

The Style of the Sensorium:

Perception and Representation in the Novels of Jane Austen

Deborah T. Aschkenes

MA Thesis, April 2007

Sponsor: Nicholas Dames

In 1816, the *Quarterly Review* praised Jane Austen in terms of qualities that later nineteenth-century novelists would continually claim as their own: an “inelegance” of subject, a “precision” of representation (as if “finished up to nature”) and an affinity with “Flemish painting” and the visual arts.¹ This conception of Austen resonated throughout the early nineteenth century as critics saw her representational practices —whether viewed as literary strength or flaw—to be essential to her distinct style. Those writing about Austen in the first half of the century declared her novels to be “correct representations of life” that unfolded with a “minute fidelity of detail” that for some, rendered too much.² Yet, looking back on Austen from the later nineteenth-century novel, attention to her technique reveals a relative sparseness, and even absence, of material detail. Characters and the domestic spaces they inhabit are represented without the descriptive opulence characteristic of Victorian fiction. Poised between the representational practices of the eighteenth century and the emerging realism of the nineteenth century, how might Austen evoke a sense of ‘things’ in the social spaces of her novels?

Despite the sparseness of physical description, formal aspects of her narratives and attributes of her language do suggest a great degree of material detail. I propose that Austen’s descriptive practices encourage a particular manner of ‘filling in’ based on the

¹ Sir Walter Scott, from an unsigned review of *Emma*. *Quarterly Review*, October 1815, No. 14, (issued March 1816). In *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, Vol. 1. Ed. B.C. Southam. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968) 67.

² G.H. Lewes, 1843; Whatley, 1821; Longfellow, 1839. Whatley’s 1821 essay lauded the “perfect appearance of reality” in her novels and her “vivid distinctness of description.” An 1839 article by Macaulay extolled the delicate touches of Austen’s representations. Longfellow called Austen’s work a “capital profile of real life,” but thought she delineated “all the little wheels and machinery” to excess. All cited from *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*. Lewes, 124; Whatley, 96; Longfellow, 117, Macaulay, 122-123.

epistemological premises of her day. I will suggest that material data in Austen—such as the physical qualities of objects—are constituted in relation to contemporaneous ideas of sensory perception. Austen’s representational practices, I intend to show, are informed by late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century theories of mind: specifically, by the discourses of associationist epistemology.

To explicate this claim, I will first provide a historical background of the theories of perception prevalent in Austen’s day. Then turning to the novels themselves, I explore her descriptive technique—asking how the strategies employed depict the material world, and what they may share with the rhetoric of perception. I examine two very different representational strategies at work in *Persuasion*: first, the novel’s early introduction of Kellynch Hall, and secondly, Anne Elliot’s arrival at Lyme. Next, I turn back chronologically to *Northanger Abbey* to show a model of apprehension within the descriptive practices. In this novel, the perceptive model works close to the surface, as its ‘reading’ of objects takes a central role in a parallel narrative. I select these works in particular in order to deny accounts that portray Austen’s style as simply maturing in a linear trajectory: moving neatly away from her Johnsonian roots to an inchoate form of high realism in her ‘late style.’ Rather, I argue that Austen has a number of techniques at her disposal and can, and does, utilize them to distinct effect in accordance with prevalent models of perception.

In *The Language of Jane Austen*, Norman Page describes the author’s technique in the following terms:

...material solidity...is something that she has relatively little interest in rendering: there is in her novels almost none of the minute description of externals—people

and their dress, houses and furniture and landscapes—that is such an important element in creating the fictional worlds of Dickens and George Eliot and Hardy...In general, the reader intent upon creating mental pictures of fictional characters will find little evidence in this novelist to assist his imaginative efforts.³

Page's analysis brings two crucial points to bear: 1) the act of reading Austen involves an *effort of creating mental pictures*, and 2) in order for this effort to succeed, the novelist must present evidence, or clues, to *assist the reader's imagination*. Posed in this way, Page offers an experience of reading Austen's novels inseparable from questions of visual perception.

However, it is at this point that I depart from Page, as his correct assessment of her style leads to a false conclusion about its effect. Not only does Austen's prose provide the evidence that Page's reader seeks, but is quite amply supplied with clues to assist a reader's imaginative efforts. To refer to these textual bits of evidence, I will use the term *high relief*--moments of heightened materiality that may be created in a multitude of ways: rhetorically, syntactically, narratively. What unites these methodologies is that regardless of their particular means, they collectively encourage a mental action of 'filling in.' While critical conversations about the novel have posed the completion of material details as the job of the eighteenth-century reader,⁴ I claim that in Austen's novels, the descriptive techniques incorporate a specific system of filling in details based on a scientific paradigm. Indeed, I propose that the oscillation between moments of high relief (the 'clues') and low relief (their absence) comprises an effect of

³ Norman Page, *The Language of Jane Austen*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1972) 56-57.

⁴Q.D. Leavis' *Fiction and the Reading Public* and Cynthia Wall's *Prose of Things* are seminal and recent works, respectively, that propose this model of eighteenth-century reading experience.

realism. This configuration of the experience of reading Austen—the drawing of mental pictures based on singular and often sparse moments of particularity—is strikingly analogous to conceptions of perception at the turn of the nineteenth century. As I will show, the ways in which mental pictures were thought to be created was the very subject of late-eighteenth century scientific debate. I will now turn to these scientific theories I have alluded to: the ones in debate among periodicals and lectures, culturally surrounding Austen as she wrote.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century, theories of perception offered a wholesale discourse concerning the way the mind sensed and interpreted external objects. In particular, popular theories regarding the perception of objects and their ‘representation’ in the mind were largely influenced by the tenets of associationism. Building on the theories of Locke, which largely informed eighteenth century science, David Hume refined a process of ideation. In his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, unique, and most importantly, subjective combinations of external stimuli formed impressions in the mind. According to Hume, these impressions became ‘associated’ by their manner of appearance to the perceiving individual. Mental impressions became associated according to three factors: their resemblance to each other, contiguity in time or place, or a relationship of cause and effect.

Building on the associative factors delineated by Hume, David Hartley’s 1749 *Observations on Man, his Frame, His Duty, and his Expectations* took a single psychological principle and refashioned it in purely bio-mechanical terms. All ideas, according to Hartley, were built on contiguous associations, either successive (occurring

in temporal sequence) or simultaneous. In addition to delimiting the mechanics of thought to contiguous impressions, Hartley defined an entirely physiological system of perception and ideation. The stimuli of the world, in Hartley's theory, are apprehended by the senses and create material vibrations. In turn, these vibrations pass through an aetherial fluid in the brain through structures called "vibratiuncles." In this schematic, no longer was associationism a "gentle" psychological force "that commonly prevails" as Hume proposed, but instead a precise physiological process.⁵

Associationism offered a physiological and psychological account of how the mind represented 'real' objects of the world. Input from the physical world were processed through an act of completion in the brain; mentally 'finished' by drawing on a vast database of previous sensory experience. Hartley explains: "Thus the sight of a large building suggests the idea of the rest instantaneously; and the sound of the words which begin a familiar sentence, brings the remaining part to our memories in order..."⁶ This act of completion not only applies to the processing of visual information, but also to verbal language. The rhetoric of Hartleyan associationism links the *formal* qualities of language with models of visual perception. In this framework, the perceptive experience of the external world consists of the reproducing of aural and visual pictures--with the potential to coagulate in a nearly limitless array.

Shortly before Austen wrote *Northanger Abbey*, Erasmus Darwin published *Zoonomia*, which built on Hartley's work but posited ideas to be less strictly determined

⁵ As noted in Tim Milnes' *Knowledge and Indifference in English Romantic Prose*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 40; 127. Milnes most thoughtfully recounts the groundwork of early brain science of the Romantic period.

⁶ David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations, etc.*, (London: J. Johnson, 1791) 66. For all citations, I use the 1791 edition of Hartley's *Observations* for its contemporaneity to Austen's writing.

by vibrations or other mechanical processes. Many found components of Hartleyan associationism problematic in its potential to leave the mind subject to a random bombardment of associated thoughts. Coleridge (whose initial enthusiasm for the *Observations* inspired him to name his son Hartley) refuted the physiological aspects of Hartleyan associationism for its lack of allowance for an “infinite spirit” and “intelligent will.”⁷ While perception was consistently posed as a mental act of combining associated parts (as in Hartley’s ‘large building’ example), both Coleridge and Darwin insist on a higher logic in the mind that helps regulate the numerous impressions--a hierarchy of sorts for the mind’s eye.

Hartleyan associationism, in its strictest sense, was a doctrine of human understanding by way of a mechanical process: the physical motion of vibrations and vibratiuncles passing through the aether to the mind. However, popular conceptions dropped the more mechanical and biological aspects in favor of its general explication of the transmission and formulation of ideas. Much like the assimilation of Freudianism into the popular culture of the twentieth century, Hartleyan associationism became firmly rooted in mainstream beliefs about perception. While perhaps not in its strictest form of cognitive biology, the more accessible aspects of Hartley’s *Observations* became a pervasive articulation of the mind’s relation to its external world.

In Hartley’s model, the brain reconstitutes sensory information from physiologically determined associations. In less mechanized accounts like those of Darwin and Coleridge, experience is formulated by the brain and body at the time of sensation, by means of “an active mind that ‘by perceiving, creates’ the phenomenal

⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, by S. T. Coleridge; ed. with his *Aesthetical Essays*, by J. Shawcross. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, repr. 1907), Vol. I. 83.

world around it.”⁸ But perhaps these accounts are not as incompatible as they might seem. These accounts uniformly give agency to the brain to actively create impressions, rather than locating this agency with the objects themselves. What further unifies these accounts is the positioning of perception as a highly subjective experience— that of an individual who actively constitutes phenomena, rather than a passive receiver of input from external objects. More importantly, what unites these theories of perception is the idea that seeing the world is more a matter of ‘filling in the blanks’ than direct apprehension.

This epistemological model is one I will be drawing upon in my analysis of description in Austen’s novels. By teasing out the methods that create an effect of high relief, I will show that these methods share more than a coincidental link to scientific discourses. While we know that Austen read Hume, and certainly may have had access to various associationist works in the extensive library at Steventon, this project will not attempt to prove Jane Austen’s direct exposure to these theorists. Rather, I simply offer that during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the discourse of associationism was ubiquitous, “quietly informing the period’s most basic assumptions.”⁹ I hope to demonstrate that at their core, Austen’s novels render the material world in ways analogous to associationist principles of sensory perception. To support this premise, let us take a closer look at the ways these techniques operate in *Persuasion*.

Persuasion opens with two moments of absence: the absence of an heir from the Baronetage, and the impending absence of the Elliots from their family seat. Not only is

⁸ Alan Richardson, *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 12.

⁹ Milnes 51

the retrenchment of the Elliot estate the narrative crux of the first chapters, it is the impetus for the resolution of the marriage plot via the future tenants of Kellynch Hall. It is within this context that the Elliot family and Mr. Shepherd, their legal counsel, discuss a naval officer as potential lessee. “‘He would be a very lucky man, Shepherd,’ replied Sir Walter, ‘that’s all I have to remark. A prize indeed would Kellynch Hall be to him; rather the greatest prize of all, let him have ever taken so many before--hey, Shepherd?’” Sir Walter specifically envisions the officer’s interaction within the physical space: “‘There are few among the gentlemen of the navy, I imagine, who would not be surprised to find themselves in a house of this description.’” This seemingly innocuous bit of dialogue contraindicates the fact that at this point in the narrative *the house has yet to be described*. Despite its relative importance to the plot, the only features of the house and grounds that the reader is privy to are its “respectability,” a “character of hospitality,” and an “ancient dignity,” abstractions that have little to do with its physical structure. Instead, this statement works upon on certain assumptions. Rhetorically, the sentence aligns the speaker in close familiarity with its listener, and implies a knowingness that we partake in. “A house of this description” not only creates a familiarity, but conveys an illusion of structural and physical characteristics by virtue of our implied ability to describe it. Austen’s frequent use of negative constructions (i.e., ‘few who would not be surprised,’ as opposed to ‘many would be surprised’) is a device that further encourages intimacy between her narrator and reader; a narratorial wink of sorts. Most importantly, the rhetorical construction and tone discourages the reader from ever noticing that she has no idea what the house looks like. Rather, it depends on this fact.

The passage fosters a point of view both different from and similar to that of the imagined tenant. The reader, in a way, has been an occupant of the Eliot household for four chapters and is thus both within and without this inner circle. Yet Mrs. Clay voices the implicit desire to look around the material space, replying in a way that focuses on the apprehension of things.

“They would look around them, no doubt, and bless their good fortune,” said Mrs. Clay, for Mrs. Clay was present; her father had driven her over, nothing being of so much use to Mrs. Clay’s health as a drive to Kellynch: “but I quite agree with my father in thinking a sailor might be a most agreeable tenant...they are so neat and careful in all their ways! These valuable pictures of yours, Sir Walter, if you chose to leave them, would be perfectly safe. Every thing in and about the house would be perfectly taken care of! the gardens and the shrubberies would be kept in almost as high order as they are now. You need not be afraid, Miss Eliot, of your own sweet flower-garden’s being neglected.”¹⁰

The reader, like the tenant, ‘sees’ the house for the first time; now permitted to look around at the objects and furnishings of its interior and the landscapes of its exterior. While particular narrative attention is drawn to the space and its objects, this act of looking is simultaneously elided. The textual space that should contain the act of looking is instead replaced by an ellipsis: “‘They would look around ...and bless their good fortune,’ said Mrs. Clay, *for Mrs. Clay was present; her father had driven her over, nothing being of so much use to Mrs. Clay’s health as a drive to Kellynch...*” This parenthesis temporally displaces the scene, leaving the narrative moment of the tenant

¹⁰ Jane Austen, *Persuasion: Authoritative Text, Background, Contexts, Criticism*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995) 13.

looking around; even stepping out of the present moment of dialogue. Why this awkward aside to explain Mrs. Clay's presence? Surely, Austen's narrator possesses the technical acumen to escort Mrs. Clay to the room more elegantly. Instead, this ellipsis suspends the narrative action or, perhaps more accurately, covers it up. The direct action of looking around is camouflaged by this aside; the reader does not witness the tenant seeing, nor is able to directly apprehend the space. In addition, Mrs. Clay is herself an outsider in the space—as her potential invasion into the family unit is made explicit as the novel progresses. Her gaze, implicitly tied with her questionable decorum, is concealed.

However, despite its textual elision, the act of looking around does occur in so far as it yields material results: the objects of Kellynch Hall. According to Mrs. Clay, the property contains “valuable pictures,” “gardens and shrubberies,” and “sweet flower gardens.” These objects are presented succinctly, mainly by the nouns that identify them. Yet, the threat of “neglect” encourages an imagistic consideration of their current “high order,” one necessary to envision the potential alteration of their future state.

Traditionally, we might think of description as an element that occurs intra-diegetically (as a character encounters a space) or extra-diegetically (a stop in the action of the plot for the narrator to depict an environment). However, the technical sophistication of this passage delivers its objects neither completely inside nor outside the plot. Rather, it evokes material images by signifying the objects as if we *always knew* they were there. Paradoxically, this stylistic choice heightens intimacy, as objects already present are made intimately familiar. To an extent, histories of prose description position this assumed familiarity as an act not altogether unusual. In these accounts, part of the work of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century reader involved an effort, as

Cynthia Wall describes it, to “fill in the empty spaces between visual tags,” or “rehydrate” signs with familiar meaning.¹¹ However, the particular ‘tags’ in this instance are notably non-visual; as the adjectives ‘valuable’ and ‘sweet’ are largely un-imagistic yet strikingly capacious.

This method of making material features present is less one of describing than one of naming. Like Barthes’ formulation of the proper Name, this act of naming, rather than describing, becomes essential to the creation of novelistic “truth” by allowing the narrator to be at once both “precise and insignificant.”¹² In *Narrative and Its Discontents*, D.A. Miller specifically addresses the significance of the name in Austen’s novels. Miller proffers the name as an essential element of narrative closure; the epistemological apex that her novels ultimately work toward.¹³ As Austen’s heroines reach their narrative goals, characters complete their development through the conclusive act of naming. Excess signifiers and extraneous details must be “purged,” as they are not only unnecessary but actually dangerous in their ability to distract and mislead. If a surplus of signifiers creates a chaos of ‘things,’ Miller proposes that “implicitly, Jane Austen insists...that a moral knowledge...must reconstitute the empirical phenomena brought before it according to its own principles.”¹⁴ While Miller suggests that the move away from excess detail in her narratives is a move toward moral knowledge, I argue that the semantic svelteness that he notes is not of a moral cast, but of an epistemological one. In other words, I interpret Austen’s omission of extraneous detail as a move *away* from an

¹¹ Cynthia Wall, *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) 9; 40

¹² Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. David Miller, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974) 68-69.

¹³ D.A. Miller, *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)

¹⁴ Miller 80

incalculable multitude of data and a move *toward* the phenomenal experience of daily life. In this sense, the reconstituting of the subjective experience of phenomena is precisely what her technique seeks to enact.

Revisiting the period's most popular model of perception, associationism posits the objects of the world to be understood through this very idea of naming. The mind, in common cant, was said to "represent" and create mental pictures based on the previous associations a single word could evoke. In fact, mental comprehension is described specifically in linguistic terms:

This language of the eye, like the language of the tongue, suggests by one sensation what may be resolved into a variety of perceptions. A tree is composed of a trunk, branches, leaves; it has color, figure, size; and all these things are at once suggested to the mind by the two words *spreading oak*. Just so it is with respect to vision: the sensation received by the eye suggests at once the *trunk, branches, leaves, color, figure, and size* of the oak, and suggests them all as the qualities of one object.¹⁵

It is crucial that this paradigm of perception be understood not as an anomaly, but as a popular psychological premise of Austen's day. This particular excerpt was a metaphor for associationism appearing in such mainstream publications as editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. As a scientific theorem, this account explains the workings of visual and verbal perception. But it also provides a system of linguistic representation: "all these things are at once suggested to the mind by the two words *spreading oak*." In the Hartleyan example, the mind resolves a single sensation --a word-- into a variety of

¹⁵ *Encyclopaedia; or, A dictionary of arts, sciences, and miscellaneous literature ...* Vol. 11. (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1798) Vol. 11. In *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group, <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>

physical attributes; therefore a multitude of physical characteristics can be—and perhaps should be—rendered with minimal description. One sensation, or one detail, metonymically represents many--the very principle at work in Austen's representational technique. It is within this context that Austen's narratives may become a form of realism: her economy of descriptive detail mimics the mechanisms of perception.

Based on this premise, adjectives are not necessarily required for an accurate portrayal of the physical world, but instead serve a focused purpose: to direct the mind to hone in on a particular association among many. For instance, in the previously cited passage from *Persuasion*, the adjective "sweet" which modifies "flower gardens" encourages particular associations but discourages others. In other words, 'sweet' gardens may indicate any number of attributes: perhaps green, lush, cozy, or flowering; but would not likely suggest grand, natural, or sprawling. While words such as 'gardens' might denote qualities of previously formed associations, an even greater sense of things is conveyed by Mrs. Clay's assurance, "Every thing in and about the house would be perfectly taken care of." This gesture at once contains all the objects inside and on the grounds—and reinforces the previous implication of intimate knowledge. Indeed, everything *about* the house, we might say, is taken care of in this assertion: the description allows an impression of great objects and grounds, and emphasizes the presence of items.

Like the model proposed by D.A. Miller, I contend that the method at work in Austen's novels is one that reconstitutes the noise of empirical phenomena, but I propose it does so in order to reproduce the overall experience of the real. The power of this type of representation lies in its potential to evoke phenomena, rather than being delimited by

an overdetermined replication of each and every single sensation (lush, green, leafy, fragrant, well-groomed, etc.). The dynamic associative power of the single word is but one feature of Austen's technique that fosters a sense of realism in her novels. But we will now depart from the description of dwellings, and leave Somersetshire and Kellynch behind. It is time to move on to one of the most powerful, memorable, and seemingly unAusten-like scenes of *Persuasion*: the incident at Lyme.

The Lyme chapters of *Persuasion* prominently feature an interest in the sensory mechanisms of the mind and body. Opening with a focus on the natural features of Lyme, the narrative quickly propels toward its climax: Louisa Musgrove's injury on the pavement of the Cobb. Disregarding warnings to the contrary, Louisa jumps from a high ledge, only to fall on the hard pavement and sustain a serious head injury that renders her unconscious. Indulging the body's sensorium at the risk of its utter destruction, Louisa leaps in order to feel "the sensation [that] was delightful to her." The reactions of *Persuasion*'s characters show the influence of brain psychology in the depiction of trauma: a staccato and monosyllabic dialogue ('True, true, a surgeon, this instant'; 'Yes, yes, to the inn') emulates the "bombardment of impressions upon the mind."¹⁶ The influence of associative psychology is also evident in the rendition of Wentworth's "automatonlike" reaction, in which he "respond[s] as mechanically as any Hartleyan association network."¹⁷ If the workings of the brain and its sensations are imbedded in the plot of the Lyme visit, its thoroughly embodied narrative invites the question of how

¹⁶ A. Walton Litz, "Persuasion: Forms of Estrangement" in *Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975) 228-229.

¹⁷ Richardson 104. Alan Richardson further finds the novel as a whole to exhibit an "embodied approach to human subjectivity."

Austen might render a site of intense physicality. In a place where the external objects of the world literally collide with the mind and body, how does Austen's mode of representation change?

The landscape of Lyme is first presented in the novel in lyrical, poetic, and highly descriptive language. Rather than evidence of the author's engagement with the tropes of Romanticism or an expansion of her technical repertoire, I suggest her strategies are rooted in the processes of perception, taking their structure from a physiological, rather than aesthetic system.¹⁸ A close look at the construction of the Lyme introduction helps unfold this idea:

They were come too late in the year to come for any amusement or variety which Lyme, as a public place, might offer; the rooms were shut up, the lodgers almost all gone, scarcely any family but of the residents left—and, as there is nothing to admire in the buildings themselves, the remarkable situation of the town, the principal street almost hurrying into the water, the walk to the Cobb, skirting around the pleasant little bay, which in the season is animated with bathing machines and company, the Cobb itself, its old wonders and new improvements, with the very beautiful line of cliffs stretching out to the east of the town, are what the stranger's eye will seek, and a very strange stranger it must be, who does not see charms in the immediate environs of Lyme, to make him wish to know it better.¹⁹

¹⁸ Litz first noted the novel's unusual interest in the natural environment, interpreting the details of its landscape as evidence of a Romantic aesthetic. Proposing this shift as a stylistic evolution of sorts, he claims Austen "learned that the natural setting can convey, more surely than any abstract vocabulary, the movements of an individual imagination." 153

¹⁹ *Persuasion* 64

Resplendent with a mazy, periodic style, this single sentence seems to meander through the town. The prolixity of this single sentence connotes a careful, measured apprehension, instead of a passing glimpse at a familiar object. Yet, instead of establishing the setting of the current action, this description reveals an impetus toward something absent, something deferred. Beckoning toward the departed summer boarders while anticipating visitors of a future season, this sentence moves away from the present in both distance and time. A street ‘hurries’ into the water; a walk skirts around the bay, and cliffs stretch out from the town; always referring elsewhere. The antithesis “old wonders and new improvements” temporally gestures backwards and forwards. Perpetually deferring the gaze, this opening sentence builds more on what we *seek*, rather than what we actually *see*.

In addition to deferring the gaze spatially and temporally, the physical landscape is comprised less of adjectival description than through devices of classical rhetoric. The patterning of language in this passage produces an undulating motion that impels the gaze along the town, bayside, and cliffs. Syllabically, tonally, and metrically, clauses mirror each other, redoubling sounds, and anticipate further redoubling. The clause “the walk to the Cobb, skirting around the little bay” shares a parallel construction with “the Cobb itself, its old wonders and new improvements,” two elements linked together in the device of isocolon. As patterns of rhyme and meter continue and multiply, they suggest a sense of perpetuity. Finally, the sentence concludes with a barrage of rhetorical schemes: “are what the stranger’s eye will seek, and a very strange stranger it must be, who does not see charms in the immediate environs of Lyme, to make him wish to know it better.” Two rhyming clauses of iambic tetrameter provide a childlike, precociously taunting

conclusion. “Strange stranger” is the device of polyptoton, by which Lyme is made distant, even uncomfortable, by making the reader “strange.” With this device, the narrator coaxes the reader into a place where he *must* want to know Lyme better--lest he be a “very strange stranger.”

Rhetoric, however, contributes much more to the passage than merely a sense of motion; its use actually enhances the materiality of the passage. Consider the next sentence:

The scenes in its neighborhood, Charmouth, with its high grounds and extensive sweeps of country, and still more its sweet retired bay, backed by dark cliffs, where fragments of low rock among the sands make it the happiest for watching the flow of the tide, for sitting in unwearied contemplation; --the woody varieties of the cheerful village of Up Lyme, and, above all, Pinny, with its green chasms between romantic rocks, where the scattered forest trees and orchards of luxuriant growth declare that many a generation must have passed away since the first partial falling of the cliff prepared the ground for such a state, where a scene so wonderful and so lovely is exhibited as may more than equal any of the resembling scenes of the far-famed Isle of Wight: these places must be visited, and visited again, to make the worth of Lyme understood.²⁰

An equally prolix sentence as its forerunner raises the rhetorical stakes, boldly revealing its own apparatus. Linguistic devices are unabashedly wielded and lustily romantic, in their “dark cliffs,” “green chasms,” fragments of rock, and love for “unwearied contemplation.” However, the language calls attention to its self-conscious creation of the scene by repeating the word ‘scene’ three times. The sentence begins: “The scenes in its

²⁰ *Persuasion* 64

neighborhood;” an odd choice perhaps, compared to the more-expected “sights” in its neighborhood. Then, a “scene so wonderful and so lovely” is not only represented but “exhibited,” and done so only in relation to “resembling scenes.” (Austen’s well-noted stylistic control makes the repetition of a word three times in one sentence not likely to be accidental). Several rhetorical devices are once again at work in an extended parataxis. The combination of anaphora and isocolon further builds the rugged landscape: “with its high grounds/with its green chasms; where fragments of low rock/ where scattered forest trees/where a scene so wonderful and lovely.” The description is permeated with internal rhyme such as sweet/sweeps; low/flow; green/between; forest/orchard; while alliteration (first/falling/far-famed/romantic/rocks) punctuates the phrases. A final clause leaves the reader with an imperative: “these places must be visited, and visited again.” The repetition of the word “visited” echoes its meaning--literally, it is “visited again.” But how exactly do these rhetorical techniques contribute to a sense of physical objects or, for that matter, relate to my claim about discourses of perception?

In eighteenth-century rhetorical theory, words were often considered material objects; frequently “studied as things, or material artifacts.”²¹ When part of a rhetorical scheme, words became increasingly physical, even corporeal things. In earlier classical traditions, rhetorical devices were called “figures” which had physical “shapes” and were considered “ornaments” to verbal and written speech. Quintilian particularly framed rhetoric in metaphors of the human body, calling it “a deviation...from the ordinary and

²¹ H. Lewis Ulman, *Things, Thoughts, Words and Actions: the Problem of Language in the Eighteenth Century British Rhetorical Theory*, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994) 23.

simple method of speaking, a change analogous to the different positions our bodies assume when we sit down, lie down, or look back.”²²

In descriptive prose, rhetoric might have heightened the impression of materiality simply by its perceived nature as a physical object. If these devices were considered tangible, textual things, a description that employed these ‘shapes’ might far exceed the sensorial effects of adjectival description alone. In this way, rhetoric might comprise a form of ‘high relief’ on a linguistic level. However, rhetoric is also distinct from other written forms in way crucial to the brain science of Austen’s day.

In a chapter concerning the comprehension of language, the *Observations* defines the act of reading as a multi-sensory process. “It may be,” Hartley writes, “that in passing over words with our eye...particularly in writing...faint miniatures of the sounds of words pass over the ear.”²³ We might recall Hartley’s analogy for the workings of verbal language: “...the sound of words which begin a familiar sentence, brings the remaining part to our memories in order.” If reading brings miniature sounds to the ear, similar to the sounds of the spoken word, then this description offers reading itself as an associative act. Words act in ways similar to other physical objects in the brain, evoking associations as they are sensually perceived. Hartley’s description of the process conflates the multiple loci of sensation: stimulating the eye and ear with visual and aural “miniatures.” And the *Observations* further describes: if “visible objects, impress other vivid sensations besides those of sight...with sufficient frequency, it follows that...these sensations must leave traces, or ideas, which will be associated with the names of the

²² Corbett, Edward P.J. “Classical Rhetoric.” In *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2004) 143. Similarly, Darwin’s *Zoonomia* defined physical motion as a “variation of a figure.”

²³ Hartley 234-235

objects, so as to depend on them.”²⁴ In reading, stimulation occurs in many sites of sensation, combining to create an especially visceral impression. Rhetorical devices, because they primarily rely on visual and oral forms of repetition like alliteration and rhyme, achieve a “sufficient frequency” that far exceeds normal linguistic structure. According to Hartley’s blueprint, the poetic language which rhetoric incorporates has the power to forge powerful associations.²⁵

In addition, rhetorical devices work upon the completion of patterns. Similar to mathematical patterns, rhetoric relies on the mind to fill in the remainder of a series based on established expectations or, one might say, based on associations. The motion of association, imbedded in the rhetoric of the Lyme environment, is one of analepsis and prolepsis: an act of recall to retrieve a sensational clue, in order to project it forward on the present moment.

The motion of associationism also resounds in the novel in a broader sense. This associative motion—the reaching back to earlier impressions and projecting them on to the present—is formally similar to the marriage plot of *Persuasion*. The re-union of Anne and Frederick revivifies the impressions of the pair’s former courtship. When Anne assures herself (an assumption not contradicted by the text) that she and Wentworth share the “same immediate association,” it establishes a confidence in a predictable, psychological reaction to external stimuli. Indeed, Anne “felt the utter impossibility, from her knowledge of his mind, that he could be unvisited by remembrance any more

²⁴ Hartley 272

²⁵ In the Hartleyan model, associations form as the mechanical outcome of vibrations through the *aether*. In the humanist theories of Locke, associations come from behavioral habit. However, regardless of position on a humanist-mechanical spectrum, all accounts consider frequency of repetition a determining factor on the intensity of formed impressions.

than herself. There must be the same immediate association of thought..."²⁶ Moreover, Anne's statement underscores the ability to create shared experience in the mechanisms of the body and mind. This paradigm might be extended to the reading experience of *Persuasion*. If this psychological phenomenon is physiologically derived, then perhaps associations may have been implicitly understood as a formal component of the physical experience of reading.

If the act of reading forms its own set of associations, certain elements of description seem to encourage their own replay. Despite its "happiest" spots and "cheerful" villages, something resonates in the Lyme description that presages the accident upon the Cobb. Reaching into the past, the description none-so-euphemistically evokes the "generations" that "have passed away." Syntactically, the "passing away" occurs because of a "falling" upon the ground, a site where a most violent "scene" is "exhibited." And the phrase "falling *of* the cliff" most easily morphs to "falling *off* the cliff," predicting the motion of Louisa's body. Additionally, the danger implied in "fragments of rock" peeking through the sand reverberates in Wentworth's concern at the roughness and hardness upon Louisa's feet. Evoking the patterns of repetition and recall at work in associative psychology, the passage concludes: "these places must be visited, and visited again, to make the worth of Lyme understood." More than simply an act of memory, the linguistic elements of this passage deftly anticipate the Cobb accident in a way that a twentieth-century reader might describe as subconsciously. To use the vernacular of Austen's day, it works by association.

While the language itself eerily prefigures the crisis upon the Cobb, there is another indication of something profoundly wrong at Lyme. The trip to the sea not only

²⁶ *Persuasion* 42

physically moves its characters out of the previous spaces of the narrative, but the move to Lyme represents a move away from social architecture to physical architecture. The narrator rather anxiously laments “the lodgers [are] almost all gone,” “the rooms are shut up,” and there is “scarcely any family” left, and Lyme is no longer “a public place.” Even the buildings themselves, as sites of social activity, now leave “nothing to admire.” In Lyme, social action becomes focalized through the town’s natural architecture. More importantly, in a place strangely released from the social nexus, the reader is permitted to look, and do so with full, audacious apprehension. The constraint so often attributed to Austen’s prose is absent, and description is dispensed immoderately. We see the green chasms, romantic rocks, and see them repeatedly, literally “visited, and visited again.” And this passage concludes most compellingly:

The party from Uppercross passing down by the now deserted and melancholy looking rooms, and still descending, soon found themselves on the sea shore; and lingering only, as all must linger and gaze on a first return to the sea, who ever deserve to look on it at all, proceeded towards the Cobb, equally their object in itself...²⁷

The introduction of Lyme concludes with a “deserted,” “melancholy” descent down to the Cobb, polarizing the place as “object.” More unsettling though, is its punitive qualification: those who *deserve* to look. Looking is qualified by the spectator’s fitness—a fitness to “*ever* deserve to look at it *at all*.” The extravagant sensory apprehension of the Lyme environs is an extraordinary act that must be mediated. This type of looking greedily consumes sensory stimuli; the same sensory excess that impels Louisa to near self-destruction. Furthermore, as the representation of the Lyme landscape

²⁷ *Persuasion* 64

is overdetermined, the description of the actual fall is oddly under-determined, as the gaze is abruptly withdrawn at the very moment one might wish to see most. At the moment of physical crisis, all visual description is absent. In both extremes, apprehension occurs incorrectly at Lyme. The narrative steps out of the social zone to an unhealthy relationship with the environmental world—an extraordinarily material world where sensation is everything (instead of a phenomenal clue), and the outcome threatens to destroy the body and mind.

Pausing a moment before departing Lyme, we might consider the historical significance of the site that Austen selected. A popular tourist destination of the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Lyme was not only famous for its reputedly restorative air and water, but for its abundant prehistoric fossils, which visibly jutted out of its striated cliffs. Pivotal to the novel, Lyme is comprised of material relics of the past—physical clues, literally in high relief—that assert themselves into the present. Not only is the Lyme landscape the physical embodiment of high relief, but the topography of Lyme is itself characterized by the motion of analepsis. And as we might recall, this is precisely how Austen described it.

Published in the same posthumous edition of 1817, *Northanger Abbey* was written nearly two decades before *Persuasion*. Austen criticism commonly divides the novel into two distinct narrative halves: the first, a coming-of-age marriage plot, and the second, a parody of the gothic novel. The two sections of the novel, however, are closely united in their depiction of objects, which I contend are crucial to its effect. The things of *Northanger Abbey*—whether the famous locked cabinet or the sprigged muslins of

Bath—are all vehicles for hermeneutic lessons in reading the world. If the things of *Northanger Abbey* appear in order to serve hermeneutic ends, then how might their manner of representation suit this purpose?

In *Northanger Abbey*, objects are depicted in order to be read; but read, I argue, according to an epistemological standard. Correlatively, the novel's plot and descriptive style encourage certain types of apprehension while discouraging others; showing the right and wrong ways to read external objects of the world. *Northanger Abbey*'s brand of realism presents its objects to demonstrate particular modes of perception – of which the ultimate end is distinguishing the real from the unreal. The descriptive practices, in other words, indoctrinate the reader in an epistemological practice: establishing the perceptive mechanisms one can trust versus those that mislead.

Northanger Abbey is a novel of things.²⁸ When items appear, they often arise in a way similar to the one I described in relation to the objects of Kellynch. The influence of eighteenth-century representational practices is distinct, as rooms frequently “arise on narrative demand” and things lie in wait until a character picks them up.²⁹ Spaces and objects tend to emerge as they are entered or encountered, and thus, are connected to their discovery. Despite its numerous objects, the novel differentiates objects that arise through this method from those that become apparent through an act of looking around. *Northanger Abbey*'s most important lessons occur when description is disconnected from the epistemological model.

²⁸ Tony Tanner and James Thompson, among others, have written extensively on objects in *Northanger Abbey*, most commonly attributing their appearance to their value as moral artifacts.

²⁹ Wall 123-124

Catherine Morland, the heroine of the novel, meets Henry Tilney for the first time in the Lower Rooms of Bath. Their initial conversation is described in the following manner:

After chatting some time on such matters that naturally arose from the objects around them, he suddenly addressed her with: “I have hitherto been very remiss madam, in the proper attentions of a partner here, I have not asked you how long you have been in Bath, whether you were ever here before, whether you have been at the Upper Rooms, the theater and the concert, and how you like the place altogether. I have been very negligent; but are you now at leisure to satisfy me in these particulars? [...]”³⁰

I select this passage purposely because it is not a description at all. As I have already shown, Austen is particularly skilled at making a number of rhetorical gestures emulate the work of description. When they converse on subjects that “naturally arose from the objects around them,” Catherine and Tilney speak inside a room filled with material things: perhaps a pianoforte, numerous tea tables, games of whist; but not one object is described to achieve this effect.³¹ Rather, the subject of dialogue becomes “matters” that “naturally” arise from a general notice of objects in the room. This distinction is an important one, and one to which I will return. Henry, in the meantime, realizes he has not inquired regarding any of the conventional “particulars”: “Have you yet honored the Upper Rooms?” “Have you been to the theatre?” “To the concert?” Catherine assures

³⁰ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* in *The Complete Novels of Jane Austen*, (New York: Modern Library, 1940) 1070

³¹ Austen utilizes this technique repeatedly, for instance, in *Sense and Sensibility*: “The Dashwoods were now settled at Barton with tolerable comfort to themselves. The house and garden with all the objects surrounding them, were now become familiar...”
Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002) 51.

Henry he need not take the “trouble” of reviewing particulars, but Henry, as throughout the novel, avails the opportunity to use humor to make a sincere point. As Henry quizzes Catherine, Austen describes his physical appearance: “Then forming his features into a set smile, and affectedly softening his voice, he added, with a simpering air, ‘Have you been in Bath long, madam?’ ” First, Tilney’s face receives a noteworthy degree of narratorial attention; a description of the “forming of features,” “set smile,” “simpering air” and soft voice. While Tilney lampoons the conventions of polite conversation, Austen caricatures Tilney through a high degree of detail. The change in tone to a comic mode is engendered by a change in description, and somatic detail becomes the stuff of parody. In addition, once Tilney switches to a parodic mode (and only then) the dialogue is rendered in full speech instead of free indirect discourse. Both of the use of direct dialogue and description of Tilney’s appearance imbeds the ‘particulars’ of this conversation into its representation. As particulars become equated with satire, Austen sets up a relationship between close attention to detail and parody – both structures outside the normative modes of narration.

Tilney continues, humorously presupposing Catherine’s writing about the evening (including his appearance) in her journal. By the time of composition of *Northanger Abbey*, the journal entry was already a trope of the eighteenth-century epistolary novel as well as the novel of sensibility. Here, the imagined journal affords a place for such ephemera as the “sprigged muslin robe with blue trimmings,” “plain black shoes,” and the “curl of [Catherine’s] hair” “to be described in all their diversities.” While the journal, (an object of satire in itself) records this paraphernalia in detail, the narrator does not. We

see a different method at work when the conversation turns with the approach of Catherine's fashion-obsessed chaperone.

They were interrupted by Mrs. Allen: "My dear Catherine," said she, "do take this pin out of my sleeve. I am afraid it has torn a hole already. I shall be quite sorry if it has, for this is a favorite gown, though it cost but nine shillings a yard."³²

An impressive scope of things become instantly present: the garment's sleeve, the offending pin (and subsequent hole), the gown, the fabric and its monetary value, and the body of Mrs. Allen, who arrives in the scene through the above sentence. The representation of all these items, similar to those of Kellynch Hall, is based on a principle of implied familiarity; objects made always-already there. The reader fills in the "mental picture" (to recall Page's claim) with details in rapid succession, and I would argue, quite vividly at that. In contrast, we might imagine this same scene in a descriptive style redolent of any number of novels of the later century:

Spying Catherine and Henry in conversation, Mrs. Allen walked toward the pair, her face pink with an anxious blush. A jeweled rose-shaped pin, due to the weight of the garnet stones encrusted within, caused a rent in the delicate white muslin of her sleeve. "Catherine," Mrs. Allen cried, raising the unfortunate arm...[etc., etc.]

Austen's description (in contrast to my own) provides details with an economy of words and a quick, natural-feeling cadence. Austen's technique, in fact, is so adroitly deployed that it is easy to forget how her fictional worlds are rendered. Since the technical qualities of her descriptions are meant to be somewhat invisible, when the mechanisms are revealed, they warrant notice. When contrasting the representation of the grounds of

³² NA 1072

Kellynch or the Lower Rooms of Bath with the blatant sense of “scene” at Lyme, extensive adjectival description quickly becomes a signal of something awry.

The gothic description of *Northanger Abbey* shares more than it might seem with the curricles and muslins of Bath in the first half of the novel: both contain an assortment of material objects that indicate danger. Austen criticism has frequently noted that excessive attention to objects by the characters of *Northanger Abbey* often accompanies moral ineptitude: from Mrs. Allen’s obsession with dress, to General Tilney, whose love for material objects signals his “parental tyranny.”³³ The sexual threat of John Thorpe also materializes through physical objects, as his primary means of seduction are the pleasures of horses, carriages and other possessions. However, I suggest that “excessive solicitude” to objects in the descriptive techniques provides an even more emphatic education.

As the courtship plot progresses, Catherine visits the Tilney home (for which the novel is named) expecting to find a replica of Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*. Henry Tilney capitalizes on Catherine’s expectations with a lengthy caricature of the abbey’s “gloomy passages” and more importantly, the objects characteristic of the Gothic novel. Henry asks, “How dreadfully will you examine the furniture of your apartment? And what will you discern?” In Henry’s rendition, her own chamber will contain such items as a bed of “purple velvet” with a “funereal appearance;” “walls hung with tapestry exhibiting figures large as life,” a “broken lute,” a “portrait of a handsome warrior” and a ponderous

³³ James Thompson states that such things appear in the novel “...to arouse our suspicions, for those characters who think so much of small matters are inclined to think improperly of great matters.” Tony Tanner, speaking of Mrs. Allen, claims “torn garments mean more to her than torn lives” noting that this “displacement of concern...does involve some perversion of affective energy.”

Thompson, James. *Between Self and World: the Novels of Jane Austen*. (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988) 21.

Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1986) 60-61.

chest.” The novel devotes several pages to this description until Catherine interrupts: “Oh! Mr. Tilney, how frightful! This is just like a book! But it cannot really happen to me.”³⁴

The manner of representation – “this is just like a book”--signals Catherine’s recognition of its falsehood. The statement “this is just like a book” is important insofar as it explicitly delineates why the events “cannot really happen” as Henry describes them. Catherine reaches this conclusion *because* his description is rendered in the manner of a book, as a plethora of object detail is the stuff of fiction. In this, the apprehension and subsequent recording of a mass of empirical data are set in opposition to more natural modes of perception and representation. Austen accentuates the aberrant nature of explicit seeing: “How *dreadfully* will you examine the furniture of your apartment? And what will you discern?”

Later that evening, Catherine will imagine her chamber as the one that Henry described, mistaking a linen chest for a mysterious locked cabinet. But prior to this mistake, Austen presents Catherine seeing correctly. The chapter opens with Catherine’s first entrance into the room:

A moment’s glance was enough to satisfy Catherine that her apartment was very unlike the one which Henry had endeavored to alarm her by the description of...Her heart instantaneously at ease on this point, she resolved to lose no time in particular examination of anything...³⁵

The information gleaned from the moment’s glance provides an accurate assessment, as she ‘reads’ the room correctly by forgoing the examination of minute particulars. Time is

³⁴ NA 1150-1151

³⁵ NA 1153-1154

lost and nothing is gained in “particular examination of anything.” As the plot will show, at this point Catherine’s senses do not misguide her. But how does her view change?

Her habit was therefore instantaneously thrown off with all possible haste, and she was preparing to unpin the linen package, which the chaise–seat had conveyed for her immediate accommodation...when her eye suddenly fell on a large high chest...the sight of it made her start; and forgetting everything else, she stood gazing at it in motionless wonder, while these thoughts crossed her...³⁶

She disregards her normal “habit” and turns her attention to a *described* object in the room (the linen package). Then her eye “fell” suddenly, a type of gaze that is physically startling, causing her to forget everything (including herself) when she threw off her “habit.” Furthermore, “gazing in motionless wonder” is clearly not a normal mode of apprehension anywhere in Austen’s novels, and thus Catherine is “crossed” by her thoughts, which will prove to mislead her.

Catherine slips out of her reliable means of perception due to her fear of General Tilney. Like her initial assessment of the room, her first glance is dependable, as the General does prove to be a character less than benevolent. Rather than trusting her senses—which are physiologically designed to quickly read brief sensational clues—Catherine insists on the close inspection of all sensory tags.³⁷ Austen records Catherine’s desire to look in language that indicates her error: “I will look into it; cost me what it may, I will look into it, and directly too.” The word ‘direct’ is repeated when General Tilney

³⁶ NA 1154

³⁷ Interestingly, the *Biographia Literaria* is also concerned with the potential dangers of apprehending *too* much. Coleridge insists that if “every partial representation awakes the total representation of which it had been a part,” the result would be a chaos of associated stimuli. Coleridge states that “will, reason, and judgment” must mitigate potential over-apprehension by “regulating the impressions on the mind.” 77-83

bellows “with violence”: “Dinner to be on table *directly!*”³⁸ The overt act of looking around is further associated with unsound apprehension when General Tilney repeatedly demands that Catherine look and comment on the rooms of the abbey, despite the fact that her “unpracticed eye” “saw little more than its spaciousness and the number of its attendants.”³⁹

Catherine spends a stormy night attempting to unlock the imposing cabinet, her imagination creating a night full of horror and suspense. Correspondingly, Austen’s description is constructed with extensive adjectival detail; the gothic parody is filled with opulent description precisely because of its parodic nature. In the morning, Catherine finds that the mysterious cabinet contained only a most mundane and domestic object—a stack of laundry bills. With misapprehensions dispelled, normative observing is restored—and with it, a more balanced method of representation. Henry mentions the previous night’s storm at the breakfast table, eliciting the following from Catherine:

“But we have a charming morning after it,” she added, desiring to get rid of the subject; “and storms and sleeplessness are nothing when they are over. What beautiful hyacinths! I have just learnt to love a hyacinth.”⁴⁰

As perception resumes its regular (and regulating) function, the hyacinth seamlessly emerges from the social dialogue. In contrast to the inappropriate, over-stimulated looking of the previous night, no one in this scene is *caught looking*; objects exist purely from a healthy, instantaneous absorption of the contents of the room. Austen’s descriptive techniques oppose items delineated in great detail, such as the mistaken chest, with the quick, incisive glance of normal apprehension. In *Northanger Abbey*, the plot

³⁸ Original emphasis, NA 1155.

³⁹ NA 1155

⁴⁰ NA 1160

and representational style are didactically paired in a single epistemological premise: successful perceiving is a process of metonymy.

Using a framework of the period's most popular models of perception, Austen's descriptive techniques offer a way of seeing. In this way, a 'proper' model of seeing emerges; proper, not in a moral sense, but rather a psychological and physiological propriety. By rendering objects in ways analogous to a physiology of perception, Austen's descriptive strategy taps into the period's beliefs about the mind and body--a scientific schema for a reality effect. The great degree of stylistic control so often attributed to Austen's prose may in fact be a symptom of its epistemology: the depiction of a social world and its objects in accordance with a physiological system.

Finally, Sir Walter Scott proposes an analogy that distinguishes the author's strength in the very terms of her descriptive style. "Upon the whole," Scott writes, "...the turn of this author's novels bears the same relation to that of the sentimental and romantic cast, that cornfields and cottages and meadows bear to the highly adorned grounds of a show mansion, or the rugged sublimities of a mountain landscape. It is neither so captivating as the one, or so grand as the other, but it affords to those who frequent it a pleasure nearly allied with the experience of their own social habits."⁴¹ Both the highly adorned and ruggedly sublime, I have shown, signal something outside of the normative mode of seeing when regarded with contemporaneous conceptions of the sensorial mind and body. Rather, a representational practice that renders cottages, curricles and characters in a structure allied to perceptive experience begets a most elegant realism.

⁴¹ Sir Walter Scott, *Unsigned review of Emma* In *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, Vol. 1. Ed. B.C. Southam, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968) 68.

Bibliography

- Austen, Jane. *Persuasion: Authoritative Text, Background, Contexts, Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1995.
- Northanger Abbey*. In *The Complete Novels of Jane Austen*. New York: Modern Library, 1940
- Sense and Sensibility*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002
- Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria, by S. T. Coleridge; ed. with his Aesthetical Essays, by J. Shawcross*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press 1907. Vol. I.
- Corbett, Edward P.J. "Classical Rhetoric." In *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2004. 142-161
- Darwin, Erasmus. *Zoonomia; or, the Laws of Organic Life*. Vol. 1. London: J Johnson, 1796. In *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. 19 Mar. 2007 <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>>
- Duffy, Joseph "Criticism 1814-70." *The Jane Austen Companion*. Eds. J. David Grey, A. Walton Litz and Brian Southam. New York: Macmillan, 1986.
- Encyclopædia Britannica; or, a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, &c*. Edinburgh: Balfour & Co., 1778-83. In *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. 19 Mar. 2007 <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>>
- Encyclopaedia; or, A dictionary of arts, sciences, and miscellaneous literature...* Vol. 11. Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1798 Vol. 11. In *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group, 19 Mar. 2007 <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>>
- Halperin, John. *The Life of Jane Austen*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.
- Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Hartley, David. *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations, etc.,...* London: J. Johnson, 1791.
- Hume, David, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1993.
- Leavis, Q. D. *Fiction and the Reading Public*. London: Bellew Publishing, 1990.

- Miller, D.A. *Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Milnes, Tim. *Knowledge and Indifference in English Romantic Prose*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Page, Norman. *The Language of Jane Austen*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1972.
- Richardson, Alan. *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Southam, B.C., Ed. *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge & K. Paul; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968.
- Tanner, Tony. *Jane Austen*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1986
- Thompson, James. *Between Self and World: the Novels of Jane Austen*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988.
- Ulman, H. Lewis. *Things, Thoughts, Words, and Actions: the Problem of Language in Late Eighteenth-Century British Rhetorical Theory*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994
- Wall, Cynthia. *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.