

A NOTE ON JANE AUSTEN

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I begin by laying together four passages from the novels of Jane Austen. (*Note.* References to 'vols.' in the footnotes are not to Chapman's arrangement of the novels into five volumes, but to the sub-division of the novels into volumes by Jane Austen. As *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were originally published together (i.e. *Northanger* in two volumes, and *Persuasion* in three), this explains why the first chapter of *Persuasion* begins in volume III. Lewis was quoting from modern editions and I have retained his chapter numbering, as well as given those in the Chapman edition.)

1. Catherine was completely awakened... Most grievously was she humbled. Most bitterly did she cry. It was not only with herself that she was sunk - but with Henry. Her folly, which now seemed even criminal, was all exposed to him, and he must despise her for ever. The liberty which her imagination had dared to take with the character of his father, could he ever forgive it? The absurdity of her curiosity and her fears, could they ever be forgotten? She hated herself more than she could express (*Note: Northanger Abbey, in The Novels of Jane Austen. The Text based on Collation of the Early Editions, in five volumes, ed. R. W. Chapman, second edition (Oxford, 1926), vol. II, ch. x, p. 199*) ... Nothing ... could be clearer, than that it had been all a voluntary, self-created delusion, each trifling circumstance receiving importance from an imagination resolved on alarm, and every thing forced to bend to one purpose by a mind which, before she entered the Abbey, had been craving to be frightened... She saw that the infatuation had been created, the mischief settled long before her quitting Bath (*Note: Ibid., p.199-200*) ... Her mind made up on these several points, and her resolution formed, of always judging and acting in future with the greatest good sense, she had nothing to do but forgive herself and be happier than ever. (*Note: Ibid. p. 201 Northanger Abbey, ch. 25.*)
2. 'Oh! Elinor, ... you have made me hate myself forever. - How barbarous have I been to you! - you, who have been my only

comfort, who have borne with me in all my misery, who have seemed to be suffering only for me!' (Note: *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. Chapman, vol. III, ch. i, p. 264) ... Marianne's courage soon failed her, in trying to converse upon a topic which always left her more dissatisfied with herself than ever, by the comparison it necessarily produced between Elinor's conduct and her own. She felt all the force of that comparison; but not as her sister had hoped, to urge her to exertion now; she felt it with all the pain of continual self-reproach, regretted most bitterly that she had never exerted herself before; but it brought only the torture of penitence, without the hope of amendment (Note: *Sense and Sensibility*, ch. ii, p. 270). [Elinor later saw in Marianne] an apparent composure of mind, which, in being the result as she trusted of serious reflection, must eventually lead her to contentment and cheerfulness (Note: *Ibid.*, ch. x, p. 342) ... 'My illness has made me think . . . I considered the past; I saw in my own behaviour... nothing but a series of imprudence towards myself, and want of kindness to others. I saw that my own feelings had prepared my sufferings, and that my want of fortitude under them had almost led me to the grave. My illness, I well knew, had been entirely brought on by myself, by such negligence of my own health, as I had felt even at the time to be wrong. Had I died, - it would have been self-destruction ... I wonder ... that the very eagerness of my desire to live, to have time for atonement to my God, and to you all, did not kill me at once ... I cannot express my own abhorrence of myself.' (Note: *Ibid.*, pp. 345-6) *Sense and Sensibility*, chs. 37, 38, 46.

3. As to his real character, had information been in her power, she had never felt a wish of inquiring. His countenance, voice, and manner, had established him at once in the possession of every virtue (Note: (Note: *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. Chapman, vol. II, ch. xiii, p. 206) ... She perfectly remembered everything that had passed in conversation between Wickham and herself, in their first evening at Mr. Philip's (Note: *Ibid.*) ... She was *now* struck with the impropriety of such communications to a stranger, and wondered it had escaped her before. She saw the indelicacy of putting himself forward as he had done, and the inconsistency of his professions with his conduct (Note: *Ibid.*, p. 207) ... She grew absolutely ashamed of herself.. 'How despicably have I acted!' she cried. - 'I, who have prided

myself on my discernment! ... who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity, in useless or blameable distrust. - How humiliating is this discovery! - Yet, how just a humiliation! - Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly ... I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away... Till this moment I never knew myself.' (*Ibid.*, p. 208) *Pride and Prejudice*, ch. 36.

4. Her own conduct, as well as her own heart, was before her in the same few minutes ... How improperly had she been acting by Harriet! How inconsiderate, how indelicate, how irrational, how unfeeling had been her conduct! What blindness, what madness, had led her on! It struck her with dreadful force, and she was ready to give it every bad name in the world (Note: *Emma*, ed. Chapman, vol. III, ch. xi, p. 408) ... Every moment had brought a fresh surprise; and every surprise must be matter of humiliation to her. - How to understand it all! How to understand the deceptions she had been thus practising on herself, and living under! - The blunders, the blindness of her own head and heart! ... She perceived that she had acted most weakly; that she had been imposed on by others in a most mortifying degree. (Note: *Ibid.*, pp. 411-12) *Emma*, ch. 47

Between these four passages there are, no doubt, important distinctions. The first is on a level of comedy which approximates to burlesque. The delusion from which Catherine Morland has been awakened was an innocent one, which owed at least as much to girlish ignorance of the world as to folly. And, being imaginative, it was a delusion from which an entirely commonplace or self-centred mind would hardly have suffered. Accordingly, the expiation, though painful while it lasts, is brief, and Catherine's recovery and good resolutions are treated with affectionate irony. The awakening of Marianne Dashwood is at the opposite pole. The situation has come near to tragedy; moral, as well as, or more than, intellectual deficiency has been involved in Marianne's errors. Hence the very vocabulary of the passage strikes a note unfamiliar in Jane Austen's style. It makes explicit, for once, the religious background of the author's ethical position. Hence such theological or nearly-theological words as *penitence*, even the *torture of penitence*, *amendment*, *self-destruction*, *my God*. And though not all younger readers may at once recognize it, the words *serious reflection* belong to the same region. In times which men now in their fifties can remember, the adjective *serious* ('Serious reading', 'Does he ever

think about serious matters?') had indisputably religious overtones. The title of Law's *Serious Call* is characteristic. Between these two extracts, those from *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* occupy a middle position. Both occur in a context of high comedy, but neither is merely laughable.

Despite these important differences, however, no one will dispute that all four passages present the same kind of process. 'Disillusionment', which might by etymology be the correct name for it, has acquired cynical overtones which put it out of court. We shall have to call it 'undeception' or 'awakening'. All four heroines painfully, though with varying degrees of pain, discover that they have been making mistakes both about themselves and about the world in which they live. All their *data* have to be reinterpreted. Indeed, considering the differences of their situations and characters, the similarity of the process in all four is strongly marked. All realize that the cause of the deception lay within; Catherine, that she had brought to the Abbey a mind 'craving to be frightened', Marianne, that 'her own feelings had prepared her sufferings', Elizabeth, that she has 'courted ignorance' and 'driven reason away', Emma, that she has been practising deceptions on herself. Self-hatred or self-contempt, though (once more) in different degrees, are common to all. Catherine 'hated herself'; Elinor abhors herself; Elizabeth finds her conduct 'despicable'; Emma gives hers 'every bad name in the world'. Tardy and surprising self-knowledge is presented in all four, and mentioned by name in the last two. 'I never knew myself', says Elizabeth; Emma's conduct and 'her own heart' appear to her, unwelcome strangers both, 'in the same few minutes'.

If Jane Austen were an author as copious as Tolstoy, and if these passages played different parts in the novels from which they are taken, the common element would not, perhaps, be very important. After all, undeception is a common enough event in real life, and therefore, in a vast tract of fiction, might be expected to occur more than once. But that is not the position. We are dealing with only four books, none of them long; and in all four the undeception, structurally considered, is the very pivot or watershed of the story. In *Northanger Abbey*, and *Emma*, it precipitates the happy ending. In *Sense and Sensibility* it renders it possible. In *Pride and Prejudice* it initiates that revaluation of Darcy, both in Elizabeth's mind and in our minds, which is completed by the visit to Pemberley. We are thus entitled to speak of a common pattern in Jane Austen's four most characteristic novels. They have 'one plot' in a more important sense than Professor Garrod suspected. (Note: Professor H. W.

Garrod complained that Jane Austen 'invents no new plots, she repeats her characters, she employs again and again the same setting. The plot is always a husband-hunt ... indeed Miss Austen has but one plot.' 'Jane Austen A Depreciation', *Essays by Divers Hands, Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, new series, vol. VIII (1928), pp. 32-4) This is not so clearly true of *Sense and Sensibility*, but then it has really two plots or two 'actions' in the Aristotelian sense; it is true about one of them.

It is perhaps worth emphasizing what may be called the hardness - at least the firmness - of Jane Austen's thought exhibited in all these undeceptions. The great abstract nouns of the classical English moralists are unblushingly and uncompromisingly used: *good sense, courage, contentment, fortitude*, 'some duty neglected, some failing indulged', *impropriety, indelicacy, generous candour, blameable distrust, just humiliation, vanity, folly, ignorance, reason*. These are the concepts by which Jane Austen grasps the world. In her we still breathe the air of the *Rambler* and *Idler*. All is hard, clear, definable; by some modern standards, even naively so. The hardness is, of course, for oneself, not for one's neighbours. It reveals to Marianne her want 'of kindness' and shows Emma that her behaviour has been 'unfeeling'. Contrasted with the world of modern fiction, Jane Austen's is at once less soft and less cruel.

It may be added, though this is far less important, that in these four novels, self-deception and awakening are not confined to the heroines. General Tilney makes as big a mistake about Catherine as she has made about him. Mrs Ferrars misjudges her son. Mr Bennet is forced at last to see his errors as a father. But perhaps all this does not go beyond what might be expected from the general nature of human life and the general exigencies of a novelistic plot.

The central pattern of these four has much in common with that of a comedy by Molière.

Two novels remain. In *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* the heroine falls into no such self-deception and passes through no such awakening. We are, it is true, given to understand that Anne Elliot regards the breaking off of her early engagement to Wentworth as a mistake. If any young person now applied to her for advice in such circumstances, 'they would never receive any of such certain immediate wretchedness, such uncertain future good'. (Note: *Persuasion*, ed. Chapman, vol. iii, ch. iv, p. 29) For Anne in her maturity did not hold the view which Lord David Cecil attributes to Jane Austen, that 'it was wrong to marry for money, but it was silly to marry without it.' (Note CSLewis: *Jane Austen* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 33) She was now fully 'on the side of early warm attachment, and

a cheerful confidence in futurity, against that over-anxious caution which seems to insult exertion and distrust Providence'. (Note: *Ibid.*, vol. iii, ch. iv, p. 30) (Notice, in passing, the Johnsonian cadence of a sentence which expresses a view that Johnson in one of his countless moods might have supported.) But though Anne thinks a mistake has been made, she does not think it was she that made it. She declares that she was perfectly right in being guided by Lady Russell who was to her 'in the place of a parent'. It was Lady Russell who had erred. There is no true parallel here between Anne and the heroines we have been considering. Anne, like Fanny Price, commits no errors.

Having placed these two novels apart from the rest because they do not use the pattern of 'undeception', we can hardly fail to notice that they share another common distinction. They are the novels of the solitary heroines.

Catherine Morland is hardly ever alone except on her journey from Northanger Abbey, and she is soon back among her affectionate, if placid, family. Elinor Dashwood bears her own painful secret without a confidant for a time; but her isolation, besides being temporary, is incomplete; she is surrounded by affection and respect. Elizabeth always has Jane, the Gardiners, or (to some extent) her father. Emma is positively spoiled; the acknowledged centre of her own social world. of all these heroines we may say, as Jane Austen says of some other young women, 'they were of consequence at home and favourites abroad'.

But Fanny Price and Anne are of no 'consequence'. The consciousness of 'mattering' which is so necessary even to the humblest women, is denied them. Anne has no place in the family councils at Kellynch Hall; 'she was only Anne'. She is exploited by her married sister, but not valued; just as Fanny is exploited, but not valued, by Mrs Norris. Neither has a confidant; or if Edmund had once been a confidant as well as a hero to Fanny, he progressively ceases to be so. Some confidence, flawed by one vast forbidden topic, we may presume between Anne and Lady Russell; but this is almost entirely off stage and within the novel we rarely see them together. Both heroines come within easy reach of one of the great archetypes - Cinderella, Electra. Fanny, no doubt, more so. She is almost a Jane Austen heroine condemned to a Charlotte Brontë situation. We do not even believe in what Jane Austen tells us of her good looks; whenever we are looking at the action through Fanny's eyes, we feel ourselves sharing the consciousness of a plain woman.

Even physically, we see them alone; Fanny perpetually in the East Room with its fireless grate and its touching, ridiculous array of petty treasures (what Cinderella, what Electra, is without them?) or Anne, alone beside the hedge, an unwilling eavesdropper, Anne alone with her sick nephew, Anne alone in the empty house waiting for the sound of Lady Russell's carriage. And in their solitude both heroines suffer; far more deeply than Catherine, Elizabeth, and Emma, far more innocently than Marianne. Even Elinor suffers less. These two novels, we might almost say, stand to the others as Shakespeare's 'dark' comedies to his comedies in general. The difference in the lot of the heroines goes with a difference in the 'character parts'. Mrs Norris is almost alone among Jane Austen's vulgar old women in being genuinely evil, nor are her greed and cruelty painted with the high spirits which make us not so much hate as rejoice in Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

These solitary heroines who make no mistakes have, I believe - or had while she was writing - the author's complete approbation. This is connected with the unusual pattern of *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*. The heroines stand almost outside, certainly a little apart from, the world which the action of the novel depicts. It is in it, not in them, that self-deception occurs. They see it, but its victims do not. They do not of course stand voluntarily apart, nor do they willingly accept the rôle of observers and critics. They are shut out and are compelled to observe: for what they observe, they disapprove.

It is this disapproval which, though shared both by Fanny and Anne, has perhaps drawn on Fanny, from some readers, the charge of being a prig. I am far from suggesting that Fanny is a successful heroine, still less that she is the equal of Anne. But I hardly know the definition of *Prig* which would make her one. If it means a self-righteous person, a Pharisee, she is clearly no prig. If it means a 'precisian', one who adopts or demands a moral standard more exacting than is current in his own time and place, then I can see no evidence that Fanny's standard differs at all from that by which Marianne condemns herself or Anne Elliot corrects Captain Benwick. Indeed, since Anne preaches while Fanny feels in silence, I am a little surprised that the charge is not levelled against Anne rather than Fanny. For Anne's *chastisement* of poor Benwick is pretty robust: 'She ventured to recommend a larger allowance of prose in his daily study; and ... mentioned such works of our best moralists, such collections of the finest letters, such memoirs of characters of worth and suffering, as occurred to her at the moment as calculated to rouse and fortify the mind by the highest precepts,

and the strongest examples of moral and religious endurances' (ch. 11). (Note: *Persuasion*, vol. III, ch. xi, p. 101) Notice, too, the standards which Anne was using when she first began to suspect her cousin, Mr Elliot: 'She saw that there had been bad habits; that Sunday-travelling had been a common thing; that there had been a period of his life (and probably not a short one) when he had been, at least, careless on all serious matters.' (Note: *Ibid.*, vol. iv, ch. v, p. 161) Whatever we may think of these standards ourselves, I have not the least doubt that they are those of all the heroines, when they are most rational, and of Jane Austen herself. This is the hard core of her mind, the Johnsonian element, the iron in the tonic.

How, then, does Fanny Price fail? I suggest, by insipidity. *Pauper videri Cinna vult et est pauper*. One of the most dangerous of literary ventures is the little, shy, unimportant heroine whom none of the other characters value. The danger is that your readers may agree with the other characters. Something must be put into the heroine to make us feel that the other characters are wrong, that she contains depths they never dreamed of. That is why Charlotte Brontë would have succeeded better with Fanny Price. To be sure, she would have ruined everything else in the book; Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram and Mrs Norris would have been distorted from credible types of pompous dullness, lazy vapidty and vulgar egoism into fiends complete with horns, tails and rhetoric. But through Fanny there would have blown a storm of passion which made sure that we at least would never think her insignificant. In Anne, Jane Austen did succeed. Her passion (for it is not less), her insight, her maturity, her prolonged fortitude, all attract us. But into Fanny, Jane Austen, to counterbalance her apparent insignificance, has put really nothing except rectitude of mind; neither passion, nor physical courage, nor wit, nor resource. Her very love is only calf-love - a schoolgirl's hero-worship for a man who has been kind to her when they were both children, and who, incidentally, is the least attractive of all Jane Austen's heroes. Anne gains immensely by having for her lover almost the best. In real life, no doubt, we continue to respect interesting women despite the preposterous men they sometimes marry. But in fiction it is usually fatal. Who can forgive Dorothea for marrying such a sugarstick as Ladislaw, or Nellie Harding for becoming Mrs Bold? Or, of course, David Copperfield for his first marriage.

Fanny also suffers from the general faults of *Mansfield Park*, which I take to be, if in places almost the best, yet as a whole the least satisfactory, of Jane Austen's works. I can accept Henry Crawford's elopement with Mrs Rushworth: I cannot accept his

intention of marrying Fanny. Such men never make such marriages.

But though Fanny is insipid (yet not a prig) she is always 'right' in the sense that to her, and to her alone, the world of *Mansfield Park* always appears as, in Jane Austen's view, it really is. Undeceived, she is the spectator of deceptions. These are made very clear. In chapter 2 we learn that the Bertram girls were 'entirely deficient' in 'self-knowledge'. (Note: *Mansfield Park*, ed. Chapman, vol. I, ch. ii, p. 19) In chapter 3 Sir Thomas departs for Antigua without much anxiety about his family because, though not perfectly confident of his daughters' discretion, he had ample trust 'in Mrs. Norris's watchful attention, and in Edmund's judgment'. (Note: *Ibid.*, ch. iii, p. 32) Both, of course, failed to justify it. In chapter 12 when Crawford was absent for a fortnight it proved 'a fortnight of such dulness to the Miss Bertrams, as ought to have put them both on their guard'. (Note: *Ibid.*, ch. xii, p. 114) Of course it did not. In chapter 16 when Edmund at last consents to act, Fanny is forced to raise the question, 'Was he not deceiving himself?' (Note: *Ibid.*, ch. xvi, p. 156) In 34 when Crawford (whose manners are insufferable) by sheer persistence pesters Fanny into speech when she has made her desire for silence obvious, she says, 'Perhaps, Sir, I thought it was a pity you did not always know yourself as well as you seemed to do at that moment.' (Note: *Ibid.*, vol. iii, ch. iii, p. 343) But deception is most fully studied in the person of Mary Crawford, 'a mind led astray and bewildered, and without any suspicion of being so: darkened, yet fancying itself light'. The New Testament echo in the language underlines the gravity of the theme. It may be that Jane Austen has not treated it successfully. Some think that she hated Mary and falsely darkened a character whom she had in places depicted as charming. It might be the other way round; that the author, designing to show deception at its height, was anxious to play fair, to show how the victim could be likeable at times, and to render her final state the more impressive by raising in us false hopes that she might have been cured. Either way, the gap between Mary at her best and Mary in her last interview with Edmund is probably too wide; too wide for fiction, I mean, not for possibility. (We may have met greater inconsistency in real life; but real life does not need to be probable.) That last interview, taken by itself, is an alarming study of human blindness. We may - most of us do - disagree with the standards by which Edmund condemns Mary. The dateless and universal possibility in the scene is Mary's invincible ignorance of what those standards are. All through their conversation she is cutting her own

throat. Every word she speaks outrages Edmund's feelings 'in total ignorance, unsuspectingness of there being such feelings' (ch. 47). (Note: *Ibid.*, ch. xvi, p. 456) At last, when we feel that her ghastly innocence (so to call it) could go no further, comes the master stroke. She tries to call him back by 'a saucy, playful smile'. (Note: *Mansfield Park*, vol. III, ch. xvi, p. 459) She still thought that possible. The misunderstanding is incurable. She will never know Edmund.

In *Persuasion* the theme of deception is much less important. Sir Walter is, no doubt, deceived both in his nephew and in Mrs Clay, but that is little more than the mechanism of the plot. What we get more of is the pains of the heroine in her rôle of compelled observer. Something of this had appeared in Elinor Dashwood, and more in Fanny Price, constantly forced to witness the courtship of Edmund and Mary Crawford. But Fanny had also, at times, derived amusement from her function of spectator. At the rehearsals of *Lovers' Vows* she was 'not unamused to observe the selfishness which, more or less disguised, seemed to govern them all' (ch. 14). (Note: *Ibid.*, vol. I, ch. xiv, p. 131) It is a kind of pleasure which we feel sure that Jane Austen herself had often enjoyed. But whether it were that something in her own life now began to show her less of the spectator's joys and more of his pains, forcing her on from 'as if we were God's spies' to 'break my heart for I must hold my tongue', or that she is simply exploring a new literary vein, it certainly seems that Anne's unshared knowledge of the significance of things she hears and sees is nearly always in some degree painful. At Kellynch she has 'a knowledge, which she often wished less, of her father's character'. (Note: *Persuasion*, vol. III, ch. v, p. 34) At the Musgroves 'One of the least agreeable circumstances of her residence ... was her being treated with too much confidence by all parties, and being too much in the secret of the complaints of each house' (ch. 6). (Note: *Ibid.*, ch. vi, p. 44) One passage perhaps gives the real answer to any charge of priggery that might lie against her or Fanny for the judgements they pass as spectators. Speaking of Henrietta's behaviour to Charles Hayter, Jane Austen says that Anne 'had delicacy which must be pained' by it (ch. 9). (Note: *Ibid.*, ch. ix, p. 77) This is not so much like the Pharisee's eagerness to condemn as the musician's involuntary shudder at a false note. Nor is it easily avoided by those who have standards of any sort. Do not our modern critics love to use the term 'embarrassing' of literature which violently offends the standards of their own group? and does not this mean, pretty nearly, a 'delicacy' on their part which 'must be pained'? But of course all these spectator's pains sink into

insignificance beside that very special, almost unendurable, pain which Anne derives from her understanding of Wentworth's every look and word. For *Persuasion*, from first to last, is, in a sense in which the other novels are not, a love story.

It remains to defend what I have been saying against a possible charge. Have I been treating the novels as though I had forgotten that they are, after all, comedies? I trust not. The hard core of morality and even of religion seems to me to be just what makes good comedy possible. 'Principles' or 'seriousness' are essential to Jane Austen's art. Where there is no norm, nothing can be ridiculous, except for a brief moment of unbalanced provincialism in which we may laugh at the merely unfamiliar. Unless there is something about which the author is never ironical, there can be no true irony in the work. 'Total irony' - irony about everything - frustrates itself and becomes insipid.

But though the world of the novels has this serious, unyielding core, it is not a tragic world. This, no doubt, is due to the author's choice; but there are also two characteristics of her mind which are, I think, essentially untragic. The first is the nature of the core itself. It is in one way exacting, in another not. It is unexacting in so far as the duties commanded are not quixotic or heroic, and obedience to them will not be very difficult to properly brought up people in ordinary circumstances. It is exacting in so far as such obedience is rigidly demanded; neither excuses nor experiments are allowed. If charity is the poetry of conduct and honour the rhetoric of conduct, Jane Austen's 'principles' might be described as the grammar of conduct. Now grammar is something that anyone can learn; it is also something that everyone must learn. Compulsion waits. I think Jane Austen does not envisage those standards which she so rigidly holds as often demanding human sacrifice. Elinor felt sure that if Marianne's new composure were based on 'serious reflection' it 'must eventually lead her to contentment and cheerfulness'. That it might lead instead to a hair-shirt or a hermitage or a pillar in the Thebaid is not in Jane Austen's mind. Or not there. There is just a hint in *Persuasion* that total sacrifice may be demanded of sailors on active service; as there is also a hint of women who must love when life or when hope is gone. But we are then at the frontier of Jane Austen's world.

The other untragic element in her mind is its cheerful moderation. She could almost have said with Johnson, 'Nothing is too little for so little a creature as man.' If she envisages few great sacrifices, she also envisages no grandiose schemes of joy. She has, or at least all her favourite characters have, a hearty relish for what

would now be regarded as very modest pleasures. A hall, a dinner party, books, conversation, a drive to see a great house ten miles away, a holiday as far as Derbyshire - these, with affection (that is essential) and good manners, are happiness. She is no Utopian. She is described by someone in Kipling's worst Story as the mother of Henry James. (Note: Lewis is referring to 'The Janeites' in *Debts and Credits* (London, 1926), pp. 153-4. Humberstall, repeating the officer Macklin's comment about Jane Austen, says: 'She *did* leave lawful issue in the shape of one son; an' 'is name was 'Enery James.' Lewis disliked the Story because, as he said in an early version of his essay on 'Kipling's World': 'Something so simple and ordinary as an enjoyment of Jane Austen's novels is turned into a pretext for one more secret society, and we have the hardly forgivable *Janeites*.' *Literature and Life*, vol. I (London, 1948), pp. 72-3. Still, as Roger Lancelyn Green helped Lewis and me to see, the *point* of the story is how Jane Austen helped to save the sanity of men serving in the worst horrors of the trenches during the 1914-18 war.) I feel much more sure that she is the daughter of Dr Johnson: she inherits his commonsense, his morality, even much of his style. I am not a good enough Jamesian to decide the other claim. But if she bequeathed anything to him it must be wholly on the structural side. Her style, her system of values, her temper, seem to me the very opposite of his. I feel sure that Isabel Archer, if she had met Elizabeth Bennet, would have pronounced her 'not very cultivated'; and Elizabeth, I fear, would have found Isabel deficient both in 'seriousness' and in mirth.