphorically, “I am internally battered” (120). For Highmore, taste is inclusive of all sides of emotions such as beautiful and ugly, attractive and repulsive. And it is also a way of “ordering and demeaning, of giving value and taking it away” (126). The point Highmore makes is that taste and the admix of affect gives the object some pertinence.

Highmore’s theory of affect is appropriate to deploy on Jane Austen’s novels because he challenges the mid-eighteenth century thought on “beauty and sublime” as means for “affective experience” to suggest that “affective experience” is outside and beyond the scope of beauty. Affective experience is part of the sensation, perception and the physical nature of the body (Highmore, 119). Furthermore, Highmore’s assertion on “social aesthetics” and of the use of “taste” as evaluation of aesthetics highlight the way Jane Austen aestheticizes love and relationships. For Austen, relationships require sensorial contact. Moreover, the use of “taste” may be focused on its metaphor for choice and with language of expression, and judgments. Jane Austen’s depictions of her characters shed light on the way she values emotions for their role in morality.

I will begin with *Sense and Sensibility* to trace Elinor’s embodied emotion throughout the novel and Marianne’s emotional journey to growth. Next, I will discuss Austen’s *Mansfield Park* to locate Fanny’s blush as symptomatic of morality and emphasize how Fanny finds her agency through emotions. Then, I will turn to *Pride and Prejudice* to elaborate on Elizabeth’s blush and how it affects various interpretations. And finally, I will turn to *Lady Susan* to show how Austen’s unique method of

highlighting the importance of emotions by discussing the absence of emotions in emotion-provoking scenes in the novel.



### CHAPTER III

#### SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Jane Austen's first published novel *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) depicts the process by which a person feels. At the onset of the novel, the narrator establishes a hierarchy between the emotional experiences of the Dashwood sisters:

Elinor, the eldest daughter, whose advice was so effectual, possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgment, which qualified her, though only nineteen, to be the counsellor of her mother, and enabled her to frequently to counteract, to the advantage of them all, that eagerness of mind in Mrs. Dashwood which must generally led to imprudence. She had an excellent heart—her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them: it was knowledge which her mother had yet to learn and which one of her sisters had resolved never to be taught. (8)

In the passage above, the narrator places Elinor in the top of the hierarchy to express Elinor as an exemplary character who demonstrates emotional strength. Austen emphasizes that Elinor is not without *strong feelings*. Her “strong feelings” express the kind of feelings which are heightened or intensified. Moreover, “knowledge” is the key term that separates Elinor from Marianne and even their mother, Mrs. Dashwood. Marianne and her mother are expressed beneath Elinor's disposition. Clearly, “strong feelings” and “knowledge” within a single body emphasizes the interlacing of the human condition. While the narrator continues to characterize Marianne as excessively sensible, the narrator states that Elinor possess the same excess of emotions; but with the ability to

“struggle, she could exert herself. She could receive her sister-in-law on her arrival and treat her with proper attention” (8). While the word “struggle” does not specify bodily terms, the word “struggle” is important to focus on because it implies the endurance of the ugly emotions or as Highmore conveys “lower senses.” However, Elinor’s ability to “exert herself” while “deeply afflicted” as the narrator puts it, is the holistic approach that Austen uses that identifies the “self” as moral.

Jane Austen begins the art of love and relationships in *Sense and Sensibility* with a fall. The scene where Marianne falls and twists her ankle can be seen both literally and metaphorically. When love is discussed, we usually express it as “fall” or “falling” in love. In this scene, Marianne’s “fall” can be metaphorically viewed as falling in her own fragmented notion of love. To begin, Marianne’s romantic view of the world is not equivalent to the kind of emotions needed to propel her to good judgment. The narrator’s early emphasis with Marianne’s characterization as “excessively sensible” at the onset of the novel is a technique used to indicate a distinction between romantic emotions, and affective emotions. Romantic emotions distract and serve as a response to the imagination. This is evident when the narrator describes:

Marianne herself had seen less of his person than the rest, for the confusion which crimsoned over her face, on his lifting her up, had robbed her of the power of regarding him after entering the house. But she had seen enough of him to join all the admiration of the others, and with an energy which always adorned her praise. His person and air were equal to what her fancy had ever drawn for the hero of a favorite story. (33)

The above passage describes the beginning of Marianne’s fall into the fantasy of love. Marianne concludes that Mr. Willoughby is the desired object. Her means of evaluation is the element which separates romantic feelings from “affective emotions.” The narrator explains that “their taste was strikingly alike. The same books, the same passages were

idolized by each...and speedily discovered that their enjoyment of music and dance was mutual” (36). Austen matches all that is “beautiful and sublime” in their cultural taste of dance and music, and their intellectual taste of books and passages. However, Marianne’s taste or lack thereof does not mobilize her senses and, therefore, she lacks discernment. Austen makes this evident when the narrator expresses Elinor’s doubt of Marianne’s evaluation when she tells her sister: “for *one* morning I think you have done pretty well. You have already ascertained Mr. Willoughby’s opinion in almost every matter of importance...But how is your acquaintance to be long supported? You will soon have exhausted each favorite topic. Another meeting will surface to explain his sentiments on picturesque, beauty and second marriages, and then you can have nothing farther to ask” (37). The importance of Elinor’s doubt underscores the way in which Austen explains “taste.” To put it differently, Marianne romanticizes the commonalities shared between her and Willoughby and by extension links fantasy with reality. Consequently, Marianne’s reasoning and rationalizing her love for Willoughby stems from her disconnection with, as Highmore terms it, “sensorial realm.”

Highmore’s definition of “taste” is “hedged in from all sides by the physical possibility of revulsion, disgust, and disdain” (124). Fittingly, Marianne uses “taste” to wound. She sees Colonel Brandon as a “body” too old for love. Brandon is thirty-five years old and Marianne is in her teens; she associates an aged body with illness. Marianne expresses her perception of Brandon as one who has no sensorial function: “If he were ever animated enough to be in love, must have long outlived every sensation of the kind. It is too ridiculous! When is a man to be safe from such wit, if age and infirmity will not protect him?” (30-31). Elinor counters Marianne’s view of him:

I must object to your dooming Colonel Brandon and his wife to the constant confinement of a sick chamber, merely because of a slight rheumatic feel in one of his shoulders.

But he talked of flannel waistcoats, said Marianne, and with me a flannel waistcoat is invariably connected with aches, cramps, rheumatisms, and every species of ailment that can afflict the old and the feeble

Had he been only in a violent fever, you would not have despised him half so much. Confess, Marianne, is not there something interesting to you in the flushed cheek, hallow eye, and quick pulse of a fever? (30-31)

In the above passage, Marianne's dislike of Colonel Brandon is already flirting with the idea of liking him. She mentions that "he is old enough to be *my* father" (29). Marianne demonstrates the ability to give value to something and takes it away which goes back to Highmore's "taste" and how taste is an orchestration of the sensible. Furthermore, Elinor's compassion for Colonel Brandon blends those emotions of the "lower senses" that Marianne feels. This is evident when Elinor sarcastically adds "violent fever" to Marianne's interpretation of "old and the feeble." Marianne resorts to her imagination to communicate the knowledge and meaning that produces from within. Marianne's inward reliance is Austen's method of producing that various process in which emotional experience stems from. Austen's depiction of Marianne's struggle to rationalize triggers the process where the physical, the mental and the social intersect. This is evident when Elinor replies to Marianne's comment on Edward lacking taste. The reply is a metaphor for the way "affective experiences" are satisfied. Elinor responds: "I assure you he is by no means deficient in natural taste, though he has not the opportunities of improving it. Had he ever been in the way of learning, I think he would have drawn very well. He distrusts his own judgment...but he has an innate propriety and simplicity of taste, which in general direct him perfectly right" (16). Through the discussion of taste and art, Austen brings attention to "innate propriety" which is a significant view on morality

because it invokes the view of how emotion is an index of character. And when Marianne further critiques Edward's ability for "taste," she says: "He admires as a lover, not as a connoisseur. To satisfy me, those characters must be united" (15). "lover" and "connoisseur" are metaphors for "emotion" and "cognition" or mind and body. And it is not that Marianne fails to unite them, but it is an aspiration to do so where Marianne "falls" into that subject of learning which is cited in Elinor.

Jane Austen illustrates "affective emotions" in Elinor suggesting the forces in which bodies communicate and in which emotions, on a physical level, can change bodily posture. When Mr. Dashwood passed away (Marianne and Elinor's father), the Dashwood family are displaced and removed from their class title with the help of their sister-in-law, Fanny Ferrars. The separation puts the Dashwood family materialistically at a disadvantage. Nonetheless, it is Elinor's affection for Edward that underscores affective emotions. Austen establishes that both Elinor and Edward shared romantic feelings for each other as enthusiastically expressed by her family: "it is enough," said she; "to say that he is unlike Fanny is enough, it implies everything amiable. I love him already" (14). However, When Elinor learns that Edward is engaged to Lucy Steele, the news catches Elinor by surprise: "what felt Elinor at that moment? Astonishment, that would have been as painful as it was strong, had not an immediate disbelief of assertion attended it. She turned to Lucy in silent amazement, unable to divine the reason or object of such declaration and though her complexion varied, she stood firm in incredulity and felt in no danger of an hysterical fit, or a swoon" (94). Jane Austen uses doubt and disbelief to thwart any "affective actions" and "reactions." Consequently, doubt serves to mobilize

Elinor into seeking out the truth. And when Lucy confirms that Edward is the one she is engaged with, the narrator explains:

She was almost overcome—her heart sunk within her, and she could hardly stand; but exertion was indispensably necessary; and she struggled so resolutely against the oppression of her feelings, that her success was...complete..."I did," said Elinor, 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...the Miss Steeles returned to the Park, and Elinor was then at liberty to think and be wretched (98).

The narrator explains the bodily struggle against the ugly or "oppressive" emotions that Elinor feels. The struggle to "stand" and the "composure of voice" all while displaying a "varied complexion" demonstrates the *affects* that Elinor endures; Lucy notices these physical symptoms as she tells Elinor: "there seems to be a kind of coldness and displeasure in your manner, that made me quite uncomfortable. I was sure that you was angry with me" (104). Lucy's direct speech is indicative of how Austen explains the physical description of emotions which another person can understand. Elinor decides to keep the news of Edward's engagement to herself as the narrator explains: "She is stronger alone, and her own good sense so well supported her" (101). This is indicative that the affect is both bodily and autonomic. Furthermore, knowing that she is to be separated from the one she loves, and the intensity of the emotions that she feels—does not influence her mind or judgment; and therefore, her state of mind is self-sufficient. Nonetheless, Elinor's affected body prompts her to seek further details from Lucy Steele: "she soon felt an earnest wish of renewing it; and this for more reason than one. [Elinor] wanted to hear many particulars of their engagement repeated again, she wanted more clearly to understand what Lucy really felt for Edward, whether there were any sincerity in her declaration of regard for him" (101). The desire for more details of the subject is the "affective action" taken to further observe and tap into Lucy's intentions. Moreover,

“that Lucy was disposed to be jealous of [Elinor], appeared very probable; it was plain that Edward had always spoken highly in [Elinor] praise, not merely from Lucy’s assertions, but by venturing to trust her on so short a personal acquaintance, with a secret so confessedly and evidently important” (101). Lucy’s “affective emotion” is evident. Her quick move to entrust an almost stranger with a very intimate secret discloses the way the bodies relate to one another. Lucy’s desire to “be close” with Elinor through a shared secret and Elinor’s desire to further observe Lucy’s truth generates the kind of force that Austen shows that bodies can produce.

Jane Austen uses Marianne’s body to emphasize emotion and “affective experience”—the experience in which the physical and emotional joy or pain unite-- that Marianne undergoes. Marianne’s expressive emotion for the dead leaves in Norland is analogous to her relationship with Willoughby: “with what transporting sensations have I formerly seen them fall? How have I delighted, as I walked, to see them driven in showers about me by the wind! What feelings have they, the season, the air altogether inspired!” (65). The “falling” of dead leaves is metaphor for the fall for Willoughby which the “dead leaves” stand for. Metaphorically, the detachment of the leaves from the whole of the tree and the moving meaninglessly by the wind reflects Marianne’s detachment with her whole self. Marianne’s perception is clouded with her romantic feelings for her beloved. When Willoughby leaves for London, Marianne secures their engagement with a lock of her hair. Her attachment is official, and “dwells on the perfection of a man of whose whole heart she felt thoroughly possessed” (100). However, Marianne and Elinor are invited to London, and Marianne is eager to meet with Willoughby. Marianne fervently writes to Willoughby which he does not reply to. When

Marianne finally sees Willoughby, she could not compose herself: “to be composed at such a moment was not only beyond the reach of Marianne, it was beyond her wish. She sat in an agony of impatience, which affected every feature” (125). the peak of their meeting finally occurs, and the narrator describes:

At last he turned round again, and regarded them both; she started up, and pronouncing his name in a tone of affection, held out her hand to him. He approached and addressing himself rather to Elinor than Marianne, as if wishing to avoid her eye, and determined not to observe her attitude, inquired in a hurried manner after Mrs. Dashwood...Elinor was robbed of all presence of mind by such an address, and was unable to say a word. But the feelings of her sister were instantly expressed. Her face crimsoned over, and she exclaimed in a voice of the greatest emotion, “Good God! Willoughby, what is the meaning of this? Have you not received my letters? Will you not shake my hand?” (125).

Marianne’s bodily attempt to greet Willoughby and the rejection that ensued engendered “her face to crimson over” and “exclaimed in a voice of the greatest emotion” are affective emotions that are both physically and emotionally expressed. When Willoughby returns to Miss Grey, “Marianne [looks] dreadfully white, and unable to stand, sunk into her chair” (126). Marianne continues to be described hereafter as “death-like paleness” and when Elinor tries to console her sister, the narrator explains: “no attitude could give her ease; and in *restless pain of mind and body she moved from one posture to another, till growing more and more hysterical*” (emphasis added,135). The affective experience is clearly displayed in bodily terms, but the utmost affective occurrence lies in Marianne’s “ill” body:

A very restless and feverish night...when Marianne, after persisting in rising confessed herself unable to sit up...poor Marianne languid and low from the nature of her melody and feeling herself universally ill...[Elinor] became more and more disturbed; and her sister, who watched with unremitting attention her continual change of posture, and heard frequent but inarticulate sounds of complaint which passed her lips, was almost wishing to rouse her from so painful a slumber, when Marianne suddenly awakened...started hastily up, and with feverish, wildness, cried out--- hour after hour passed away in sleepless pain and delirium on Marianne’s side (217-221).



Austen uses Marianne's body as the place for experiencing emotions thereby attaining knowledge necessary for moral development. The bodily terms described such as "change of posture," "feverish," "painful slumber," "sleepless pain and delirium," etc.... all point to the physical, emotional, and mental affects on Marianne. Moreover, Austen makes use of Marianne's body not just as a "mere kind of growth into maturity" but to highlight those "lower senses" or symptomatic of those emotions that serve to propel one's body into achieving a moral identity. Furthermore, it is those kind of "lower senses" that serve a holistic understanding of the human condition and its journey towards a more ethical and moral habits. Also, after her illness, Marianne explains to Elinor about her renewed self. And makes a reference of her "inexperienced" self by using bodily terms to express her emotional state at that time: "Had I died, --in what particular misery should I have left you, my nurse, my friend, my sister!—you who had seen all the fretful selfishness of my latter days; you who had known all the murmurings of my heart!" (245). Interestingly, "murmurings of my heart" implies both emotional pain and affectivity. When Marianne begins to speak of Willoughby, her physical emotions begin to appear as the narrator describes: "her rising colour as she spoke—and her unsteady voice plainly shewed [sic]" (247). As Marianne continues to make amends with herself, and Elinor seeing that Marianne is remorseful, decides to tell Marianne about Willoughby's apology to provide a resolution:

Marianne said not a word. —she trembled, her eyes fixed on the ground, her lips became whiter than even sickness had left them. A thousand inquiries sprung up from her heart, but she dared not urge one. She caught every syllable with panting eagerness; her hand, unknowingly to herself, closely pressed her sister's, and tears covered her cheeks. (246).

Marianne's physical emotions are evident of a struggle between wanting to respond but overcoming it with exertion. Her "tremble, eyes fixed on the ground" and "white lips" all

point to those emotions in which the sound of Willoughby ignites. But Marianne pushes back as she holds back “with panting eagerness.” Austen’s use of that phrase unites the physical and the emotional. “Panting” is the physical exertion and “eagerness” is the emotional. Jane Austen’s depiction of Marianne’s physical and emotional union along with Marianne’s desire to be “checked by religion,” and “checked by reason,” is the coming together of her physical, emotional and social self. Evidently, Austen emphasizes emotions by physically describing emotions so that Marianne’s emotions are not suppressed, repressed or tamed but felt and experienced as they surface on her body.

Elinor’s emotional process is more evident of her experience than Marianne’s emotional process; nonetheless, Jane Austen’s depiction of Elinor’s embodied emotion serves to accentuate the emotional value that many critics like Gilbert Ryle and Matt Fisher have discounted. In depicting Marianne’s emotional outbursts and irrational conduct, Austen describes Elinor’s ability to uncover a “pre-cognitive” state of being. This is evident in Austen’s emphasis by repetition of the idea of Elinor’s exertion to govern her emotions: “[Elinor] turned to [Lucy] in silent amazement...unable to divine a reason...though her complexion varied, she stood firm...she was silent—Elinor’s security sunk; but her self-command did not sink with it” (94-95). It is worth noting how Austen chooses the words that express both mind and body in the same line such as “turned... in silent amazement” and “her complexion varied, she stood firm.” This might be an indication of how Austen is exploring the place of emotion in the context of the prevailing, and overly praise of cognitive hold. Nonetheless, for Austen, emotion remains an important matter to experience because emotion engenders a shift to moral identity.

Furthermore, Austen's physical description of emotion is evident in the way her characters blush. Mrs. Jennings first appearance in the novel "pretends" to see her company blush: "[Mrs. Jennings] was full of jokes and laughter, and before dinner was over had said many witty things on the subject of lovers and husbands; hoped they had not left their hearts behind them in Sussex, and pretended to see them blush, whether they did or not" (27). It is a kind of injection toward Elinor which is why Marianne takes offense on her sister's behalf. The narrator describes Mrs. Jennings as one who is active and happy to "project weddings among all the young people of her acquaintance." And "was remarkably quick in the discovery of attachments and had enjoyed the advantage of raising blushes and the vanity of many young lady" (29). But while Mrs. Jennings "pretends" to see those blushes, Elinor attempts to raise those blushes in Marianne. When Marianne and Willoughby tour around the house he was to inherit from Mrs. Smith, Elinor scolds Marianne's conduct and Marianne replies:

I am not sensible of having done any thing [sic] wrong in walking over Mrs. Smith's grounds, or in seeing her house. They will one day be Mr. Willoughby's and....

If they were one day to be your own, Marianne, you would not be justified in what you have done.

She blushed at this hint; but it was even visibly gratifying to her (52).

Marianne's blush indicates an excitement of the idea of becoming Mrs. Willoughby but Elinor intends to raise Marianne's blush to embarrass her and have Marianne see her impropriety in her behavior. This is evident when the narrator describes the ten-minute interval Marianne takes to enjoy your mental image as Mrs. Willoughby. And when she returns to her sister, Marianne then tells Elinor: "perhaps, Elinor, it was rather ill-judged in me to go to Allenham" (52). The narrator makes no mention of Marianne's blush and instead only refers to her approach as said with "great good humour." There was no time

wasted after her “acknowledgement” of her “ill-judged” behavior because in that same sentence joined by a semi-colon Marianne goes on to describe the beauty of the house. Clearly, Elinor’s attempt to raise Marianne’s blush for ethical purposes fails when Marianne’s blush is produced out of excitement for the possibility of becoming Willoughby’s wife and mistress of the house. Austen’s portrayal of this scene is to elevate the importance of body and the meaningful experience it can or cannot produce. In other words, Elinor’s attempt to make Marianne feel ashamed by exposing her hidden aspirations to become Mrs. Willoughby fails because Marianne does not “feel” as if she did anything wrong. And although she acknowledges her misstep, Marianne’s acknowledgment is said without any affectivity.

Austen also uses blush as a mark of first and second-hand embarrassment and makes the context for blushing humorous. When Elinor decides to seek more information from Lucy to determine Lucy’s “sincerity in her declaration of tender regard for him” (101), Miss Steele mishears Lucy when she referred Mr. Robert Ferrars as a great coxcomb and as Lucy corrects her sister with a negative, Mrs. Jennings jumps in to say:

I can answer for it that Miss Dashwood’s is not...for he is one of the modest, prettiest behaved young men I ever saw; but as for Lucy, she is such a sly little creature, there is no finding out who she likes.

Oh! Cried Miss Steele, looking significantly round at them. “I dare say Lucy’s beau is quite as modest and pretty behaved as Miss Dashwood’s.”

Elinor blushed in spite of herself. Lucy bit her lip and looked angrily at her sister (106).

This is entertaining and funny because both Mrs. Jennings and Miss Steele are unaware that they are referring to the same “beau”—Edward. However, Elinor is aware, and it is for this reason she blushes. In this sense, Elinor’s blush is indicative of a first-hand embarrassment. The blush that indicates a second-hand embarrassment occurs when

Elinor discovers Lucy's insincerity. Lucy asks Elinor for a favor. She wants Elinor to recommend Edward to her brother, John Dashwood, and appoint Edward at Norland living. Elinor politely declines citing a logical reason. Edward is the brother to John Dashwood's wife, Fanny Ferrar and that should be enough to recommend. And Elinor further explains that her opinion will hold no weight, "unless it were on the side of [Lucy's] wishes," and Lucy attempts to counter Elinor by reassuring her that she "values" Elinor's opinion and judgment to the extent that if Elinor says "put an end to your engagement with Edward Ferrar...I should resolve upon doing it immediately" (107). In response, the narrator explains: "Elinor blushed for the insincerity of Edward's future wife and replied, this compliment would effectually frighten me from giving any opinion on the subject had I formed one" (107). Evidently, Elinor's blush is on behalf of Lucy's hypocritical claim made to Elinor for which Lucy does not blush. Another occurrence of blushing as a second-hand embarrassment takes place when Edward receives a letter from Lucy about her marriage to Edward's brother, Robert. In the letter, Lucy makes irrational and insensitive statements and after Elinor reads it, Edward says:

I will not ask your opinion of it as a composition, said Edward, for worlds would not I have had a letter of her's seen by *you* in former days. –in a sister it is bad enough, but in a wife! – how I have blushed over the pages of her writing! (258).

Edward's blush for the way Lucy behaves is significant in the way Jane Austen portrays those characters with moral values. Lucy cannot blush because she cannot feel for her insensitivity; however, much like Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*, Elinor and Edward do blush because they are in touch with their emotions and for that reason they are morally perceptual. Moreover, Austen's use of the blush evidently shows the way in which emotion propels moral judgments and good perceptions. Austen's physical descriptions

of emotion emphasize the significance in the ability to feel and experience emotions that would consequently enable a moral perception.

## CHAPTER IV

### MANSFIELD PARK

Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) has more scenes of blushing. The important aspect in the novel is in the way *affect* is highlighted and reflects physically, emotionally, and socially. Upon Fanny's first arrival to Mansfield, the narrator describes Fanny's substance as "no glow of complexion, exceedingly timid and shy," and "shrinking from notice" (11). Austen's descriptions are not merely a description of physical features but of bodily *affects*. Fanny Price is removed from her family to live with her relatives. Mrs. Norris ensures Fanny knows her "place" in Mansfield. Throughout the novel Austen depicts affect to underscore the ways in which the physical, and emotional unite to produce the experience needed for morality without compromising Fanny's agency.

The novel begins with Fanny's arrival. Austen highlights how Fanny's surroundings cause bodily affects. The narrator explains: "the grandeur of the house astonished but could not console her. The rooms were too large for her to move in with ease; whatever she touched she expected to injure, and she crept about in constant terror of something or other; often retreating towards her own chamber to cry" (13). The terms used to describe Fanny's bodily affect towards her new environment such as her inability

“to move in with ease” and “crept in terror” are bodily descriptions that implies apprehension. As the Bertram family welcomes Fanny in, Mrs. Norris takes it upon herself to serve as Fanny’s governess. She is to teach Fanny her limitations and ensure Fanny will not be “close” with the Bertram children because of her lower social status. Those restrictions and the constant attempts from Mrs. Norris to ensure Fanny’s place are the boundaries the family imposes on her. When Mrs. Norris reinforces the idea that Fanny and the Bertram girls are not to mingle because they are not considered “equals” and to attempt to secure a way that the Bertram sons do not become romantically involved leaves Fanny to be in a state of vulnerability. This is evident when Edmund finds Fanny sitting on the attic stairs crying. Moreover, Fanny fears any sort of attention or notice from her relatives. When Edmund tells Fanny of how her uncle admires her beauty, it oppresses her to the extent that her body reacts by turning away: “your complexion is so improved! —and you have gained so much countenance—and your figure! Nay, Fanny, do not turn away about it—it is but an uncle” (136). The gesture that Fanny makes is indicative of the result of Mrs. Norris diminishing lecture to Fanny about her “lower” social status, and it also may be indicative of Fanny’s reserved self because Edmund is the one who is complimenting her. Austen’s use of bodily expressions points to her understanding of how the body can produce meaning.

There are little over a dozen times Austen uses “blush” throughout the novel and more than half are in description of Fanny Price. When Sir Thomas comes back from his business trip from Antigua, the family surrounds him, and Fanny follows through as Sir Thomas searches for her:



And on perceiving her, came forward with a kindness which astonished and penetrated her, calling her his dear Fanny, kissing her affectionately, and observing with decided pleasure how much she has grown! ...A fine blush having succeeded the previous paleness of her face, he was justified in his belief of her equal improvement in health and beauty (123).

It is worth noting that the narrator mentions “the previous paleness of her face” to reinforce the idea that Fanny was not at all accepting of the kind of immoral behavior that went on during Sir Thomas’ absence. Maria and Julia’s battle over Tom Crawford’s affection and how Maria and Tom continue to openly flirt with each other despite Maria’s engagement with Mr. Rushworth. In addition, the choice of *Lover’s Vow* as the play to use in their theater is controversial. Neither Edmund nor Fanny approved. As Edmund went along with the play, Fanny tried to resist participating the simplest part of the play. However, Mrs. Norris scolding her for not helping added stress to Fanny. Therefore, when Sir Thomas returns, and order has been restored in Mansfield Park, Fanny’s blush is not only an indication of “embarrassment” but also a feeling of pleasure to have things back in order.

Fanny’s blush further signifies resentment and disapproval which is evident when Henry Crawford tries to win her heart. Fanny attends a dinner party at Mr. and Mrs. Grant’s house and Henry tries to court Fanny. Henry tries to converse with Fanny about Mr. Rushworth but her discomfort with Henry is embodied as the narrator says: “Fanny coloured and said nothing” (154). As Henry misses the mark of Fanny’s bodily expression, he continues to talk about the play:

It is as a dream, a pleasant dream! He exclaimed, breaking forth again after few minutes musing. I will always look back on our theatricals with exquisite pleasure...Fanny repeated to herself, “Never happier! —never happier, than doing what you must know was not justifiable...oh! What a corrupted mind!

[Henry] seemed determined to be answered; and Fanny, averting her face, said with a firmer tone than usual, “As far as I am concerned, sir, I would not have

delayed [Sir Thomas] return for a day. My uncle disapproved it all so entirely when he did arrive, that in my opinion everything had gone quite far enough. [Fanny] had never spoken so much at once to him in her life before and never so angrily at any one; and when her speech was over, she trembled and blushed at her own daring. (155).

Fanny's loyalty to Edmund is not only the reason for her disliking Henry. Henry is amoral. And Fanny sees that in him and therefore expresses bodily terms such as "averting her face" and using a "firmer tone" to speak to him to indicate her dislike of Henry. Fanny's "tremble" and "blush" at such an angry approach for a response is indicative of her unintentionality. Henry, however, uses Fanny's blush as a feature that adds to her beauty: "but in that soft skin of hers, so frequently tinged with a blush as it was yesterday, there is decided beauty; and from what I observed of her eyes and mouth...her tout ensemble is so indescribably improved!" (157). As Henry schemes "to make Fanny Price in love with him," he further refers Fanny's blush to say: "and if a fortnight can kill her, she must have a constitution which nothing can save. No, I will not do her any harm, dear little soul! I only want her to look kindly on me, to give me smiles as well as blushes" (158). The two different modes in the way "blush" is used and perceived is significant. Henry refers to Fanny's blush as "something to admire," but Fanny blushes at Henry because his amoral character offends hers. Moreover, Mary Crawford wrongfully interprets Fanny's blush when she asks her about Henry's whereabouts: "Miss Crawford blundered most towards Fanny, in her intention to please. [Mary] meant to be giving [Fanny] little heart a happy flutter and filling her with sensations of delight self-consequence; and misinterpreting Fanny's blushes, still thought she must be doing so" (190). Austen makes use of Fanny's blush to signify Fanny's moral identity.

Furthermore, Jane Austen continues to use Fanny's blush as an involuntary occurrence that signifies an unwelcomed social attention that Fanny receives from Henry. In the scene where Fanny is preparing for a ball and decides on a chain from Mary for her cross, and upon selecting a chain from Mary's jewelry box, Fanny finds out that that chain was a gift from her brother, Henry Crawford: "My dear child—said [Mary] laughing. What are you afraid of? Do you think Henry will claim the necklace as mine, and fancy you did not come honestly by it? ...looking archly—you suspect a confederacy between us, and that what I am doing is with his knowledge and at his desire? With the deepest blushes, Fanny protested against such a thought" (178). During the ball, Mr. Crawford had the first dance with Fanny and Fanny notices Mr. Crawford's "eye glancing for a moment at her necklace, with a smile—[Fanny] thought there was a smile—which made her blush and feel wretched" (188). As the narrator associates the "blush" with "feeling wretched," the embodied emotion unambiguously and unintentionally exposes Fanny's emotional state of mind. Also, Henry Crawford uses Fanny's brother as a means to manipulate Fanny's emotions. He finds a way to help Fanny's brother, William Price, to secure a position as Lieutenant. As Fanny receives the letters the narrator describes: "While her hand trembled under these letters, her eye running from one to the other, and her heart swelling with emotion" (204). Henry's actions were intended to have Fanny become romantically involved and despite the extent of the affect it has on Fanny, Henry's scheme fails. Consequently, Henry seeks to pressure Fanny by going to Sir Thomas. Because Sir Thomas represents the kind of authority that Fanny respects, his opinion emotionally affects her:

Fanny obeyed, with eyes cast down and colour rising—After a moment's pause, Sir Thomas, trying to suppress a smile, went on...Fanny's color grew deeper and

deeper; and her uncle perceiving that she was embarrassed to a degree that made either speaking or looking up quite impossible, turned away his own eyes, and without any further pause, proceeded in his account of Mr. Crawford's visit (212-213).

The coloring in Fanny's appearance is indicative of the embarrassment that she feels. But Sir Thomas's support of Henry is also indicative of the fact that he does not carry the same perception and knowledge of Henry that Fanny does. It is worth stating that Sir Thomas' body movement such as rising from his seat and sitting back down is indicative of the kind of *affect* Fanny's response has on him: "her mind was in too much confusion, Fanny was listening to her uncle in the utmost perturbation and dismay. For a moment he ceased...when rising from his chair, he said, and now Fanny... [you must] accompany me downstairs [to see Mr. Crawford] (213). Sir Thomas' "rising from his chair" signifies that he has accepted Henry's proposal and therefore the marriage proposal is a settled matter. However, Fanny pushes back with a rejection: "There was a look, a start, an exclamation, on hearing this, which astonished Sir Thomas...I do not catch your meaning, said Sir Thomas, sitting down again" (213). Sir Thomas' bodily movement of "sitting down again" may be interpreted that he has been overpowered by Fanny's rejection. Simultaneously, Fanny is also holding back the truth about her love for Edmund. Her refusal of Henry's proposal leaves both Sir Thomas and Fanny "in deep thought." Sir Thomas' astonishment comes from the fact that he has *rationalized* Henry to be a good suitor: "Here is a young man wishing to pay his addresses to you, with everything to recommend him; not merely situation in life, fortune, and character, but with more than common agreeableness" (214). From what Sir Thomas observes and from what he can "see," Sir Thomas lacks the kind of perception he needs to better judge Henry. Fanny sits through Sir Thomas' bitter judgment of her to say that she is "selfish"

and “ungrateful” and with a “good deal of stern coldness, said, it is of no use, I perceive, to talk to you” (215). The narrator describes Fanny as in “tremble wretchedness” and in tears, but Fanny persists on declining Henry’s marriage proposal. Clearly, Jane Austen not only has Fanny choose emotion, but it is through her emotion that Fanny is able to see through Henry’s illusory and sham affections that he bestows on her. Moreover, Fanny’s emotional rejection of Henry, her ability to confront her uncle’s authority, and Fanny’s success, may suggest the way in which Austen values emotions in the context of formal “perfection.” Evidently, Austen’s emphasis on emotions and its physical description suggest the importance of feeling and experiencing emotions to enable moral perception.

Furthermore, Austen uses Edmund’s character to echo the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century view on women and rationality. When Sir Thomas tells Edmund, taking desperate measures, to try to convince Fanny to marry Henry. Edmund tells Fanny: “Let [Henry] succeed at last, Fanny, let him succeed at last. You have proved yourself upright and disinterested, proved yourself grateful and tender-hearted; and then you will be the perfect model of a woman, which I have always believed you born for” (235-236). And with a forceful outburst, Fanny cries out: “Oh! Never, never, never; he never will succeed with me.” And she spoke with a warmth which quite astonished Edmund, and which she blushed at the recollection of herself, when she saw his look and heard him reply, “Never, Fanny, so very determined and positive! This is not like yourself, your rational self.” (236). Fanny once again embodies the emotion of embarrassment for making such a forceful assertion but without regret in doing so. Furthermore, Austen’s use of emotion produces the kind of agency that Fanny needs to challenge a nearly forced marriage. However, that Edmund cites “faultless” Fanny and a

“perfect model of a woman” and speaks of “rationality” in the context in which Edmund cannot understand Fanny’s behavior points to a kind of critique of the way in which men tend to perceive women. For Austen, the show of emotion is not regrettable but the regret for which Edmund defines Fanny’s “rational self.” Therefore, for Austen, emotion is highlighted in a way that cannot be associated with female irrationality but, instead, it can be associated with female agency.

Jane Austen acknowledges other emotions to include those of the “lower” senses; namely, jealousy. It has already been established that Fanny is jealous of Mary Crawford because of the kind of attention and interest Edmund provides to Mary. Needless to say, Fanny is in love with Edmund. During the ball, Fanny “felt the advantage; and drawing back the toils of civility, would have been again most happy, could she have kept her eyes from wandering between Edmund and Mary Crawford” (187). The affect is evident. Austen uses bodily terms to describe Fanny’s jealousy. The height of Fanny’s jealousy is when Edmund tells her that he has decided to marry Mary Crawford.

It was a stab, in spite of every long-standing expectation; and she was obliged to repeat again and again that she was one of his two dearest, before the words gave her any sensation. Could she believe Miss Crawford to deserve him, Oh! How different it would be—how far more tolerable! But he was deceived in her. He gave her merits which she had not; her faults were what they had ever been, but he saw them no longer. Till she can shed many tears over this deception, Fanny could not subdue her agitation; and the dejection which followed could only be relieved by the influence of fervent prayers for his happiness. (181).

“fervent prayers” provokes an image of Fanny holding prayer beads and rocking herself while whispering prayers for Edmund’s happiness. Fanny is more emotionally outspoken when it came to Henry’s marriage proposal, yet she makes a conscious choice to “tranquillize herself” instead of declaring her love for him: “it ought not to have touched the confines of her imagination. She would endeavor to be rational...by a sound intellect

and an honest heart.” (181). Her love for Edmund and her “lower” social status is entangled in a complex web of social rules and boundaries imposed by characters like Mrs. Norris—sets Fanny up for an imperfect response. The narrator describes: “Having regulated her thoughts and comforted her feelings, by this happy mixture of reason and weakness, she was able, in due time, to go down and resume her usual employments” (182). Consequently, Fanny conceals her emotions and behaves rationally. In light of this, Jane Austen’s depiction of jealousy, her depiction of an “immoral” emotion, remedies the notion that women behave irrationally under “emotional” situations.

Fanny Price may seem reserved and timid, but Austen’s depiction of Fanny’s emotions only elevates the importance when Fanny continues to experience her emotions by being persistent in declining Henry Crawford’s marriage proposal. Similar to Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Fanny defies the authoritative figure that stands before her—Sir Thomas Bertram. And she defies Sir Thomas by not suppressing her emotions; thus, she finds agency through her experience with emotions. For Austen, emotions must be felt and experienced to propel a moral perception.

CHAPTER V  
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

*Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is a novel about the title itself, Pride and Prejudice. The significant aspect of the story is in the characters' blush which shows how Austen values emotions. Mrs. Bennet has five daughters and thinks about their future prospect in marriage. During the nineteenth century, marriage was an important means for females to obtain financial security. In Austen's novel, Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's intimate friend, is symptomatic of the way the nineteenth-century English society thought about women and marriages. In that sense, Charlotte's view of marriage is more rational and realistic: "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance" (16). Unlike her friend Charlotte, Elizabeth Bennett defies social norms as does Mr. Darcy, in the sense that they both choose emotion over the rational view of marriage. Jane Austen depicts prejudice in Elizabeth and pride in Mr. Darcy to indicate the merits of love and impart a meaningful perspective to love and marital relationships. To put it differently, Austen values emotion over reason when it comes to forming a love relationship, but it is emotion over reason and not emotion that works against reason. Austen uses blush to make that indication. Jane Bennet presents a naïve and innocent kind of love as well as Mr. Bingley; and, Lydia is lively, flirty, and reckless—she does not blush at all.



Charlotte Lucas represents the traditional view of women and marriage. To her, marriage is a way for women to obtain financial security. Happiness, actual feelings and emotions of love for each other are a matter of chance. Charlotte Lucas is practical and realistic in the sense that she adopts the social norm and its regulations. When Charlotte and Elizabeth discuss happiness in marriage, Charlotte tells Elizabeth: “A woman had better show more affection than she feels...if a woman conceals her affection with the same skill from the object of it, she may lose the opportunity to fix him” (15). Charlotte is referring to Jane Bennet’s reserve and shy nature and has offered this as an advice to Elizabeth’s sister, Jane Bennet. However, the traditional view is clear: where there is opportunity, there is security. And for Charlotte, “it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life” (15). Elizabeth’s reply is important to observe: “your plan is a good one where nothing is in question but the desire of being married well. And if I were determined to get a rich husband, or any husband, I dare say I should adopt it” (15). This reply sets in motion the different view Elizabeth has on marital relationships. “But these are not Jane’s feelings, she is not acting by design” (15)—and neither does Elizabeth Bennet. Elizabeth goes on to specify how Jane spent insufficient time with Mr. Bingley to “make her understand his character.” By depicting Elizabeth Bennet’s emotion in terms of blushing, Jane Austen shows the usefulness of emotions in the way it shapes good perception and moral judgment.

During the first ball, readers learn of Elizabeth’s prejudice and Mr. Darcy’s pride. The two qualities stem from outside factors. As Mr. Darcy enters the ball room, everyone takes notice: “the report which was within general circulation five minutes after his

entrance, ...and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity, for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased” (8). Because Darcy acted haughty towards those he was unfamiliar with, Elizabeth Bennet falls under the general perception of him. Moreover, Elizabeth overhears Bingley telling Darcy to dance and suggests that he ask Elizabeth to be his partner, but Darcy’s haughtiness rejects her: “he withdrew his own and coldly said: “[Elizabeth] is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men” (9). The disdain from Darcy is the reason Elizabeth rejects a dance with Mr. Darcy when William Lucas attempts to offer Elizabeth as a dancing partner to Darcy: “Elizabeth looked archly and turned away” (19). Hearing that rejection, Elizabeth assumes prejudice; nonetheless, emotions still overpower their perception of each other and begins their love for one another.

Austen depicts Elizabeth’s body as a sight that prompts Mr. Darcy’s curiosity. It is here that the desire to know and learn more about her becomes evident by Darcy’s observation of Elizabeth’s physical features:

But no sooner has [Mr. Darcy] made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, then he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. To this discovery succeeded some others equally mortifying. Though he had detected more than one failure of perfect symmetry in her form, he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing; and in spite of his asserting that her manners were not those of the fashionable world, he was caught by their easy playfulness...he began to wish to know more of her (16).

The verb “mortify” is used to describe the type of effect Elizabeth’s beautiful expression of her dark eyes,” “uncommonly intelligent,” “failure of perfect symmetry” and “easy playfulness in her manners” has on Darcy as he continues to examine and observe

Elizabeth's thought-provoking body and the affect it has on him. Darcy's affect is in the 'bodily' drive toward learning more about Elizabeth. Moreover, it is in that desire "to know more of" that is perceived as an emotion. And it is at this moment that Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship begins. The observation along with its move is suggestive of the way Austen tries to show how bodies relate to one another. Consequently, Darcy "takes a step towards conversing with her himself" (17).

When Jane falls sick at Netherfield and is compelled to stay there until she is better, Elizabeth walks three miles to visit her sick sister. This is significant because Darcy notices Elizabeth's physique. "Elizabeth continued to walk alone. Crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity...with weary ankles, dirty stockings and a face glowing with the warmth of exercise" (23). The rapidity and fervent walk to arrive at Netherfield may suggest sisterly love, but Mr. Bennet's belief that "people do not die of a little trifling cold" and that "[Jane] will be taken good care of," implies a subtle suggestion that Elizabeth has a different motive at heart: Mr. Darcy. Even Mr. Darcy "doubt[ed] as to the occasion's justifying her coming so far alone" (23). It can be asserted that Elizabeth both loathed and loved Darcy at once. Nonetheless, the repulsive feelings Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley had for Elizabeth's appearance was not true for Mr. Darcy. His admiration of her physique and "the brilliancy which exercise had given to her complexion" crosses those class barriers that divide Elizabeth and Darcy. And through Darcy's admiration, it may be suggested that Elizabeth's body, her figure and form not only defy social norms but puts forth the idea that Austen links the polish with the muddy; the ugly with the beautiful; the "lower" senses with the fashionable ones.

As noted above, Elizabeth both loathes and loves Darcy. Nevertheless, her emotion maintains a self-sufficient mind in the sense that Elizabeth's emotion which is reflected in her tone of voice sharpens her eye for detail that would challenge Darcy's definition of "accomplished" women. Miss Bingley sees Elizabeth as a rival. She addresses Darcy with an attempt to undermine Elizabeth: "Eliza Bennet...is one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex by undervaluing their own; and with many men, I dare say, it succeeds. But, in my opinion, it is a paltry device, a very mean art" (28). And Darcy replies: "undoubtedly, there is meanness in all the arts which ladies sometimes condescend to employ for captivation" (28). While Miss Bingley uses "art" to express a kind of deception women use to 'captivate' men, the subject of art in the context of love and relationships echoes, on the flipside, the art and aesthetics of emotion that Austen highlights in Elizabeth and Darcy. As Darcy and Miss Bingley describe the fulfillments required to identify a woman "accomplished" Darcy explains that through mastery of music, art, dance, manners and so forth, a woman must also "add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading" (27). Darcy's view of an "accomplished women" stem from what his society lacks, i.e., "a woman with an improved mind." But when Elizabeth challenges the concept of all those qualities to say that "[she] never saw such a woman, [she] never saw such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance, as you describe, united" (27), the tone in which it is said reflects the kind of sentiment that moves both Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley "to cry out against the injustice of her implied doubt" (28). The definition of "accomplished" women and denying the truth of their existence is Austen's way of amusing those sentiments

about the ideal woman. For Austen, emotion paves the way for discerning details which reflects on how Austen perceives emotions as a significant index of character.

The first case of the blush occurs when Jane Bennet recovers, and the girls decide to depart from Netherfield. Mrs. Bennet receives a request from her daughter Elizabeth to visit Jane at Netherfield. Bringing her three daughters with her, Mrs. Bennet comes to Netherfield and converses with Mr. Bingley about his stay at Netherfield and Mr. Bingley expresses his liking of the country; however, Mrs. Bennet pokes at Mr. Darcy: “Aye--- that is because you have the right disposition. But that gentleman, looking at Darcy, seems to think the country was nothing at all” (30) and Elizabeth instantly replies to her mother: “Indeed, Mama, you are mistaken, said Elizabeth, blushing for her mother” (30). Elizabeth is embarrassed by her mother for making a vocal assertion about Darcy. But Elizabeth’s mother does it again during the Netherfield festivity. As they come to sit for dinner, Elizabeth hears her mother talk to Lady Lucas in an open and carefree manner about her expectations of Jane marrying Mr. Bingley. Elizabeth’s mother expresses her excitement about Jane’s marrying a “young and rich man” and how that will pave the way for her younger daughters to marry off rich as well. Upon hearing her mother, Elizabeth tries to quiet her mother for fear Darcy has heard too much and her mother scolds her saying: “What is Mr. Darcy to me, pray, that I should be afraid of him? I am sure we owe him no such particular civility” (68). With that remark, the narrator explains: “Nothing that [Elizabeth] could say, however, had any influence. Her mother would talk of her views in the same intelligible tone. Elizabeth blushed and blushed again with shame and vexation” (68). The repetition of the word “blush” points not only to the extent of Elizabeth’s emotion towards her mother’s embarrassing behavior but also to the

anxiety Elizabeth feels at the possibility of Darcy knowing how materialistic and eager her mother is at deriving such benefits. Bearing this in mind, Elizabeth's blush is Austen's way of critiquing those eighteenth and nineteenth century "rational" views of women seeking financial benefits through marriage. More importantly, it shows an elevated value of emotion that Austen beholds when it comes to romantic relationships. Another similar moment occurred when Darcy thinks Elizabeth to assume convenience between her family and the family she'll be married into: "it is proof of your own attachment to Hertfordshire. Any thing beyond the very neighborhood of Longbourn, I suppose, would appear far. As he spoke there was a sort of smile which Elizabeth fancied she understood; he must be supposing her to be thinking of Jane and Netherfield, and she blushed as she answered" (119). Austen makes these moments where Elizabeth understands certain cues such as a "smile" for Elizabeth to redress any misconception that might occur. And it is a method that Austen uses to reaffirm the significance of emotion. For Austen, Elizabeth's blush signifies shame and embarrassment to enable a moral stance and her blush may also signify Austen's perception on women who are driven by rational means for the sole purpose of deriving financial benefits through marriage.

Austen depicts the scene where Mr. Collins offers a marriage proposal to Elizabeth to expose the kind of language used between emotion and reason. Mr. Collins comes to the Bennet's house to make his proposal and addresses Mrs. Bennet: "May I hope, Madame, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?" (71). And upon hearing this, Elizabeth is caught off guard and the narrator expresses: "Before Elizabeth had time

for any thing but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered” (71). Mrs. Bennet gives a hasty “yes” to Mr. Collins. Nonetheless, the “blush of surprise” is indicative of Elizabeth’s bodily affect as pre-cognitive and anti-intentional. Elizabeth, justifiably, wants to escape the room; however, her mother interjects and tells her to stay. With Elizabeth’s acquiesce, the narrator explains:

Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction—and a moment’s consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible; she sat down again and tried to conceal by incessant employment the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion (72).

Clearly, after registering her “blush of surprise” Elizabeth’s attempt to move away or as the narrator puts it “escape” signifies the kind of meaning the body can produce: marrying Mr. Collins would be wrong. In other words, Austen’s bodily description of emotion elaborates on the startled response. It is the affective action that makes Elizabeth’s body turn away in rejection of Mr. Collins. Austen’s emphasis on the emotional part of being “surprise” prompts a bodily response from Elizabeth. With this said, Elizabeth makes that judgment by turning away. But Elizabeth’s mother tells her to stay which prompts Elizabeth to take a “moment’s consideration” before deciding that it would be the wisest. In this sense, Austen suggest that “reason” stems from outside forces and “emotion” is an index of character. As Mr. Collins begins talking to Elizabeth, Elizabeth wants to laugh at the idea of Mr. Collins “being run away with his feelings” because, in truth, there are no “feelings” to begin with. Mr. Collins goes on to provide “reasons” for his marrying Elizabeth and Austen uses his speech to mock those who are full of “reason” and void of emotion. When Elizabeth assertively rejects Mr. Collins’ marriage proposal and Mrs. Bennet is informed of this rejection, Mrs. Bennet tells Mr. Collins: “But depend upon it Mr. Collins...that Lizzy shall be brought to reason” (75).

The language that Austen uses in this part of the novel mimics eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century debates about emotion and reason. When Charlotte informs Elizabeth that she is engaged to Mr. Collins, Elizabeth's astonishment, as the narrator describes, "was consequently so great as to overcome at first the bounds of decorum" (85). And when they got married and Elizabeth pays her friend, Charlotte, a visit, Mr. Collins wanted to make Elizabeth feel that she had lost an opportunity. But of course, she does not "gratify him by any sign of repentance" and only wonders how Charlotte could be happy with such a man. More importantly, the narrator describes Elizabeth's discernment of Charlotte's embarrassment of Mr. Collins: "When Mr. Collins said any thing of which his wife might reasonably be ashamed, [Elizabeth] involuntarily turned her eye on Charlotte. Once or twice [Elizabeth] could discern a faint blush; but in general Charlotte wisely did not hear" (104). The "faint blush" is indicative of Charlotte's embarrassment of Mr. Collins. However, and more importantly, Austen makes this scene humorous. Austen's description of physical cues of communication that show a dialogue between Charlotte and Elizabeth. Through the physical description of emotion, Austen perceives how emotions play a role in obtaining a moral identity.

Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley is significant to Austen's depiction of embodied emotion. When Mrs. Gardiner suggests to Elizabeth that they should visit Darcy's Pemberley, Elizabeth assumes that it is a just another "great house" with fancy carpet and satin curtains and she was not interested in going. However, Mrs. Gardiner informed Elizabeth about the grounds and the woods that surrounded Pemberley, and Elizabeth enjoys natural settings. But as she agrees to visit Pemberley, it crosses her mind that she might run into Darcy: "but her mind could not acquiesce. The possibility of meeting Mr.



Darcy while viewing the place, instantly occurred. It would be dreadful! She blushed at the very idea” (158). Upon hearing that Darcy will not be present at the time of their visit, she decides to go. As they toured the house, Elizabeth learns more about Mr. Darcy in favorable terms. However, Mr. Darcy returns to his house a day earlier than anticipated and appears in front of Elizabeth. The affective emotions are evident as the narrator describes:

They were within twenty yards of each other, and so abrupt was his appearance, that it was impossible to avoid his sight. Their eyes instantly met, and the cheeks of each were overspread with the deepest blush. He absolutely started, and for a moment seemed immovable from surprise, but shortly recovering himself, advanced towards the party and spoke to Elizabeth, if not in terms of perfect composure, at least of perfect civility (163).

Austen makes use of affect not only to indicate that Elizabeth is “overpowered by shame and vexation” but also the display of affective emotions extends to how the bodies convey meaning, knowledge and experience. The narrator continues to emphasize that “[Elizabeth] blushed again and again over the perverseness of the meeting” (163). It certainly makes for an awkward moment, but more importantly are the thoughts in which Elizabeth is occupied. She wonders what his “politeness” means given the fact that, earlier in the novel, she declined his marriage proposal because she had legitimate ethical concerns about his interference between Jane and Mr. Bingley. Elizabeth’s emotions, and the affect it has on her –along with her inquiry on Darcy’s behavior—serves as the path toward a moral identity.

Another case of embodied emotion occurs when Darcy and Wickham coincidentally meet at Meryton. After Lydia’s intention to walk to Meryton to meet with officers there and Mr. Collins’ escort, Jane and Elizabeth go in their company. Wickham has just been introduced and before he can enter a conversation, Darcy and Mr. Bingley appear. Mr.

Bingley's intention was to ask about Jane Bennet, and while Darcy tries to avoid meeting eyes with Elizabeth, Elizabeth witnesses Darcy's and Wickham's embodied emotion: "Elizabeth happened to see the countenance of both as they looked at each other, was all astonishment at the effect of the meeting. Both changed colour, one looked white, the other red" (50). Evidently, Wickham turns "white" which is implied fear of being exposed by Darcy. And Darcy turns "red" which may signify both anger at the sight of him and embarrassment to acknowledge Wickham's presence. But when Elizabeth asks, "What can be the meaning of this?" suggests that Darcy and Wickham have prior knowledge of each other. Austen's method in the way she depicts emotion indicates how emotion can communicate.

Elizabeth does most of the blushing. Jane Bennet blushes once and Lydia does not blush at all. After learning the truth about Mr. Wickham, Lydia and Wickham have already eloped. With Darcy's help, the disgraced occurrence is remedied, and Lydia returns home as Mrs. Wickham. They return as a married couple, and the narrator describes Lydia as "Lydia still; untamed, unabashed, wild, noisy, and fearless" (204). Elizabeth realizes that Wickham has all the manners one can be pleased with but knowing the truth of him changes her perspective of Wickham. However, instead of an "emotional reaction" the narrator explains: "[Elizabeth] sat down, resolving within herself, to draw no limits in future to the impudence of an impudent man. *She* blushed, Jane blushed; but the cheeks of the two who caused their confusion, suffered no variation of colour" (205). In this sense, Austen uses 'blush' as an index of character as opposed to a social construct of manners.

By depicting Elizabeth Bennet's emotion, Austen is emphasizing how emotion can play a crucial part in both making good judgments and sharpening perception when detecting right from wrong. By contrast, Lydia does not blush, nor does she show any guilt which is a unique way of emphasizing the importance of emotion, as in *Lady Susan*. The absence of a blush is indicative of Lydia's unabashed self, but it is a self that leads up to reckless decisions. Elizabeth, as a heroine in the novel, highlights the importance which her emotions have been felt. And it is through experiencing her emotions that allowed Elizabeth to resist Mr. Collins and marry Darcy. For Austen, emotions are not a component that needs to be tamed by reason but needs to be felt and experience because emotion is the factor that enables ethical habits.

## CHAPTER VI

### LADY SUSAN

While Austen emphasizes the physical description of emotion in Elizabeth Bennet, an unusual emphasis would be showing an absence of emotion. Austen accentuates emotion by the absence of blush in the epistolary novel of *Lady Susan* to underscore poor judgments and cruel rationalization which in turn obliterates moral perception.

In *Lady Susan*, Jane Austen's earliest epistolary novel, the protagonist, Lady Susan, is verbally persuasive which is reflective of her thinking ability. She is positioned neither outside nor inside the domestic sphere. Lady Susan is a widow who, without her daughter, moves from one house to another as a guest. She is the anti-hero in the novel. Her schemes and the way she sways male characters into favoring her has been seen as comical. However, Lady Susan's character can be seen to some extent as a critique of the purely rational. Austen's depiction of Lady Susan, where her sense of cognition dominates emotion and who exhibits unprincipled behavior toward other people, may suggest that Austen is critiquing rationality in the absence of emotions. Throughout the novel, Lady Susan displays no affection for her own daughter, rationalizes her immoral

behavior and does not blush where necessary, and this may be deliberate on Austen's part to emphasize her view to deride eighteenth century view of supreme rationalism.

Furthermore, there are only a few instances where emotions are embodied by Fredericka which in turn zooms in on Lady Susan's rationalization. Nonetheless, Mrs. Vernon serves to reinstate those principles lost on Lady Susan. Consequently, Austen's anti-hero lacks any real emotions. Lady Susan's social outcast-like character serves as a critique of supreme rationalism and in the absence of emotion, Austen depicts Lady Susan as an immoral character which in turn emphasizes the role emotions play in attaining a moral identity.

Lady Susan has been labelled as an unkind mother, one with, according to Mrs. Vernon, "uncommon union of symmetry, brilliancy, and grace" and holds a superior "command in language" where she can make "black appear white" (11). In Mrs. Vernon's letter of caution to her brother, Mr. De Courcy, Mrs. Vernon describes Lady Susan's persuasive skill and superior prowess in the art of persuasion:

she is clever and agreeable, has all the knowledge of the world which makes conversation easy and talks very well, with a happy command of language, which is too often used, I believe, to make black appear white. She has already almost persuaded me of being warmly attached to her daughter, though I have been so long convinced to the contrary. She speaks of her with so much tenderness and anxiety, lamenting so bitterly the neglect of her education, which she represents however as wholly unavoidable, that I am forced to recollect how many successive springs her ladyship spent in town, while her daughter was left in Staffordshire to the care of servants, or governess very little better, to prevent my believing what she says (11).

In the aforementioned passage, Mrs. Vernon describes Lady Susan's emotions of "anxiety," "tenderness" and "warmly attached" that are used to empower Lady Susan's art of persuasion. And it is so convincing to the extent that Mrs. Vernon has to "*force*" herself to recollect the truth. The manipulation is clear. And there is no real affection

displayed for neither Mrs. Vernon's daughter, nor for her own. Mrs. Vernon's cautiousness letter describes Lady Susan's prowess and skillfulness as a conversationalist. And in that sense, Austen emphasizes on this trait in Lady Susan to establish the basis for the maneuvering of emotions within the intellectual property. In other words, through her cognitive strength, Lady Susan manipulates other people's emotion.

Jane Austen uses emotion provoking occurrences in the novel to emphasize the way in which Lady Susan rationalizes unethical stances in lieu of a blush. Lady Susan has been stirring up trouble for the Mainwaring household. Her flirtation with Mr. Mainwaring has caused Mrs. Mainwaring's jealousy and insecurities to arise. Early in the novel, Lady Susan informs Alicia about her desire to leave Langford because the "females of the family are united against [her]" and further explains her "motive" in the way she behaved with Sir James Martin. In a letter to Mrs. Johnson, Lady Susan states:

I have avoided all general flirtation whatever; I have distinguished no creature besides, of all the numbers resorting hither, except sir James Martin, on whom I bestowed a little notice, in order to detach him from Miss Mainwaring; but, if the world could know my motive THERE they would honor me. I have been called an unkind mother, but it was the sacred impulse of maternal affection, it was the advantage of my daughter that led me on; and if that daughter were not the greatest simpleton on earth, I might have been rewarded for my exertions as I ought (3).

Lady Susan *rationalizes* her behavior by revealing her intent and motive to the one friend she can trust to be herself with, Alicia. And although she comes between Miss Mainwaring and sir James Martin, Lady Susan uses her "motherliness" in a way that distorts her perception and diminishes morality. Moreover, Lady Susan gives attention to James while rationalizing her decision to interfere and put an end to the potential marriage between Miss Mainwaring and James Martin. To put it differently, the

protagonist makes an appeal of “motherly” claims as she gives reason to her actions that were socially disapproved. More importantly, Lady Susan does not blush when it could be predicted. The absence of a blush is indicative of the significance of the role emotions play on moral decisions and behavior. Furthermore, Austen makes the connection between the personal body and the socialized body. The personal body is the maternal identity that Lady Susan claims and the socialized body is her acknowledgement of the duty she claims in motherhood which was evident when she invokes “motherly affection.” The connection is made in the process of rationalizing her manner in securing a potential husband for her daughter.

The concept of morality and moral identity is obliterated. The protagonist speaks of “maternal affection” or warmth of her maternal body that led her into action. The emotion is not only established but also misused in the rationalization of her cause. Lady Susan believes that if the world (or society) knew about her reason, she will be “honored” for it; and, further maintains that she should be “rewarded” for her efforts in trying to secure her daughter’s future. Because in all maternal sense, it is what a mother should worry about. However, Austen destabilizes the acquisition of morality when she magnifies it in two folds: an objective perspective and a subjective perspective. When Reginald informs his sister, Mrs. Vernon, about lady Susan’s “attention to a young man previously attached to Mr. Mainwaring’s sister [that] deprived an amiable girl of her lover” (7), this would serve as the objective perspective. Sir James Martin and Mr. Mainwaring’s sister were attached which means that James was not available in the market for marriage. The interference of Lady Susan that triggered the separation between James and Mr. Mainwaring’s sister is an amoral scheme. Moreover, the

maternal reasoning behind lady Susan's scheme serves to indicate the extent to which rationalization works independently. And in this view, Lady Susan's actions toward securing her daughter a husband is coldly rational and deceptive. In another letter to Mrs. Johnson, Lady Susan self-praises about her scheme: "I commend my own conduct in this affair extremely and regard it as a very happy instance of circumspection and tenderness. Some mothers would have insisted on their daughter accepting so good an offer on the first overture; but I could not reconcile it to myself to force Fredericka to marriage from which the heart revolted, and instead of adopting so harsh a measure merely propose to make it her own choice" (13). Lady Susan's subjective view maintains that her mind and the way she *thinks* results in poor judgments. Austen may be indicating her disapproval for the way in which rationalism, and reasoning have been overly praised and overly valued at that time.

When Mr. De Courcy expresses his desire to see Lady Susan to his sister Mrs. Vernon, Mr. De Courcy walks into the relationship aware of Lady Susan "captivating deceit." Lady Susan is aware that her sister in law, Mrs. Vernon, is the one who has predetermined her brother into disliking her. Lady Susan writes to Alicia that:

There is exquisite pleasure in subduing an insolent spirit, in making a person predetermined to dislike acknowledge one's superiority. I have disconcerted him already by my calm reserve, and it shall be my endeavor to humble the pride of these self-important De Courcy's still lower, to convince Mrs. Vernon that her sisterly cautions have been bestowed in vain, and to persuade Reginald that she has scandalously belied me (13).

Lady Susan's idea of putting her efforts "to humble the pride of these self-important De Courcy's" is evident of how she perceives the family and it seems that she sees them not only as those who have treated her unjustly but also comes off as one who will 'teach' them a moral lesson by carrying out this plan "to humble" them. To put it differently,



Lady Susan wants them to know that they have erred in the judgment of her. This is significant because it is in a way suggesting superiority of those highly rational. And it allows readers to see how distorted Lady Susan's perception is in the absence of emotions. After all, Lady Susan is responsible for the separation of James Martin and Mr. Mainwaring's sister and she is also responsible for Mrs. Mainwaring's jealousy. Furthermore, Lady Susan's social disapproval undermines her superior attitude. Consequently, Lady Susan *rationalizes* her socially unacceptable behavior by referring to her lack of education, and early marriage to justify herself. Consequently, the superior attitude of Lady Susan is laughable and serves to accentuate the flaws of being solely rational which is evident when Lady Susan does not express any sentiment of guilt or shame for separating James Martin from Mr. Mainwaring's sister.

In a letter to her mother, Mrs. Vernon voices her concerns about her brother's change of heart in Lady Susan. Mrs. Vernon says: "when [Mr. De Courcy] has mentioned her of late it has been in terms of more extraordinary praise; and yesterday he actually said that he could not be surprised at any effect produced on the heart of man by such loveliness and such abilities" (15). The irony with Reginald's is that he was able to warm up to Lady Susan's character despite what he already knew of her. As Alicia tries to get Lady Susan to consider Reginald as a prospective husband, Lady Susan "cannot easily resolve on anything so serious as marriage; especially as [she is] not at present in want of money" (19). Moreover, Lady Susan explains to Alicia the reason she refuses to consider Reginald: "I should make a point of not bestowing my affection on a man who had dared to think so meanly of me" (19). Clearly, Lady Susan has no intention of reciprocating the same warmth and desire that Reginald has, and she is within "reason" to think herself as

justly as “morally” possible. It is also evident that Lady Susan enters her relationship with Reginald without any emotion. When Lady De Courcy informed Mrs. Vernon about Lady Susan and Reginald’s break-up, Mrs. Vernon writes to her mother about Lady Susan’s visit:

We had a most unexpected and unwelcome visit from Lady Susan, looking all cheerfulness and good-humour, and seeming more as if she were to marry him when she got to London than as if parted from him for ever [sic]. She stayed nearly two hours, was as affectionate and agreeable as ever, and not a syllable, not a hint was dropped, of any disagreement or coolness between them. I asked her whether she had seen my brother since his arrival in town; not as you may suppose, with any doubt of the fact, but merely *to see how she looked*. *She immediately answered, without any embarrassment* (emphasis added, 83).

Mrs. Vernon’s deliberate move to try to detect an embodied emotion from Lady Susan reveals Mrs. Vernon’s understanding of Lady Susan’s body language as lacking thereof. Susan does not blush even when other characters expect her to blush. The desire “to see how she looked” signifies the extent to which emotion and its revelation are important. While Reginald is described as “very low” about his departure from Lady Susan, Mrs. Vernon describes her as “cheerful,” “affectionate” and “agreeable.” Thus, Lady Susan is unaffected, unashamed, and detracts any possible moral identity. Jane Austen’s use of Mrs. Vernon’s search for embodied emotion is a critical aspect in the way it reveals its importance to achieving a moral identity.

Lady Susan has more regard for Mainwaring’s love and attention than Reginald. In comparison, Lady Susan writes to Alicia that: “I infinitely prefer the tender and liberal spirit of Mainwaring, which, impressed with the deepest conviction of my merit, is satisfied that whatever I do must be right; and look with a degree of contempt on the inquisitive and doubtful fancies of that heart which seems always debating on the reasonableness of its emotions” (31). It is no coincidence that Austen uses that statement

about “the heart. debating on the reasonableness of its emotions.” Taking the context into consideration, that statement echoes the debate about the usefulness of emotions within the cognitive sphere.

The art of loving is another significance and it shows that true emotions are embodied. Mrs. Vernon tells her mother that she notices Fredericka’s artless affection for her brother Mr. De Courcy and hopes the relationship between the two to blossom. But Lady Susan critiques her daughter’s artlessness as uncomplimentary: “Her feelings are tolerably acute, and she is so charmingly artless in their display as to afford the most reasonable hope of her being ridiculous and despised by every man who sees her. Artlessness will never do in love matters; and that girl is born a simpleton who has it either by nature or affectation” (37). Clearly, Lady Susan lacks any real emotion. And although Mrs. Vernon may have used “artless” to mean “without disguise,” Austen’s protagonist uses the term to suggest deceit. Art, for Lady Susan, is a matter of deceit that stems from someone who is solely rational. It is the same kind of art that Mrs. Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice* addresses Darcy with in which Darcy thinks art to be a mean way of “captivating a man.” However, Lady Susan’s daughter, Fredericka, embodies her emotions. When Mrs. Vernon meets Fredericka on the staircase, Fredericka was in tears about Mr. De Courcy’s departure and Mrs. Vernon asks Fredericka:

But what is it you have done to occasion all this? She[Fredericka] blushed deeply as she answered: I was so unhappy about Sir James that I could not help—I have done something very wrong, I know; but you have not an idea of the misery I have been in... “Fredericka” said I [Mrs. Vernon], you ought to have told me your distresses...do you think that your uncle or I should not have espoused your cause as warmly as my brother? Indeed, I did not doubt your kindness, said she [Fredericka] colouring again (47).

Fredericka's bodily affect not only shows a kind of "embarrassment" but it is also a scene where Mrs. Vernon is more of a mother than Lady Susan. Fredericka is shown the motherly affection and care that she is missing. Furthermore, Sir Reginald De Courcy's letter to his son, Reginald, warning him against Lady Susan is another way of expressing bodily emotion. In a letter to his son, Sir Reginald writes: "it would be the death of that honest pride with which I have hitherto considered my son; I should blush to see him, to hear of him, to think of him" (23). The father's concern about the possibility of Lady Susan as part of their family is a blush-worthy moment for the father. Thus, Jane Austen uses these moments in the novel to express the importance of experiencing emotions.

Although Austen views emotion and cognition as interconnected and work together to produce a moral self, Jane Austen places a higher value on emotions for its role in attaining a moral identity. Throughout her novels, Austen makes a consistent depiction of her female characters: namely, Elizabeth Bennet, Fredericka, and Fanny Price. They choose emotion over rationality and they find their agency through their emotions when 'society' expects them to settle for less than love in the name of marriage and security. Elizabeth refuses Mr. Collins; Fredericka refuses James Martin; and, Fanny Price refuses Henry Crawford. Unlike Mary Crawford, Charlotte Lucas, and Lady Susan, who see marriage as a business exchange, Austen describes embodied emotion in her characters to show significance of emotions in relationships, and more importantly, in obtaining moral identities. Austen values emotions by physically describing her character's emotions throughout her novels so that her characters' emotions are not repressed, or tamed by reason, but felt and experienced. It is through the use of blush that characters not only identify right from wrong from within themselves but also blush

when others cannot. And for those characters, such as Lady Susan, who do not blush, are less perceptible. Elinor Dashwood portrays a perfect balance between mind and body. However, it is Marianne Dashwood who clearly shows how emotions serve as the foundation for becoming morally perceptible and morally reasonable. With that said, it can be stated that Jane Austen values emotions as the starting point in forming a moral identity in the context when rationalism was overly praised.

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