

Beholding the Beholder's Eye: Beauty and Mimetic Effects in Jane Austen

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Beauty is sometimes thought to be “objective,” where everyone agrees on who or what is beautiful. Beauty is other times characterized as “subjective,” *in the eye of the beholder*. In René Girard’s mimetic theory beauty must be “intersubjective,” not in the eye of the beholder but *in the beholding of the eye of the beholder*. That is, beauty is mimetic; it is mediated by others.^[1] Such intersubjective dynamics play out constantly in Jane Austen’s treatment of beauty, and more than superficially; they often propel the plot and determine the fate of principal characters.^[2]

Yet Austen, focused as she is upon romantic attraction and the marriage market, is too much of a realist to ignore the objective aspects of beauty and their ruthlessly determinative influence.^[3] Charlotte Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice*, a sharp and observant character and Elizabeth Bennett’s close friend, exemplifies this utilitarian realism about beauty. It is strongly implied (though never stated outright) that Charlotte is not particularly attractive, and she “settles” unapologetically for the comically ridiculous Mr. Collins—Austen’s most cringe-worthy pairing. As Charlotte explains to Elizabeth,

“I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only for a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins’s character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair, as most people can boast on entering the married state.”^[4]

Charlotte deals (or so she sees it) with the cold, hard facts of life. It would be difficult to convince her that beauty is an intersubjective phantom. And though readers will agree that she deserves better than Mr. Collins, even that she *could* do better, few are under any misapprehension that Charlotte could secure a Darcy or a Charles Bingley.^[5]

On the other hand, Charlotte knows better than anyone else that beauty is hardly the only thing that matters; much more important is how one plays one’s hand, as her own finessing of Mr. Collins demonstrates. When Collins is rejected by Elizabeth after his comic debacle of a proposal, Charlotte deftly places herself in his way, presents herself as a sympathetic listener, and very quickly (within a few days) manages to get him to look upon her as a

helpmate and desirable life partner: massaging his bruised ego, re-channeling his resentment toward Elizabeth, and redirecting his gaze toward herself.[6] However opportunistic and calculating, Charlotte's engineering of the situation relies entirely on "intersubjective" factors.

Charlotte contrasts usefully with Jane Bennett, Elizabeth's elder sister, who is, objectively, the great beauty in the novel but has no such situational awareness and much more difficulty securing a partner. Jane and Charles Bingley have a strong mutual attraction and are, in the common phrase, "made for each other," but Jane very nearly loses him because she fails to sufficiently display her attraction. Charlotte, appropriately, is the first person to notice that this is going to be a problem. As she prophesies to Elizabeth,

"... there are very few of us who have heart enough to be really in love without encouragement. In nine cases out of ten, a woman had better shew more affection than she feels. Bingley likes your sister undoubtedly; but he may never do more than like her, if she does not help him on." [7]

But Jane is a very sincere person with a calm, serene temperament. She is not one to make a presumptuous show of her feelings, and if anything underplays them.

Left to their own devices, Jane and Bingley might find their way to happiness and invalidate Charlotte's misgivings. Unfortunately, it is not solely a matter of Jane looking at Bingley or of Bingley looking at Jane, but also of Bingley's friend and mentor, the imposing Mr. Darcy, *looking at Jane looking at Bingley*. Darcy cannot perceive in Jane, as he reports later, "any symptom of peculiar regard" for Bingley—precisely what Charlotte predicted—so he separates the two.[8] Bingley in turn, insofar as he yields to Darcy's counsel, is *looking at Darcy looking at Jane looking at himself*.

These unhappy circumstances are fortunately resolved later: Darcy withdraws his disapproval and gives his blessing, but only because he can now see Jane through Elizabeth's eyes, that is, *look at Elizabeth looking at Jane looking at Bingley*. Bingley in turn renews his attention toward Jane after *looking at Darcy looking at himself, looking at Jane*. [9]

Even without the benefit of mimetic theory, we can see that beauty in Austen's world, however objectively self-evident, is very much socially embedded. With Austen there is constant interplay between objective, subjective, and intersubjective aspects of beauty. Yet it is the intersubjective, the mimetic aspects, that are the most revealing, the most interesting, and the most determinative. This extends to our experience as readers, since Austen's description of beauty tends to be minimal, mostly suggestive, and left to our imagination. We, too, nearly always experience beauty in Austen through the eyes of other characters.

While human beauty can be both very powerful and very superficial, the advantage of beauty in this context is that, being both powerful and superficial, it is also very *obvious*. In Austen's hands, beauty brings certain mimetic effects into sharp relief. This study will explore these effects primarily through three characters: Henry Crawford (*Mansfield Park*), Anne Elliot (*Persuasion*), and Fanny Price (*Mansfield Park*).

With Henry Crawford, Austen's treatment of beauty is wryly satirical; Henry is a relatively plain man who can leverage his personal appeal to quickly become the most attractive man in any social setting. He is a classic Girardian "pseudo-narcissist," meaning that he projects self-love, gets women to imitate it, and feeds off the ensuing stream of desire, from an indefinitely long stream of women.^[10] However, Rebecca Adams has argued that Girard's "pseudo-narcissism" can go beyond *méconnaissance* (misrecognition, or the "Romantic lie"). Adams repurposes Girard's psychology to propose a model of "loving mimesis."^[11] Adams suggests an alternate scenario by which this mimetic relation, instead of being "objectifying," confers agency and affirmation. The center of attention in the putatively "narcissistic" relation can experience, sustain, and augment desires that are positive and non-appropriative. Quite interestingly, Adams was inspired to formulate her model after watching a *Star Trek* episode (described below) premised on the power of romantic attraction. Adams' thesis is highly suggestive, though it remains underdeveloped and unelaborated through further examples.

Anne Elliot and Fanny Price are exemplary subjects for further developing Adams' model. They demonstrate the affirming power of mimetic desire, most obviously (but not only) manifested in physical beauty. Anne and Fanny blossom through series of interactions that ultimately confer personal value and agency. They "become beautiful" before our eyes but are not in any way trying to achieve this effect. In certain scenes, *aware of being admired*, they glow reciprocally. This is much more than a "Cinderella factor" to captivate readers (though it certainly is that); it is an outward sign of a positive intersubjective transformation. Austen's treatment of these mimetic effects makes Adams' insights more concrete and suggests a fresh approach for exploring "positive mimesis," a longstanding and controversial puzzle in mimetic theory, which is nearly always focused on envy, rivalry, doubling, and violence.^[12]

Henry Crawford and "Pseudo-Narcissism"

"Objectively" speaking, Henry Crawford is rather short and relatively plain. However, he somehow manages to be the most handsome man wherever he goes. Austen captures the process brilliantly and economically when Henry first makes his appearance at Mansfield:

Her [Mary's] brother [Henry] was not handsome: no, when they first saw him he was absolutely plain, black and plain; but still he was the gentleman, with a pleasing address. The second meeting proved him not so very plain: he was plain, to be sure,

but then he had so much countenance, and his teeth were so good, and he was so well made, that one soon forgot he was plain; and after a third interview, after dining in company with him at the Parsonage, he was no longer allowed to be called so by anybody. He was, in fact, the most agreeable young man the sisters had ever known, and they were equally delighted with him.[\[13\]](#)

Julia and Maria Bertram being “equally delighted” with Henry is of course a sign of trouble from a Girardian point of view, and indeed, it turns out to be exactly so.[\[14\]](#) But for present purposes it is worth asking, how does Henry manage to become the most handsome man in world after only three meetings? These “runaway” effects are powerful enough that even readers (not unlike Julia and Maria) fall victim to them; it is difficult to remember even a few chapters later that Henry is, objectively speaking, not particularly good looking.

Over the course of the novel we observe how Henry achieves these effects. He has immense personal charm and superb conversational skills. He takes command of every situation, effortlessly projecting self-assurance, self-confidence, and self-admiration—while avoiding the foppishness of someone like Robert Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*.[\[15\]](#) Henry flatters women with extreme art but does not fawn over them—as the hapless Rushworth does with his fiancé Maria Bertram. Instead, Henry teases women with suggestive barbs that keep them off balance, and always stays just out of reach; women everywhere fall in love with him yet never get more than a plausibly deniable return for their attentions. He is a serial heartbreaker, quick to move on to his next conquest when his current situation becomes uninteresting, or unsustainable.

All of this conforms to Girard’s analysis of the classic “pseudo-narcissist.”[\[16\]](#) For Girard, genuine “narcissists” (those who desire themselves independently of the desires of others) cannot exist. Those who *appear* to be narcissists are in fact imitating the desire directed at them, then re-presenting it (mostly unconsciously) as their own self-love, something that projects a potent self-sufficiency. When successful, the “pseudo-narcissist” attracts even more ardent desire and can create a semi-stable, irresistible field of desire around his or her self.

The pseudo-narcissist is surrounded by desiring supplicants who imitate his or her self-love, thereby feeding it and perpetuating the charade, strengthened and sustained by this positive feedback. But the pseudo-narcissist cannot unequivocally reciprocate this admiration, because the fawning admirers, by very virtue of their admiration, have demonstrated their low value, but also their necessity as fawning admirers; their role is to feed energy into the system. To return the admiration in equal measure would disrupt the field of attraction.

Girard identifies Olivia in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* as the quintessential pseudo-narcissist, though she is hardly aware of what she is doing. Her aura of complacent self-

love, sustained by fawning admirers, is punctured in an instant by a critical interloper (Viola, pretending to be her brother Sebastian), who scolds her for her neglect of the lovelorn Orsino. Olivia immediately falls in love with Sebastian/Viola, the only one who fails to admire her.[\[17\]](#) Girard also finds the same pattern prefigured in a minor exchange in *As You Like It*, when Rosalind (like Viola, also disguised as a man) chides the country girl Phebe for keeping her forlorn lover Silvius contemptuously dangling. Then, Phebe immediately falls in love with Rosalind:

Sweet youth, I pray you chide a year together:
I had rather hear you chide than this man woo.[\[18\]](#)

In contemporary street wisdom, this is a strategy that every “pick-up artist” claims will get beautiful women into bed: puncturing their self-regard with negative comments and thereby triggering insecurity in women otherwise supremely self-confident. Henry deviates from Girard’s analysis insofar as he is a male rather than female instantiation of the pseudo-narcissist, and insofar as his strategy is, like the pick-up artist’s, conscious and deliberate. In this sense, Henry is operating at a meta level, a “pseudo pseudo-narcissist.” Nevertheless, very much like Olivia, he is upended by his own strategy.

Henry lacks respect for the women who are captivated by him, exactly because they *are* captivated by him, and offer so little challenge. The only woman he can fall in love with is Fanny Price, who genuinely dislikes him, is unmoved by his flattering insinuations, and never gets caught up in the Henry fever depicted above; Fanny—the objective realist in this context, and in that sense an important “reality check”—remains convinced that Henry Crawford is not particularly good looking. Yet her resistance to his charms makes her irresistible to him. As he expounds to Mary,

“I do not quite know what to make of Miss Fanny. I do not understand her. I could not tell what she would be at yesterday. What is her character? Is she solemn? Is she queer? Is she prudish? Why did she draw back and look so grave at me? I could hardly get her to speak. I never was so long in company with a girl in my life, trying to entertain her, and succeed so ill! Never met with a girl who looked so grave on me! I must try to get the better of this. Her looks say, ‘I will not like you, I am determined not to like you’; and I say she shall.”[\[19\]](#)

Henry “discovers” Fanny’s beauty simultaneously as he encounters her impermeable resistance. For Henry, Fanny presents a completely new challenge, first as an object of psychological seduction, then eventually, as his efforts continue and he makes no progress, an object of love.

Fanny is the Viola to Henry’s Olivia, the Rosalind to Henry’s Phebe. After the climactic ball, Henry falls deeply and publicly in love with Fanny, even to the point of reveling proudly in his chains like the most pitiful supplicant.[\[20\]](#) He forgets his own script, imagining—though

his accumulated experience should have taught him better—that such fawning beggars (i.e., Rushworth) get nowhere. Fanny for her part, though not following Henry's script, remains mostly unmoved by his protestations. She thinks that she can simply wait him out until he forgets about her. (She is not exactly right, but close enough.)

Fanny has exactly the effect of a coquette, but it is the farthest thing from her mind. Austen has a robust understanding of the psychology around "pseudo-narcissism." However, her interpretation is quite a bit more nuanced than Girard's, or perhaps it is better to say broader and more generalizable, which is why Adams' model becomes necessary for the sake of interpretation. Something more is at play. In the meantime, it is worthwhile to look briefly at a larger assembly of Austen's female "coquettes."

There is no dearth of them, and they come in different shapes and sizes. Lucy Steele in *Sense and Sensibility* and Lady Susan Vernon in *Lady Susan* could be considered "successful" coquettes, not in the sense that they finally get what they want (arguably Lucy Steele does, in her twisted way) but insofar as the machinery of coquetry is fully operational. By contrast, Isabella Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey* acts the part of the coquette but is transparent and incompetent; even the naïve protagonist Catherine Morland sees through Isabella in the end.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, we have seen that Charlotte Lucas is not above being coquettish. Her friend Elizabeth Bennett has an engaging way with men which Darcy misinterprets as coquettishness; she does not speak critically to Darcy or engage pleasantly with other men in order to get his attention, but that is exactly what he thinks she is doing when he first falls in love with her. He thinks he is falling for an irresistible coquette, even against his own better judgment.^[21] Thus Elizabeth succeeds as a coquette without in fact being one. Some of the personal qualities *around* being a coquette can therefore be considered positively after all; being personable, being friendly, openly and critically engaging with others. These are successful ways to "win friends and influence people."

Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park*, another great Austenian beauty, has these gifts but deploys them in a deliberately coquettish way. Mary is a very "high functioning" coquette, an extraordinary fictional creation, whom we can neither love nor hate. Edmund is to her as Fanny is to Henry, but the feelings aroused are reciprocal and we cannot help wanting the romance between Edmund and Mary to somehow work out. Mary hybridizes the wit and vivaciousness of Elizabeth Bennet with the moral unsavoriness of Lady Susan, yet Austen gives Mary an underlying humanity that makes her moral flaws not vicious but careless and strangely (since she is hardly an idiot) blinkered and stupid. Mary, like Henry, is something of a tragic figure who misses her chance at redemption, at what we might call authenticity.^[22]

Elizabeth Elliot in *Persuasion* aspires to be the sort of "pseudo-narcissist" that Olivia is in

Twelfth Night: the beautiful woman at the center of attention, condescendingly proud and self-assured but universally admired. Elizabeth cannot, however, attract any romantic attention at all, and only comes off as arrogant and off-putting. She suffers quiet distress as she sees the window of her desirability slowly closing around her. Elizabeth is a failed coquette, a failed “pseudo-narcissist.” If she were not such a mean and unpleasant woman, she might be another tragic Austenian figure like Henry or Mary.

Pseudo-Narcissism Reconsidered: Rebecca Adams’ Model of Mimetic Desire

The term “pseudo-narcissist” may be unfortunate insofar as it automatically implies *méconnaissance* (misrecognition, Girard’s “Romantic lie”) wherein people are misreading their own motives and playing games with each other. While this *can* be true, even with Girard’s examples the case is overstated. For instance, Viola launches the tirade that turns Olivia’s head; Viola thus disrupts the flow of desire and inadvertently reconfigures it around herself.^[23] The reconfigured desire has essentially the same structure for Viola as it did for Olivia. But does this make Viola another “pseudo-narcissist”? The same could be asked of Rosalind in relation to Phebe in *As You Like It*.^[24] Likewise, Fanny’s rebuff of Henry accentuates his desire and makes her—unwittingly, then unwillingly—the center of attention. Yet Fanny is not being coy or “playing hard to get.”^[25]

The more salient point about “pseudo-narcissism” may not be misrecognition after all, but rather the configuration of desire, the structure. Since the object of desire is a *person with desires*, she/he can also be both a *model* and a *subject* of desire. The three points of Girard’s mimetic triangle—subject, object, and model of desire—can thus collapse into a single person, with a field of attraction around him/her: a singularity of desire, as it were.^[26]

Such a structure must have negative implications for Girard because, by definition, it involves “internal mediation” (subject and model inhabit the same sphere of desire and are in competition for the same object). Internal mediation in Girard’s system usually implies an intensification of mimetic desire and hence, by implication, a greater distortion of awareness, an intensification of rivalry and conflict. Insofar as Girard could conceive of mimesis positively at all, it was almost always in the realm of “external mediation,” as in benign role modeling, where the subject and model are not in competition.

Rebecca Adams, who famously elicited key statements from Girard about the “goodness” of mimetic desire,^[27] struggled with his thought on precisely this point. External mediation *may* be less conflictual, but it can also mean exclusion, being cast into outer darkness (that is, putting yourself out of the game when you have a legitimate stake in it). Renunciation *may* be virtuous, but it can also mean a kind of Freudian “self-mutilation,” (that is, denying or being denied legitimate desires). Internal mediation *may* pull us into the vortex of doubling rivalry, but for Adams it can also be transformative and can confer genuine agency.

Adams articulated this in her model of “loving mimesis,” a significant though still underappreciated contribution to mimetic theory.[28] Adams redrew the mimetic triangle using the example of our *coquette*, Girard’s “pseudo-narcissist.” Adams repurposed the mimetic relations in and around the “pseudo-narcissist” to imagine an alternate scenario, by which this mimetic relation becomes a truly “intersubjective” one, which for Adams means that no “objectification” takes place (the “object” is instead affirmed as a desiring subject).

Adams’ exposition is unfortunately opaque. It is split between the highly technical and abstract presentation of the model in one book,[29] and a highly compelling and accessible personal story about how she came to discover it in another.[30] The latter is particularly relevant here because the central insights are, as noted above, gained through a story involving romantic attraction. It is worth revisiting Adams’ personal account in some detail.

Adams’ epiphany came specifically from an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (“The Perfect Mate”).[31] (Adams is a *Star Trek* fan.) The central figure in the episode is a “metamorph,” Kamala, a genetically engineered female alien “literally with no mind of her own.”[32] Endowed both with empathic (telepathic) abilities and an ability to perfectly mirror and mold herself to the desires of her partner, she has been raised to be a “gift” that will help facilitate peace between two warring planets (a conflict originating, interestingly enough, in a rivalrous conflict between two brothers over the same woman).

While aboard the *Enterprise*, Kamala is awakened from her dormant state prematurely (by nefarious premeditation of Ferengi on board), before the bonding with the official for whom she is intended can take place. At her discovery, Captain Picard objects in the strongest terms that her condition amounts to little more than slavery, and that her concealed transportation on his vessel is nothing less than trafficking. The quickened Kamala is given free access to the ship as any other passenger would. However, comically, Kamala, wreaks some havoc on the *Enterprise* through her interactions with men, with whom she cannot help being potently and irresistibly seductive as she mirrors back their deepest desires.

Because of this, she needs to be sequestered. Picard looks in on her and begins to take an interest in her well-being and her fate. Then, under the influence of her own impulses, Kamala permanently bonds with Picard. Adams explains,

However, because Picard has no desire to possess her, or even to serve as a model for her at all, but has only expressed a wish that she could become an independent agent capable of making a free choice and choosing a noble destiny, from within the strict confines of her mimetic nature she indeed becomes an independent agent. This was the surprise twist of the story. As I watched, the story demonstrated the possibility that mimetic desire need not entail enslavement, rivalry or violence, but could actually open up into regard for freedom for another. I had my answer to my theoretical problem with Girardian theory.[33]

Adams elaborates, "Unable to desire this freedom for herself or even understand it until it was made possible by the desire of another, she has been transformed from an object, something which is desired and acted upon by others, into what philosophers call a Subject." Adams outlines what subjectivity is in the context of mimetic desire:

. . . we sense there is something inauthentic about having a subjectivity purely derivative of someone else's point of view. The only alternative has traditionally appeared to be conceiving human beings ideally as totally free, autonomous agents, an idea central to pure Enlightenment individualism but which I suspect we also know to be untrue, because people are clearly social and interdependent beings. The *Star Trek* episode offered a way to think about a third alternative: human beings might be understood as deeply mimetic and thus as profoundly relational (as Girard and many postmodernist thinkers have stressed), yet this would not preclude the possibility of authenticity, defined not as absolute autonomy of action and consciousness, but as the capacity to participate fully in a loving dynamic of giving and receiving in relation to others.[\[34\]](#)

I have objections to some of Adams' assertions (not overviewed here),[\[35\]](#) but none of them should detract from the importance of what she has done. She has worked out how positive mimetic desire might work within the context of internal mediation (remembering here that since the "pseudo-narcissist" is simultaneously subject, object, and model, the mediation is internal, by definition). Adams also generalizes the structure of "pseudo-narcissism" to show that there need not be anything particularly "pseudo" or "narcissistic" about it. It allows for agency, subjectivity, or what we could call authenticity.

Another example Adams might have used is the romantic comedy *Runaway Bride*.[\[36\]](#) Julia Roberts' character in the film is essentially a "metamorph," a woman who keeps trying to be "the perfect mate" for a long series of men, but gets cold feet at every wedding, sensing (it is implied) that her agency will be subsumed in the melding of her identity with each groom's desires. Roberts' character is a serial coquette, who traps herself (and others) in inauthentic desires, but at least has the sense to bolt each time. Richard Gere's male lead is a critical interloper who plays a role comparable to Picard's, though in this case the relationship becomes a reciprocal and romantic one. Though there is risk here of succumbing to Girard's "Romantic lie," surely a vast number of romantic comedies contain at least this kernel of truth: that we need other people to become "authentic," and it ought to be those who can see through our inauthenticity.

What is most unfortunate about Adams' model is that it was not pursued further, since she withdrew at that time from active scholarship. Her model can and should be fleshed out with further examples. Obviously, Kamala is a highly idealized, perfectly mimetic being. (As noted, the *Star Trek* episode was not included in the formal explication of Adams' model, and in addition, Adams later developed other misgivings about Kamala.[\[37\]](#)) The idealization

helps Adams work through the problem schematically, and achieve a genuine breakthrough, but having worked it through, other examples would have been helpful. Further support for her model can be found with Austen's coquettes, especially the inadvertent ones who are not coquettes at all: Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*, and Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*.

The "Second Spring" of Anne Elliot

Girard often compared escalating mimetic effects to positive feedback in engineering or to speculative bubbles in the stock market.^[38] Beauty in Austen can manifest these effects, as was shown earlier with Henry Crawford, who can produce and harness them at will, even without being particularly attractive. With Fanny Price and Anne Elliot something very similar happens, but the beauty is "objectively" quite real. Moreover, the "objectively" real beauty is interlocked with mimesis, further producing discernable physiological effects, which, being noticed, feed back into the mimetic cycle, feeding back again into the "objectively" perceived beauty, and so on.

Adams was on the right track not simply theoretically but in a down-to-earth, verifiable way, and not just as an idealized extrapolation from a science-fiction drama; we have all seen people "glowing" from admiration or affection—people who are literally more beautiful for having received it. Experiences with groups can "socialize" people, transforming them into confident, engaging individuals where they were previously mousy or inhibited, and a radiance can manifest even physiologically from such a transformation. These effects become apparent with Anne Elliot and Fanny Price.

Since they are the type of women *least* likely to parade their beauty, the effects are the more striking to readers. The "Cinderella" patina to both of their stories—oppressed women shoved to the periphery who come into their own and are brought to the scenic center—allows us to enjoy the effect aesthetically, because potential resentment is neutralized.^[39] Especially in Anne's case (Fanny's relationship with readers is a great deal more complicated),^[40] she has earned her happiness and is barely aware of her good looks. But pragmatically, from an analytical perspective, the lack of vanity helps to isolate the relation of mimesis and beauty, for someone not seeking that kind of attention, and to understand how inside and outside are being affected. That is, the process described by Adams can be clearly and realistically depicted through Anne's character arc.

First, it is necessary to consider Anne's "bad looks," which also have mimetic origins. They constitute "pseudo-narcissistic" effects, operating in reverse. Eight years prior Anne was persuaded to give up Frederick Wentworth, then a dashing and brilliant lieutenant. Wentworth denounced her at the time as weak and overly yielding and has still not forgiven her. Anne neglects her body as a form of self-mortification, laying upon herself the burden of his unforgiveness in her prematurely faded appearance. This is an outward sign of an inner wasting away. She conforms to Wentworth's denunciation, becoming excessively

deferential to everyone around her, in precise contrast to Wentworth's confidence and brilliance, though Anne in fact has natural charm and considerable interpersonal skills with men. She becomes the woman Wentworth accuses her of being, physically wilting under his denunciation for eight years.

Anne values herself downwardly according to the value projected on her by Wentworth. The two captains, Rebecca Adams' Picard and Jane Austen's Wentworth, are having opposite but structurally comparable effects. While Picard confers and facilitates agency and subjectivity, Wentworth resentfully withholds them, so long as he withholds acceptance or forgiveness.

It is precisely this belated forgiveness (so I have argued) which launches Anne's "second spring."[\[41\]](#) Her re-blooming is in fact an extremely complex process, finely detailed by Austen, and involves a great deal of social interaction, but chronologically, it can be traced back to a little gesture of Wentworth's in chapter ten, when he takes her hand and helps her into a gig. Anne interprets this small token as a sign of reconciliation. Thereafter, being in the presence of Wentworth is less mortifying, and she goes on to win the favor of everyone in his social set. Her natural personableness comes out, and her interactions, especially with men, initiate a reciprocal process of positive feedback that begin to affect her appearance.

Anne's long faded beauty reappears strikingly on the beach at Lyme, after being noticed by a fine-looking stranger (who later turns out to be her cousin, Mr. Elliot):

When they came to the steps, leading upward from the beach, a gentleman at the same moment preparing to come down, politely drew back, and stopped to give them way. They ascended and passed him; and as they passed, Anne's face caught his eye, and he looked at her with a degree of earnest admiration, which she could not be insensible of. She was looking remarkably well; her very regular, very pretty features, having the bloom and freshness of youth restored by the fine wind which had been blowing on her complexion, and by the animation of her eye which it had also produced.[\[42\]](#)

It is worth noting that Mr. Elliot first notices Anne's beauty objectively (remembering, though, that he is responding to a beauty that has a mimetic genesis elsewhere). It is thereafter conspicuously noticed by a great many other people, even Anne's father, a ridiculous man comically obsessed with looks. Mr. Elliot's initial admiration, followed by Wentworth's imitative admiration, followed by a near universal admiration in Bath, amplify her beauty still more. Wentworth's renewed proposal finally transforms her into a radiant beauty who all but transfixes the guests at her father's card party in the penultimate chapter.

These are the mimetic "runaway" effects under discussion earlier, but at this point it is difficult in the end to separate the mimetic effects from objectively, physiologically verifiable beauty—a radiance, an animation, a flush—so closely are they interlinked. Beauty, being so *obvious*, brings out mimetic effects that are taking hold under the skin, and which

are quite positive. Anne becoming beautiful is inseparable from Anne acquiring agency and subjectivity, and both are reliant on the intersubjective relation, which is the core of Adams' model of mimetic desire.

The Coming of Age of Fanny Price

Nowhere is a woman's beauty depicted by Austen with so much care, with so many delicate brushstrokes and over so long a span of the narrative, as it is for Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*. It is not pure coincidence that Fanny is Austen's most controversial and sometimes quite heatedly debated character. Many disgruntled readers perpetually hope that this elaborate attention to Fanny's appearance is undertaken for the sake of a match with Henry that, to their great frustration, does not take place. Henry is the prince with the glass slipper and Fanny refuses to stick her foot into it. Austen is "trolling" us all, for reasons that cannot be elaborated here,[\[43\]](#) but for present purposes, the relevant point is the magnification of Fanny's beauty.

Her beauty unfolds in ways that are very similar to Anne's, and ultimately amplifies with the same escalating mimetic effects (which we saw also with Henry). Fanny's social awkwardness and mousiness[\[44\]](#) are, also like Anne's in *Persuasion*, connected to emotional trauma, in Fanny's case her sudden displacement to her uncle's home as a young girl. Her inhibition is, also like Anne's, reinforced by years of under-appreciation and neglect.

Unlike Anne, Fanny's coming into beauty coincides with her coming of age, in this way making her more akin to Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*. Catherine is an earlier bloomer, starting out as a tomboy with "a thin awkward figure, a sallow skin without colour, dark lank hair, and strong features."[\[45\]](#) Catherine's physical maturation is dispatched very quickly (though delightfully) by Austen:

Such was Catherine Morland at ten. At fifteen, appearances were mending; she began to curl her hair and long for balls; her complexion improved, her features were softened by plumpness and colour, her eyes gained more animation, and her figure more consequence. Her love of dirt gave way to an inclination for finery, and she grew clean as she grew smart; she had now the pleasure of sometimes hearing her father and mother remark on her personal improvement. "Catherine grows quite a good-looking girl-she is almost pretty today," were words which caught her ears now and then; and how welcome were the sounds! To look almost pretty is an acquisition of higher delight to a girl who has been looking plain the first fifteen years of her life than a beauty from her cradle can ever receive.[\[46\]](#)

The description makes a glaring contrast with the words Fanny hears from her uncle before he leaves for Antigua, so glaring, in fact, that it seems likely Austen worked it in deliberately for comparison:

“If William does come to Mansfield, I hope you may be able to convince him that the many years which have passed since you parted have not been spent on your side entirely without improvement; though, I fear, he must find his sister at sixteen in some respects too much like his sister at ten.” She cried bitterly over this reflection when her uncle was gone; and her cousins, on seeing her with red eyes, set her down as a hypocrite.[\[47\]](#)

Sir Thomas, in his characteristically unartful way, means that Fanny has not changed or matured much since her arrival at Mansfield; she is still girlish, awkward, socially and possibly physically underdeveloped. What a great contrast, then, when he meets her next, on his unexpectedly early return to Mansfield, and Fanny is eighteen:

As she entered, her own name caught her ear. Sir Thomas was at that moment looking round him, and saying, “But where is Fanny? Why do not I see my little Fanny?”—and on perceiving her, came forward with a kindness which astonished and penetrated her, calling her his dear Fanny, kissing her affectionately, and observing with decided pleasure how much she was grown! Fanny knew not how to feel, nor where to look. She was quite oppressed. He had never been so kind, so very kind to her in his life. His manner seemed changed, his voice was quick from the agitation of joy; and all that had been awful in his dignity seemed lost in tenderness. He led her nearer the light and looked at her again—inquired particularly after her health, and then, correcting himself, observed that he need not inquire, for her appearance spoke sufficiently on that point. A fine blush having succeeded the previous paleness of her face, he was justified in his belief of her equal improvement in health and beauty. He inquired next after her family, especially William: and his kindness altogether was such as made her reproach herself for loving him so little, and thinking his return a misfortune; and when, on having courage to lift her eyes to his face, she saw that he was grown thinner, and had the burnt, fagged, worn look of fatigue and a hot climate, every tender feeling was increased, and she was miserable in considering how much unsuspected vexation was probably ready to burst on him.[\[48\]](#)

This sequence is vital. We have been with Fanny for fourteen chapters without noticing that she has become very pretty; Sir Thomas notices it before we do.

As with Anne Elliot, it is worth asking how this transformation came about: what has made Fanny so pretty? In Fanny’s case the answer is more complex. There are certainly “baseline” objective factors: first, that Fanny has come into physical maturity since Sir Thomas left, and second, that Fanny has natural endowments to begin with. The Price family, like the Bertrams, are a good-looking set of people, as becomes clear late in the novel, when Austen describes them on their way to church in Portsmouth: “The family were now seen to advantage. Nature had given them no inconsiderable share of beauty, and Sunday dressed them in their cleanest skins and best attire.”[\[49\]](#)

A parallel description of the Bertrams, when Fanny is first transplanted to Mansfield, shows how physical beauty runs in the extended family:

They were a remarkably fine family, the sons very well-looking the daughters decidedly handsome, and all of them well grown and forward for their age, which produced such a striking difference between the cousins in person, as education had given their address; and no one would have supposed the girls so nearly of an age as they really were. There were in fact but two years between the youngest and Fanny. Julia Bertram was only twelve and Maria but a year older.[\[50\]](#)

This early tableau also shows how far the shy, beleaguered Fanny lagged behind in her self-presentation—the ten-year-old Fanny whom Sir Thomas later thinks is “too much like” the Fanny at sixteen. While the objective factors (physical maturity and natural endowment) are obviously important, it was Fanny’s mousy girlishness and social inhibition which were most prominent before. Now, something has effected a change, and it can only be the intense *socialization* that Fanny has undergone in Sir Thomas’s absence.

The mature situations and emotions she has had to deal with, the interactions she has had to engage, most conspicuously in the Sotherton scenes, with the private theatricals, and through being forced to observe and endure the ongoing romance between Mary and Edmund (with whom she is secretly in love)—these experiences have given her the kernel of an adult consciousness, notwithstanding the drama, nonsense and selfishness of those around her. Fanny has begun to come of age. It has been through social interaction, and it is manifesting physically, not just through puberty, but in the same process we saw with Anne. This is what Sir Thomas is noticing.

The issue of Fanny’s “coming of age” was explicitly canvassed much earlier, before this transformation had begun, when Mary Crawford inquired about her:

“I begin now to understand you all, except Miss Price,” said Miss Crawford, as she was walking with the Mr. Bertrams. “Pray, is she out, or is she not? I am puzzled. She dined at the Parsonage, with the rest of you, which seemed like being *out*; and yet she says so little, that I can hardly suppose she *is*.”

Edmund, to whom this was chiefly addressed, replied, “I believe I know what you mean, but I will not undertake to answer the question. My cousin is grown up. She has the age and sense of a woman, but the outs and not outs are beyond me.”

[Mary:] “And yet, in general, nothing can be more easily ascertained. The distinction is so broad. Manners as well as appearance are, generally speaking, so totally different. . . . A girl not out has always the same sort of dress: a close bonnet, for instance; looks very demure, and never says a word. You may smile, but it is so, I assure you; and except that it is sometimes carried a little too far, it is all very proper. Girls should be

quiet and modest. The most objectionable part is, that the alteration of manners on being introduced into company is frequently too sudden. They sometimes pass in such very little time from reserve to quite the opposite—to confidence! *That* is the faulty part of the present system. One does not like to see a girl of eighteen or nineteen so immediately up to everything—and perhaps when one has seen her hardly able to speak the year before.”[\[51\]](#)

The explicit connection of socially accepted rites of passage to Fanny (however amusing and satirically it is conveyed in this extended conversation) is significant, since the novel is in effect Fanny’s *bildungsroman*. Fanny is shown here in an indeterminate state, between childhood and womanhood; she has not yet been properly introduced to society:

“But now I must be satisfied about Miss Price. Does she go to balls? Does she dine out every where, as well as at my sister’s?”

“No,” replied Edmund; “I do not think she has ever been to a ball. My mother seldom goes into company herself, and dines nowhere but with Mrs. Grant, and Fanny stays at home with *her*.”

“Oh! then the point is clear. Miss Price is *not* out.”[\[52\]](#)

The Fanny that Sir Thomas sees is seen after the intense period of socialization—after Sotherton, the theatricals, and everything between. They have served informally as social rites of passage. Mary’s mention of balls is important because Sir Thomas, not too long after this, will give a ball in Fanny’s honor, a *formal* rite of passage. In the meantime, his very favorable and public approbation of Fanny is a sanction for everyone else to do the same. As Edmund tells her:

“Your uncle thinks you very pretty, dear Fanny—and that is the long and the short of the matter. Anybody but myself would have made something more of it, and anybody but you would resent that you had not been thought very pretty before; but the truth is, that your uncle never did admire you till now—and now he does. Your complexion is so improved!—and you have gained so much countenance!—and your figure—nay, Fanny, do not turn away about it—it is but an uncle. If you cannot bear an uncle’s admiration, what is to become of you? You must really begin to harden yourself to the idea of being worth looking at. You must try not to mind growing up into a pretty woman.”[\[53\]](#)

Fanny’s beauty, “objectively” very real, is also externally mediated by Sir Thomas, and begins increasingly to make its effect felt by others (including Fanny herself) as they react to his reaction. Her beauty begins to undergo the escalating effects we saw also with Anne and Henry.

When Maria and Julia leave Mansfield, Fanny grows still more in consequence but also in the projection of beauty, which, I think it is fair to say, has been unleashed by Sir Thomas, in the sense of being socially sanctioned. It is at this point in the novel that Fanny draws the attention of Henry, first as a target for his nefarious designs. As he rapturously exclaims to Mary:

“ . . . I assure you she is quite a different creature from what she was in the autumn. She was then merely a quiet, modest, not plain-looking girl, but she is now absolutely pretty. I used to think she had neither complexion nor countenance; but in that soft skin of hers, so frequently tinged with a blush as it was yesterday, there is decided beauty; and from what I observed of her eyes and mouth, I do not despair of their being capable of expression enough when she has anything to express. And then, her air, her manner, her tout ensemble, is so indescribably improved! She must be grown two inches, at least, since October.”[54]

But, as noted earlier, Henry’s attraction to her is inseparable from Fanny’s impermeable resistance to his (pseudo-narcissistic) charms.

Post-return, the imposing Sir Thomas puts restraints on how Henry can operate; this is no longer the unrestricted playground of the Sotherton scenes or the private theatricals. Much more art is required for Henry’s game, so much so that he literally falls into his role and starts believing his act. Within the orbit of Sir Thomas, as well as through Sir Thomas’ coronation of Fanny at the ball, Henry’s unsavory designs morph into sincere and socially sanctioned ones; Sir Thomas provides the “role model,” in Girardian terms the external mediator, that Henry’s dissolute uncle could never be. Henry, too, is being socially mediated in a new way, as he begins to fall in love with Fanny.

The ball at Mansfield is the climax of Fanny’s physical beauty, from the objective point of view, though it is inseparable from mimetic effects. Fanny achieves universal admiration, which is, again, a factor of youth and natural good looks vastly supplemented by the sanctioning admiration of Sir Thomas, and of Henry Crawford, and of other attendees at the ball. These powerful interlocking effects with beauty are neatly captured by Austen:

Her uncle and both her aunts were in the drawing-room when Fanny went down. To the former she was an interesting object, and he saw with pleasure the general elegance of her appearance, and her being in remarkably good looks. . . .

Fanny saw that she was approved; and the consciousness of looking well made her look still better.[55]

Young, pretty, and gentle . . . she had no awkwardnesses that were not as good as graces, and there were few persons present that were not disposed to praise her. She was attractive, she was modest, she was Sir Thomas’s niece, and she was soon said to

be admired by Mr. Crawford. It was enough to give her general favor.[\[56\]](#) (Emphasis mine.)

This is the climax for the escalating mimetic effects we have been observing since the return of Sir Thomas, with Fanny now as the radiant center of attention, and it duplicates similar effects we saw with Anne Elliot. Henry is not unaffected; after the ball he determines to marry Fanny, his nefarious designs now definitively transmuted into socially acceptable ones. Fanny's being "in remarkably good looks" designates her being objectively beautiful; she is having a "good hair day." But objective beauty is inseparable here from the mimetic effects, as we see Fanny, others seeing Fanny, others seeing others seeing Fanny, and *Fanny seeing others seeing Fanny*, in tightly locked and mutually augmenting mimetic relations.

Still Better: Toward a Model of Good Mimesis

Fanny has much yet to undergo, and quite a bit to endure, but this is an appropriate place to conclude, and to consider the interlocking effects of beauty and mimesis. "Fanny saw that she was approved; and the consciousness of looking well, made her look still better":[\[57\]](#) this sentence encapsulates Adams' model of loving mimesis. Fanny is technically a "pseudo-narcissist" here, Girard's "coquette": Fanny, the center of attention, is receiving admiration; she is aware of the admiration; she experiences an augmentation of her beauty, even physiologically, through that awareness. Everything should point to Girard's *méconnaissance*, yet it does not: Fanny's beauty and her consciousness are clear, much as were Anne Elliot's; Fanny's is a perfectly natural reaction, and Austen achieves a very touching effect.

Fanny, like Anne, is an excellent subject for elaborating Rebecca Adams' model. The physical beauty is important mainly insofar as it highlights the mimetic structure, but with Fanny it is not finally about beauty but about agency, subjectivity, and personal integrity. These become increasingly important in the remaining chapters of the novel, even to the point where Fanny stands up alone to a sort of collective victimization.[\[58\]](#) The manifestation of beauty is tied to the acquisition of agency, but we cannot forget that this acquisition, like the beauty, has been mediated by others, especially (if imperfectly) by Edmund.[\[59\]](#)

In his famous interview with Adams, Girard emphasized (with genuine regret) that "good mimesis" is important but not *salient*. It does not address the great problems of human co-existence. It is not what religion and the great literature are about: "I agree with Gide that literature is about evil. That doesn't mean evil is the whole of life."[\[60\]](#) Yet Girard did not really believe this, because it is not reflected in his own literary analyses; the great literature for Girard is about conversion, transformation. Literature *must* be about good, or there would be nothing to convert *to*.

I think that Rebecca Adams' reconfiguration of mimetic desire opens the way for a fuller elaboration of "Girardian" literary criticism, and of mimetic theory itself. Adams, and Austen, can make mimetic theory "still better" by theoretically unlocking this aspect, the affirming aspect, even within the inferno of mimetic desire and internal mediation. It is appropriate to give Adams the last words. Her model, so superbly instantiated in Anne Elliot and Fanny Price,

. . . fully meets the criteria Girard exhaustively sets out as characteristic of mimetic desire: it is "acquisitive"; it leads to doubling; it escalates in a feedback loop; it transforms subjects and objects; it has a metaphysical character; and it even describes a "twin narcissism" (wherein desiring you is really desiring myself). Yet in this case all these characteristics are not only nonviolent but actively constructive.[\[61\]](#)

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Notes

[\[1\]](#) Mimetic desire was first and best explicated in the first half of Girard's *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 1-152.

[\[2\]](#) For instance, I have argued that Frederick Wentworth in *Persuasion* falls back in love with Anne Elliot by imitating a series of male admirers, in "What Persuasion Really Means in *Persuasion*: A Mimetic Reading of Jane Austen," *Contagion* 11 (2004), 110-121. I have analyzed how mimesis drives Austen's plots in two other studies: "Traipsing into the Forest: Landscapes and Rivalry in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*," *Anthropoetics* 14, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2009), anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1402/taylor.htm , and "*Mansfield Park* and Scandal," *Anthropoetics* 16, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2009), <http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1601/1601taylor/>

[\[3\]](#) John Mullan canvasses beauty in Austen very usefully. See "Chapter 4: How Do Jane Austen's Character's Look?" *What Matters in Jane Austen?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012) electronic edition.

[\[4\]](#) *Pride and Prejudice*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Donald Gray (New York: Norton, 2001), 85.

[5] It is worth noting in passing, though, that Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* would later succeed in making a "plain Jane" both romantically discriminating and passionately desirable.

[6] *Ibid.*, 82-83.

[7] *Ibid.*, 15

[8] *Ibid.*, 130-131.

[9] *Ibid.*, 221 (the exchange of glances occurs literally here) and 242.

[10] The idea of "pseudo-narcissism" is brilliantly developed in *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 367-393.

[11] Adams, "Loving Mimesis and Girard's 'Scapegoat of the Text': A Creative Reassessment of Mimetic Desire." *Violence Renounced*, ed. Willard M. Swartely (Telford, PA: Pandora Press, 2000): 277-307; Adams, personal commentary on "Loving Mimesis," untitled and inset in Vern Neufeld Redekop's *From Violence to Blessing* (Toronto: Novalis, 2002): 260-269.

[12] See the useful review by Petra Steinmair-Pösel, "Original Sin, Grace, and Positive Mimesis," *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*, 14 (2007) 1-12. See the essay collections edited by Vern Neufeld Redekop and Thomas Ryba: *René Girard and Creative Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013) and *René Girard and Creative Mimesis* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016).

[13] *Mansfield Park*, Annotated Edition, ed. Dierdre Shauna Lynch (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2016), 82.

[14] I explored this mimetic entanglement in "Traipsing into the Forest" (par. 34-43) and "*Mansfield Park* and Scandal" (par. 14-16, 25).

[15] *Sense and Sensibility*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Claudia L. Johnson (New York: Norton, 2002), 176-177.

[16] See note 10.

[17] Girard, *A Theater of Envy* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2000) 106-120.

[18] *Ibid.*, 100-103; *As You Like It*, 3.5.69-70 (quoted in *A Theater of Envy*, 102).

[19] *Mansfield Park*, 158.

[20] Many other factors intensify Henry's desire for Fanny, but the ball appears to bring it to a head.

[21] Darcy admits as much the conclusion of *Pride and Prejudice*, 241. I have treated this misinterpretation by Darcy in "Traipsing into the Forest" (par. 6).

[22] I.e., Henry can play-act the worthy suitor but never crosses over completely into *being* one.

[23] See note 17.

[24] See note 18.

[25] At various times Henry, Sir Thomas (e.g., in his interview with Fanny in the east room, *Mansfield Park* 348), and even Edmund make this assumption about Fanny: her resistance to Henry must be an elaborate (and tiresome) display of feminine delicacy. Despite ample evidence to the contrary, many readers seem to come to a similar conclusion.

[26] It can be noted how the three points of Girard's mimetic triangle correspond to the objective, subjective and intersubjective aspects of beauty.

[27] Most famously excerpted in "The Goodness of Mimetic Desire," *The Girard Reader*, ed. James Williams (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1996): 62-65.

[28] See note 11.

[29] "Loving Mimesis" in Swartely (note 11).

[30] Personal commentary in Redekop (note 11).

[31] "The Perfect Mate," written Gene Roddenberry and Reuben Leder, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, 1992).

[32] Personal commentary in Redekop (Note 11): 261.

[33] Ibid., 262.

[34] Ibid., 263.

[35] My objections are elaborated in an unpublished draft paper, "Rebecca Adams' Model of 'Loving Mimesis': An Overview and Assessment," uploaded to Academia (April 2019), https://www.academia.edu/38790661/Rebecca_Adams_Model_of_Loving_Mimesis_An_Overview_and_Assessment_Draft

[36] *Runaway Bride*, dir. Garry Marshall (Paramount Pictures, 1999).

[37] Personal communication, July 8, 2015.

[38] For instance, he applies the financial analogy to Phebe in *A Theater of Envy*, 102.

[39] “Periphery” and “scenic center” are terms from generative anthropology (GA). Restrictions of length prevent this analysis from incorporating GA, which is unfortunate given GA’s incisive insights into aesthetic effects and resentment, not least in relation to beauty. Among many other things, GA takes the appetitive dimension in the desired object much more seriously, and so (unlike in mimetic theory) tends less to downplay the “objective” aspects of beauty and attraction. For a superb recent treatment see Ian Dennis, “Human Beauty and Reciprocity in the Market World: A Preliminary Inquiry,” *Anthropoetics* 24.2 (Spring 2019) <http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap2402/2402dennis/>. See also Eric Gans’s moving study of the Hollywood icon, *Carole Landis: A Most Beautiful Girl* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2008).

[40] This is developed in “*Mansfield Park and Scandal*” (note 2), par. 30-41.

[41] “What Persuasion Means in Persuasion” (note 2), 121-122.

[42] *Persuasion*, A Norton Critical Edition, ed. Patricia Meyer Spacks (Norton: New York, 2013), 75.

[43] See note 33. Again, the scandal of Fanny is explored in “*Mansfield Park and Scandal*,” par. 30-41.

[44] Her cousin Tom Bertram teases her for being a “creepmouse”: *Mansfield Park*, 183.

[45] *Northanger Abbey*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Susan Fraiman (New York: Norton, 2004), 6.

[46] *Ibid.*, 6-7.

[47] *Mansfield Park*, 73.

[48] *Ibid.*, 215-216.

[49] *Ibid.*, 442.

[50] *Ibid.*, 53.

[51] *Ibid.*, 87-88.

[52] Ibid., 88.

[53] Ibid., 234-235.

[54] Ibid., 264-265.

[55] Ibid., 305, emphasis mine.

[56] Ibid. 310.

[57] Ibid., 305.

[58] Universal pressure to accept Henry's proposal. My mimetic analysis of that portion of the novel is in "*Mansfield Park* and Scandal," par. 30-40.

[59] The affirming mimesis in the Fanny-Edmund relationship, which bears comparison to Adams' Kamala and Picard, is a subject for future study.

[60] "The Goodness of Mimetic Desire," 64.

[61] Adams, "Loving Mimesis," 292.