

Jane Austen, her Worlds within Worlds, and Shakespearean Authorship

Jane Austen and the Anonymisation of Shakespeare

In the background of this essay lie the original presentations to the De Vere Society, which articulated the connection with the Touchstone passages of *As You Like It*:

JANE AUSTEN AND THE SHAKESPEARE AUTHORSHIP QUESTION

YouTube talks and associated paper

Jane Austen's enigmatic gossamer cobweb of allusions to the Shakespeare Authorship Problem in her novel *Emma*, which nevertheless I believe gives us enough circumstantial evidence to be reasonably certain she did indeed identify all this - under the radar and with plausible deniability - is now, as far as I have ascertained, comprised in four 'complexes' or rafts of allusion:

1. References to the I am Ipse - Touchstone - passages of *As You Like It* in Emma's Epiphany (Ch. 47): First Talk April 2021 Jane Austen and Shakespeare - Mystery Woman Mystery Problem

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8-TdoomuOY>

2. References to 'Vere' and related allusions to Stanza 81 (the Melville Stanza in Billy Budd) of Andrew Marvell's poem to Lord Thomas Fairfax and his daughter Mary, 'Upon Appleton House', (in Chapters 18 and 19 and 20): Second Talk July 2021 Mystery Woman Mystery Problem

3. References to the First Folio and Canto 1 of Spenser's Faerie Queene (crucial in the search for Edward de Vere as Senior Poet in 1589) in Ch. 42 'Mr Knightley's Detective Work', also in the Second Talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LibcoPnXXI&t=2529s>

4. Now we have two talks February 2022 which together discuss the significance of the Anonymisation of the Author of Shakespeare through the fate, progress and relevance of Jane Austen's character Harriet Smith, through whom the allusions to 'Oxford', as erased and anonymised author, are transmitted. It also outlines the role of Samuel Johnson in establishing the orthodox narrative as mainly unassailable.

Talk no 3

<https://youtu.be/EtCOLW7g6qo>

Talk no 4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK3JH4SUBLo>

This paper

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Summary

"The claim: A century before Looney, in *Emma*, Jane Austen already understood the parameters and significance of the Shakespeare Authorship Question ('SAQ' hereafter), with the identity of de Vere as author. She offers an interim report to history, obliquely and allegorically with plausible deniability. But the circumstantial textual evidence is considerable. I had long been writing about her, in a work in progress, as a very subtle realist author, when Costa Chard encouraged me to explore her reference to 'some famous ox' near the end of the novel. With amazement, over a year, I gradually found four major trails of clues: one leading via Emma to the Touchstone passages of *As You Like It*; one leading, in an exemplifying 'demonstration: how it is done', kind of way, to an entire layer of Spenserian and

Arthurian allegory, with a reference to the First Folio; one leading, via Jane Fairfax, to the allusion to 'Fairfax and the starry Vere' in Marvell's *Upon Appleton House*, later also used by Melville; and, finally, one leading, via Harriet Smith, almost as a throw away jest, to the name 'Oxford'. An entire complex account of the bourgeoisification of English civilisation, plus a loss, with the feudal, of the magical and archetypal, with the enthronement of a bourgeois author, and with De Vere partially displaced as the 'cuckoo in the nest', comes into view behind these trails."

The Problem of the Double Layering of Jane Austen's Text

I believe Jane Austen understood the complex essence of the Shakespeare Authorship Question (SAQ), and sought to explore and indicate it indirectly, through allegory and allusion. At the same time, for reasons to which we shall come, she did not want to bring it into view blatantly, but to maintain what we would call plausible deniability. To the extent that it is accepted, it is an invocation of the implicit historical background. She offers us a hidden systematic allegory, with enough obscurity to be plausibly deniable, yet also enacting and offering a metaphor of the deep and dark problem she sees.

So, as the fullness of the allegorical dimension I am hypothesising comes into view, in *Emma*, the whole situation of the historicity/historical consciousness implicit in Jane Austen also gradually dawns on us. Methodologically, one again and again is faced with something anomalous, often so ridiculously or casually anomalous that one only slowly realises she *intends one to notice it*, though knowing that most readers will disregard it, and, if the claim in relation to the SAQ is true, those sympathetic to it may underrate its importance. It is not only Dickens who gets turned into a mere entertainer in our perceptions, but Austen as well, so her hidden aspects go unnoticed¹. The case of Harriet Smith is a classic in this respect, as we shall see. I use Frederick Forsyth's deep sea fishing related phrase in *The Deceiver*, part IV: 'the ripple on the surface that should not be there', as a paradigm and prompt.

I shall say a little, briefly, about my experience of this process. I may of course be quite wrong in my inferences and there is the very reverse of being a 'smoking gun' in this situation. Perhaps a Derringer disguised as a pea-shooter. But *if* I am right in thinking there is a whole raft of *circumstantial* evidence in this total situation, then the fact that Jane Austen understood all this in 1814 when she was writing *Emma* becomes important. If, also, there is, at any rate, to the best of my knowledge, no one who has gone public with it in 200 years, so that one has the experience of being the first to discover it, then there is a most peculiar sense of *being led into this network of discoveries* by Jane Austen, and that one is privileged to have a secret shared with one, to be a secret sharer, which cannot be revealed to the wider world for some reason. And one assumes, therefore, that Austen wanted it this way, and she usually has deep reasons for anything she does in her writing. There is much more I could say here but that is enough to call attention to the puzzle she is presenting us with.

Jane Austen's proto-postmodern mastery of textual process is centuries ahead of its time, in *Emma* especially. Jane Austen leads one down what feels like a pre-ordained path, in which the next disclosure only reveals itself, when one has grasped the problem of its predecessor. So it feels uncannily as if she herself is alongside of one,

¹ Witness e.g., Harding 1940: <https://www.unz.com/print/Scrutiny-1940mar-00346/>

accompanying one, especially if one is noticing things which may never have been noticed since she wrote. And so also the teasing ambiguities, and parodical character, of the process sometimes leaves one wondering if one is quite mad and delusional, whether it is just a 'garden path' she is leading one down. I believe all this is quite deliberate, extraordinarily subtle and 'post-modern', and that it is all part of the allegory she is showing us. For *Emma* is not a mirror, but a text whose textuality, as Lionel Trilling said, leaves us always baffled by the ever new kaleidoscopic aspect under which the novel presents itself to us (Trilling, *Emma*, <https://www.unz.com/print/Encounter-1957jun-00049/>).

The prioritisation of text over mirror can sometimes be given to us by Oxfordians also, despite the 'death of the author' so strongly indicted by James Warren², as for instance when Richard Whalen shows how recognising the primally textual background of the *Commedia Dell'Arte* lying behind *Othello* enables solution of many problems that have bedevilled 'mimetic realist' accounts of the play since the 18th Century:

<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp-content/uploads/Whalen.Othello.pdf>

This, coming from an Oxfordian, is strongly parallel to what Laura Mooneyham White does with Menander's New Comedy in relation to *Emma*:

<https://jasna.org/assets/Persuasions/No-21/aa582c338a/white.pdf>

Both Whalen and White are doing something opposed to the 'cultural-historicist' analysis fashionable today, which Warren also castigates; I suggest the position is more complex and that the argument may often be not so much about the fashions as about the uses to which they are put.

The Position at the Outset

My original presentation to the De Vere Society, which articulated the connection with the Touchstone passages of *As You Like It*, I summarise now, with some additions concerning how she herself might have supplemented her understanding. I am not saying this *is* how she did do it, but as the kind of thing she might have spotted as an extremely precise textualist. Most of this paper is about confirmatory correlations on which I believe she draws, but I shall sketch here one pathway she may have followed, supposing it was not something she had already picked up in the traditional oral culture. Is she telling us something she had already known? Is she expecting it to be visible in the text without ourselves already knowing it? I certainly myself would not have ever noticed it all, without already having Looney's discovery to lean on.

There is a pathway of allusions to *As You Like It* and the Touchstone passages, culminating in the 'I am Ipse' moment (Ch. 47), so central for Oxfordians. There is the direct allusion, discovered by Arnie Perlstein, along with the one to 'I see Jane every day', to '... but *as you like. It...*' in the Donwell chapter (Ch. 42). Then there is in *Emma* a pathway of allusions to 'Touchstone': a direct one in Ch. 26, then one to the contrast, alluding to Marlowe's death ('infinite riches', 'a great reckoning'), to 'little room' ('a crowd in a little room', and Emma's Marlovian-Shakespearean phrase reinforced by Frank Churchill: 'Miss Woodhouse, you have the art of giving pictures in a few words.') in Ch. 29. (Note for postmodernists: we have here a layering of three, possibly four, - if we include Jesus in Mary's womb behind this - quotations then themselves quoted.)

² See *Shakespeare Revolutionised*: <https://deveresociety.co.uk/shakespeare-revolutionized-by-james-a-warren/> My review of it is in the October 2021 issue of the De Vere Society Newsletter.

In Emma's epiphany (Ch. 47), the phrase 'that Mr Knightley must marry no one but herself' alludes to both 'I am Ipse' and the 'must marry', which cannot be coincidental given the weight of the pathway to the Touchstone passages in *As You Like It*: 'Why sir, he that must marry this woman.' And it is reinforced by a *double* reference to Cupid and married love, 'It darted through her with the speed of an arrow ...', and (Cupid's) 'dart' has come up on three separate previous occasions, each time implicitly alluding to *marriage*, or aspirations to marriage. The 'leap' Emma takes here has been noticed by the astute traditional Austen critic, Bruce Stovel, who takes up the idea of Emma's two selves, to which I return, and who naturally explains it plausibly, but yet the leap is still there and is emphasised in highlights by the double Cupid reference:

"Here we reach my third idea. The change that brings into being a new Emma is not instantaneous or total. The very words in which Emma first acknowledges "the whole truth" about her love for Mr. Knightley suggest that the new Emma is still enmeshed in the old: "It darted through her, with the speed of an arrow, that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!" (408). Jocelyn Harris aptly remarks, "That arrow must be the arrow of the blind boy Cupid"(181). We might expect Emma's all-important realization to be "It darted through her, with the speed of an arrow, that she loved Mr. Knightley!"—and, indeed, in all three film versions of *Emma* produced in 1995-96 (the Gwyneth Paltrow Hollywood film, the BBC/A&E film starring Kate Beckinsale, and the Beverly-Hills-High film adaptation *Clueless*), the heroine exclaims at this moment, "I love him!" (in *Clueless*, the heroine Cher tells herself, "*I love Josh*"). Emma's self-discovery arrives in her consciousness as a decree about Mr. Knightley's future—and we may recall that "must" has been a favorite verb of the God-like Emma, who has been arranging others' destinies. Harriet "must have good sense and deserve encouragement," while the Martins "must be coarse and unpolished" and "must be doing her harm" (23). Again, "Mr. Knightley must never marry. Little Henry must remain the heir of Donwell" (228), while Frank Churchill "must learn to do without her" (266)."

(<https://jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol28no1/stovel-b.htm>)

This, here, is Forsyth's "the ripple on the surface that should not be there". For the proximity to 'he sir that must marry this woman' is stronger and more specific than all the other 'musts'.

The additional material I am positing draws on her dimension of interest in Spenser and *The Faerie Queene*. We may assume she was well acquainted with the Commendatory Verses and was able to see the textual connections. Austen, like Nina Green³, would note how Spenser makes it clear in his poem to Oxford that, to say the least, he is a senior poet who has a central relation to the Muses and is in a position – in 1589 – to protect a fellow poet:

... Which by thy countenance doth crave to bee
Defended from foule Envies poisonous bit.

And also for the love, which thou doest beare
To th' Heliconian ymps and they to thee,
They unto thee, and thou to them most deare

She would then have noted the Ignoto poem as from the same authoritative poet and, being familiar with Jonson's *First Folio* panegyric to Shakespeare, would have seen the emphatic affinities between these two celebratory poems:

³ https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp-content/uploads/Oxfordian1998_Green-Spenser.pdf

Jonson

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
While I confess thy writings to be such
As neither man nor muse can praise too much;
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage.

Ignoto

Thus then to shew my judgement to be such
As can discern of colours blacke, and white,
As alls to free my minde from envies tuch,
That never gives to any man his right,
I here pronounce this workmanship is such,
As that no pen can set it forth too much

The reference to *envy* is also shared between them here of course. Thirdly, the 'repudiation of praise' strategy is shared and is even more emphatic in Jonson.

Other things in the Jonson poem would become obvious: that Elizabethan poets rather than Jacobean are Shakespeare's contemporaries: Lyly, Kyd, and Marlowe; that the text read carefully (as in Ogburn, for instance) actually implies that Shakespeare knew Greek; that he is highly educated and not a child of nature, and works ('sweat....and strike the second heat') endlessly at his texts⁴; that he is 'gentle', i.e. aristocratic; that his works show his 'race'; and that he was a court poet (Hampton Court, known as Avon) whose works, on the 'banks of Thames' 'so did take Eliza and our James'.

The whole mysterious communication of Jane Austen with which I am concerned is nevertheless found in this, the very novel which is *deceptively so ostensibly innocent*, timeless, living in the idyl of a perfect 'Surry' world, seemingly completely without traumatic drama, on its surface. Lionel Trilling can even seemingly get away with saying it is pretty much a morally completely Edenic unfallen world (though his judgements of the characters concerned are idealising and unsustainable): "So in *Emma* Jane Austen contrives an idyllic world, or the closest approximation to it that the genre of the novel will permit, and brings into contrast with it the actualities of the social world, of the modern self. *In the precincts of Highbury there are no bad people, and no adverse judgments to be made.* [my italic and bold] Only a modern critic would think to call Mr. Woodhouse an idiot and an old woman; in the novel he is called "the kindhearted, polite old gentleman." Only Emma with her modern consciousness, comes out with it that Miss Bates is a bore, and only Emma can give herself to the thought that Mr. Weston would be a "higher character" if he were not so simple and open-hearted. It is from outside Highbury that the peculiarly modern traits of insincerity and vulgarity come, in the person of Frank Churchill and Mrs. Elton. With the exception of Emma herself, every person in Highbury lives in harmony and peace--even Mr. Elton, had Emma but let him alone! -- and not merely because they are simple and undeveloped: Mr. Knightley and Mrs. Weston *are no less innocent than Mr. Woodhouse and Miss Bates* [my italic], and if they please us and do not bore us by a perfection of manner and feeling which is at once lofty and homely, it is because we accept the assumptions of the idyllic world

⁴ As the evolution of *Hamlet* shows, witness M Jolly: <https://mcfarlandbooks.com/product/the-first-two-quartos-of-hamlet/>

which they inhabit--we have been led to believe that man may live in "harmony and peace with himself and the external world." " (Trilling, *Emma*⁵)

There is definitely something in this, which is intended as an effect, for the contrast, by Jane Austen, and, even if Trilling drastically over-eggs it, where any one of his very questionable illustrations are concerned, it is a partial illusion Jane Austen wishes a good deal of her readership to embrace (c.f., Harding, above).

The next example, coming from a somewhat sceptic Jane Austen critic, is also striking. Barbara Thaden (*Figure and Ground: The Receding Heroine in Jane Austen's Emma*, in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Emma – 'Bloom'* hereafter), who, in an essay which, despite some exaggerations, has been something of a catalyst for me, sets out to invert the heroines, going so far as to treat Jane Fairfax (who is actually on the edge of breakdown or anorexia for most of the novel) as the 'normal' (i.e., marginalised) Austen heroine, nevertheless also writes: "Austen's work does not depict anger, or passionate despair, or personal suffering, and this, as Woolf recognized, is not a weakness but Austen's greatest strength." Woolf, replying in *Jane Austen and the Geese* to a modern relative of Austen's, Miss Austen-Leigh, who argued that the key to her works is 'Repentance', comments, - as is also applicable here, - "The truth appears to us to be much more complicated than that."

This apparition of serenity and idyll, however, in fact powerfully intensifies the effect Jane Austen is working for, which is to work at the level of the subtly hidden, very unobtrusively. But, even simply at the 'realistic (mimetic) novel'⁶ level, that perceptually innocent Edenic vision, *taken alone in all perceptual innocence*, also disastrously fails to grasp both the dark undercurrents of the novel and the textuality of it. That is indeed precisely the stark contrast she is working to create. To some of why she does this, and needs to do so, we shall come.

Yet, to misuse Churchill on the Battle of Blenheim (*Life of Marlborough*, Vol 2, ch. 19), "But behind this [seemingly innocent novel], if [we] could discern them, are the shapes of great causes and the destinies of powerful nations...."

In the allegorical background, Jane Austen's hidden commentary brings historicity – the historical markers of a given historical moment - powerfully into full play; but getting there is quite the detour.

The "emblematic meaning nucleus" concept

How Jane Austen accomplishes this I shall first consider. Here, to begin with, I want to take a brief detour, to postulate a concept, which may by no means be original; I am simply using it for my own purposes in this connection. I evoke it as follows; there can no doubt be many other variants.

It is the concept of an "emblematic meaning nucleus", in an organised and organic *text*: a novel, a drama, a piece of history, and so on. It is through and through a *textual*, not primarily a 'mimetic realist' effect, though the 'mimetic realist' is certainly embedded within it. It may be a thing or a person. And the meaning nucleus may be overt or hidden, depending on the emphasis. It is never either totally overt or

⁵ <https://www.unz.com/print/Encounter-1957jun-00049/>

⁶ E.g., Adena Rosmarin: 'Misreading' *Emma: the powers and perfidies of Interpretive History* in David Lodge's Casebook *Emma*

totally hidden. But, then, we have four possibilities:

- i. “an overt emblematic meaning nucleus/person”
- ii. “an overt emblematic meaning nucleus/thing”
- iii. “a hidden emblematic meaning nucleus/person”
- iv. “a hidden emblematic meaning nucleus/thing”

‘Emblematic’ might be supplemented by ‘cross-radiating’, ‘cross-referential’, ‘all-pervasive’, and so on; I choose ‘emblematic’ as also implying the symbolic ‘how’ of the all-pervasive cross-referentiality. When I refer simply to ‘meaning nucleus’ in what follows, the whole formulation is presupposed. As shall be seen, there readily comes into view, in a way not clearly delineated in its full multiplicity in archetypal psychology, an archetypal aspect or dimension. Nor do I analyse it here in, say, ‘speech act’ (Austin, *How to do Things with Words*; Searle, *Speech Acts*) functional terms; I am simply using it by bringing some of its elements into view. So there are potentially four options, in fact.

If we were to turn to historical accounts, such as Churchill’s full evocation (in his *Life of the Duke of Marlborough*, Vol II) of the significance of the Battle of Blenheim, which I have alluded to, it gets even richer and more complex, but elements of the same principles are at work. This, the event of the battle itself, is a *temporally*, historicity concentrating, nucleus of emblematic (in both written text, and actual event, historical-cultural) meaning, and no doubt others of these types of analysis can be much expanded in various ways. I include it first so as to suggest this is not a closed system of analysis of the *merely fictional*; text includes and embeds what we call real events, which are, however, very far from lacking in relevantly ‘textual’ character, as is clear in Churchill:

“The Count of Merode Westerloo, a Flemish officer of distinction who commanded a Belgian contingent in the service of Spain forming part of Marshall Tallard’s army, has left us sprightly memoirs of this and other campaigns. He dined that night in Blenheim village with the generals and colonels of his division. Never was he in better spirits, when, having eaten and drunk excellently, he returned to his quarters. These were in a grange which overlooked the Nebel. His retinue had carpeted the floor and set up his bed. ‘Never I believe have I slept more sound and tranquil than this night.’ He was still sleeping profoundly at six o’clock in the morning when his trusty valet, all out of breath, entered the barn. ‘Milord the enemy are there!’ ‘Where?’ said the count, mocking him, ‘there?’ ‘Yes there, there!’ reiterated the servant, and, throwing open the door of the barn and the curtain of his master’s bed, he revealed a brilliant and astounding spectacle. The wide plain, bathed in the morning sunlight, was covered in hostile squadrons and battalions, already close at hand, and steadily marching on. *But behind this magnificent array, if the count could have discerned them, were the shapes of great causes and the destinies of many powerful nations.* Europe protested against the military domination of a single power. The Holy Roman Empire pleaded for another century of life. The ancient rights of the Papacy against Gallicanism, and the ascendancy of a Universal over a National Church despite the mistaken partisanship of the reigning Pope, were in fact fatefully at stake. The Dutch Republic sought to preserve its independence and Prussia its kingdom rank, And from across the seas in England, the Protestant Succession, Parliamentary Government, and the future of the British Empire advanced with confident tread. *All these had now brought their case before the dread tribunal now set up in this Danube plain.*” [italic mine]

Next, returning to literary texts: as a clear both overt and physical example, in Joseph Conrad's *Nostramo* the *silver of the mine*, as a meaning nucleus, provides an all-pervasive emblematic cluster of meaning-referentialities, aspiration, event, symbol, curse, metaphor, analogy, allegory, and so on, all through the novel, mostly very potently and successfully so. But also, there is in parallel a layer of disguise in that, originally, the 'Gould Concession' is not mined at all, and then exists as a dream in Charles and Emilia Gould's minds, before it is developed. And then, after the overthrow of the military coup, and the secession of Sulaco as the Occidental Republic, it becomes Nostromo's intolerable secret; and previously the cause of Hirsch's torture and death, by which, all-permeating as the sinister Gothic background of the great incognito encounter between Nostromo and Dr Monygham, it is hidden again.

Another very great and poignant overt example is the Marshalsea prison in Dickens's *Little Dorrit*. Dickens, of course, is particularly profoundly inclined to generate physical-cultural symbols, actual non-fictional ones, as meaning nuclei in this way, creating animistic worlds, replete with what are felt to be living and symbolic objects. The depth of the animistic internalisation of the prison nucleus or metaphor is indicated by the encounter between the now liberated William Dorrit and Mr Merdle's Chief Butler:

"He looked as closely at the Chief Butler as such a man could be looked at, and yet he did not recall that he had ever seen him elsewhere. Ultimately he was inclined to think that there was no reverence in the man, no sentiment in the great creature. But he was not relieved by that; for, let him think what he would, the Chief Butler had him in his supercilious eye, even when that eye was on the plate and other table-garniture; and *he never let him out of it*. To hint to him that *this confinement in his eye* was disagreeable, or to ask him what he meant, was an act too daring to venture upon; his severity with his employers and their visitors being terrific, and he never permitting himself to be approached with the slightest liberty." (*Little Dorrit*, part II, Ch. 16, italic mine)

Of course, Mr Dorrit internally remains, tragically, post-traumatically, within the (concretised metaphorical) 'prison', and cannot escape from it. But the Butler implicitly also reflects something much wider in scope than simply Mr Dorrit's personal predicament and trauma, something about an all-pervasive element of this whole culture and civilisation. Here we have a physical emblematic nucleus which is by no means merely physical, and so, of course, though less obviously, this is also true of the silver of the mine in *Nostramo*. The all-pervasiveness generated by the emblematic potency is what I am trying to bring into view, though not fully analysing.

And, as we see, overtness is not necessarily of an object. In *King Lear* the antithesis between wordy hypocritical profession of love, and silent but authentic testimony of love, is the potent and generative contrast, one, that is, between persons. In his masterly essay, *The Three Caskets*, mainly on *King Lear*, Freud relates Cordelia's silence to the leaden casket and choice of it in *The Merchant of Venice*, and goes on to extract far-reaching and potent archetypal-existential conclusions and backgrounds from the metaphor. This may well be valid, but it still would not at all preclude the generative emblematic original meaning nucleus being located in this

meaning contrast. Indeed we would surely actually expect a two way traffic in such contexts, persons as not reducible to things nor things to persons.

https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_ThreeCaskets.pdf

But of course what has already become clear, willy nilly, is that we are dealing with a complex *four way* equation. As the uncanny reach and generative power of meaning nuclei comes further into view, the complexities become greater. This however, since the silence is overt in *King Lear*, is still an overt meaning nucleus. *But of course, though overt, its haunting quality indicates a profound hidden dimension also, which works upon Lear's implicit awareness, - a hidden dimension which I would indeed expect to be always present when we are dealing with this kind of phenomenon of meaning.* What I am trying to do, a little, is to make some partial sense of how it acquires 'a local habitation and a name'. And we now see it at work in the role of Jane Fairfax.

The "emblematic meaning nucleus" at work in *Emma*: Jane Fairfax

So, now we next come to *Emma*, which I am now going to argue gives us a *covert* meaning nucleus in a profoundly haunting way, which is connected with the integration of the layers of allusion and allegory I am positing in the novel, as a function of the total 'narrator' dimension of the work. And in tandem it is made possible by the 'Edenic' illusion we have discussed. I shall return to this whole 'post-modern' dimension of the differentiation of narrator and writer, as is necessary if we are not to see Jane Austen as crudely inserting a kind of code into the otherwise disconnected text of her novel, which I believe is no more how she does things than Shakespeare (c.f., Ted Hughes in *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*).

In *Emma*, we have a kind of distractor system developed of *false* and blundering pursuance of secret intuitions on the part of Emma herself⁷, incidentally developed as a very penetrating psychology of deception and self-deception by Jane Austen (which is one part of the analogy which will open up the historicity dimension). In a partial support of Thaden's cautious thesis (that Jane Fairfax is the actual heroine, see above), it is (hiddenly) contrasted with, in Jane Fairfax, a *genuine*, actual, but hidden, *secret*, protected with a deep (but not unreadable) silence, like Cordelia's, which in many ways is the secret 'emblematic meaning nucleus' of the novel (and again, as a secret, it is an analogue of the historicity dimension of the hidden allegory).

For it, for the real secret (or one of them, the other being the 'hidden in plain sight' Harriet Smith, to whom we shortly come), for much of the novel, Emma's self-deceptions, and crashing missings of the point, - which are a kind of caricature of a real secret, and which correlate, as she realises in her epiphany, with her own inauthenticity and falsity of feeling, - are the foil. As such the polarity, with its hidden taproot in Jane Fairfax's secret, pervades the novel, with all the further or higher levels of allusion and allegory, which I believe are there to be discovered, and which indeed, I believe, it makes possible. There is something about a secret which engages uncanny and archetypal resonances, closely connected with the possibility of incognito encounter, which comes up in this case in a most surprising way, to which I shall return (c.f.,

⁷ See again Laura Mooneyham White: <https://jasna.org/assets/Persuasions/No-21/aa582c338a/white.pdf>

<http://hewardwilkinson.co.uk/sites/default/files/Transformational-Reversal-of%20Conflict-Situations.pdf> p. 11ff).

This is what makes Jane Fairfax's secret continue to haunt us, after the revelation of the 'solution' of it, in the first reading of the novel. Our minds are textual arenas. Jane Austen is well able to tap into this. And, through this articulation of *absence* in the novel, the profound silence and hiddenness Jane Fairfax possesses, and about which critics, (including Faden, above) have complained, but which are 'communicators' in their own right - in this way, parallel absences can be exploited by her. It also removes from those levels the element of arbitrary extraneousness that initially seems to be involved in this authorship question layer.

In this connection, there are, firstly, the emblematic cross connections and detective clues from the orthodoxly recognised and embedded meaning nucleus in the 'realistic (mimetic) novel'⁸. (PD James has very interesting accounts of many of these in her *Emma considered as a detective story* – Appendix 2 of *Time to Be in Earnest*.) Then, transitionally, there are the Spenserian connections we are coming to, in the 'detective work' chapter 41, which is, so to speak, a prelude, or demonstration run, or a 'tip off', to the three De Vere/Oxford complexes. Then there is the gradual convergence of the 'Emma' 'complex' with the 'Jane Fairfax' 'complex', for which, also, the 'Harriet Smith' complex goes proxy, for whom indeed Emma inadvertently creates her own proxy secret, in the refusal to speak about Frank Churchill when Harriet means Mr Knightley. (And, as we shall see, the 'Harriet Smith' complex becomes the fourth complex in this intricate tapestry of allegory.) This, as a time fuse, leads to Emma's catastrophic awakening to her *real* secret, her love for Mr Knightley. This all then enables a binary convergence and conjunction of two systemic allusions to de Vere as Shakespeare, the *Upon Appleton House* (Andrew Marvell's poem to Lord Fairfax) one (Jane Fairfax, Ch. 19-21), and the *As You Like It* one already outlined (Emma, ch. 47), to which we are now coming. On the basis of those, we can then discover the true significance of the third, the 'Oxford' complex, that of 'Harriet Smith', as indicated.

The potency of the whole double/triple convergence comes out in the extreme and unexpected depth of the reconciliation between Jane Fairfax and Emma, which is like the healing marriages at the end of *As You Like It* (as explored by Ted Hughes in *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*). So, in the way Ted Hughes envisages for *As You Like It*, in Austen also there is a (very Shakespearian) parallel healing and revelation and re-alignment at the archetypal level, with the healing that takes place in the realistic novel, with the marriages that end the novel, arising in contrast, in a way, with the two, as it were, new, marriages (the Westons and the Eltons), which cause a good deal of the trouble. The other three couples, in effect, end up - where they already are, at the beginning of the novel. In *As You Like It* there is a fourth marriage, Touchstone and Audrey; is there a parallel in *Emma*? We shall come to this.

The 'secret', or complex of 'secrets', now, is what makes the pivotal 'detective work'

⁸ This whole argument is not an either/or, but a further dimension. Without at least a ghost or residue of orthodox mimetic meaning the textual dimension cannot produce its play. But unfortunately, without the postmodern 'textual' dimension the significance of the SAQ allegorical dimension in Jane Austen is pretty much lost to us.

chapter 41, as Mr Knightley discovers Jane Fairfax's secret, but gets caught in it himself, in a way, in several ways so significant - and also so wounding and toxic for Mr Knightley. This chapter offers us a paradigm and also a piloting or demonstration of the kind of hidden knowledge this novel affords us. It tells us the hidden things can be found, and yet that there are major blockages to finding them, both in social assumption, and in internal self-hesitation and sense of opacity.

And it also gives an augury of the disasters which are about to strike the secret engagement itself between Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax, the events at Donwell and Box Hill, leading to Jane Fairfax's breaking of the engagement with Frank. There is also the partial rupture between Emma and Mr Knightley, with the beginning of Emma's shame and real remorseful awakening (yes, this is indeed, as Miss Austen-Leigh says, genuine repentance) over her insult to Miss Bates, Jane Fairfax's aunt, - who is, as comes out clearly in the 'detective work' chapter, likewise Jane's telepath.

In this connection there is an oblique connection with Harriet Smith, which is worth pursuing, since Miss Bates's name is Hetty, which is one contraction of Harriet. Arnie Perlstein, who discovered the incision, in the next chapter (ch. 42) following the 'detective work' chapter, of '*As You Like It*' into the stone of Austen's text, see below, believes this makes Harriet, who is illegitimate, the secret daughter of Miss Bates, which may be pushing it too far with his sexualised versions of Austen's 'shadow novels', here, but nevertheless may give us a first symbolic link; there are more to come. Edith Lank has also noticed this possibility but draws back from following it through, though she makes the very interesting remark that Jane Fairfax never once in the novel speaks a single word to Harriet Smith (<https://jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number7/lank.html>). Is Harriet's mother in the novel? If Harriet were the daughter of Miss Bates, she would be Jane Fairfax's first cousin. This is left dangling, and we shall see later whether there are any pieces of the puzzle to tease out from it.

Nevertheless, whether or not it is a red herring Austen has trailed, it may at the very least give us a first symbolic link, in the sense of a silent and hidden affinity between Harriet and Jane Fairfax. What I am also coming round to, is that it is a deliberate anomaly, and that here, as with her several times debated Spenserian 'mistake' (e.g., Stephen Derry U Durham E-Thesis p. 282: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1536/1/1536.pdf>) about the apple blossom in midsummer at Abbey Mill Farm seen from above from Donwell Abbey in Ch. 42 of *Emma*.

Emma is certainly mostly badly wrong about Harriet; that is, the very reverse of a telepath. Because her intuitions are always governed by egotism and the desire to be the first to think of them, even when she is 'on to something', as with the Dixon intuition, had she tried replacing Dixon with Churchill, she *never* submits her first guesses to any critique.

There is something very powerful in the paragraphs of this chapter containing Miss Bates's words, (echoing Lank's, above): 'I am not like Jane; I wish I were. I will answer for it *she never betrayed the least thing in the world.*' And, a little later, "Aye, very true, my dear," cried the latter, *though Jane had not spoken a word*, "I was just going to say the same thing. It is time for us to be going indeed."

Much indeed is hidden in here, in Jane Fairfax's silence, apart from the author's name, and Miss Bates as Greek chorus. In the pathway she, Harriet, under the patronage of Emma, pursues, there is more than a hint that Harriet is a cuckoo in the nest, though the displacement of Jane Fairfax by the foundling changeling Harriet is entirely Emma's responsibility. Orphans and parentless children are rife in this novel. The illegitimate Harriet is the epitome of this (and there is also an associative allusion to gypsies⁹). Lank's brief paper, asking whether Harriet's mother is anywhere in the novel, is well worth study and thought. And if Harriet is a cuckoo in the nest, put there by Emma, the analogy I at first tried to develop, here, is, as Oxfordians would assume, with the bourgeois tradesman Stratford man as opposed to the true aristocrat, Edward de Vere. And that would mean that, just as Audrey in *As You Like It* symbolises Shakespeare's art, Mr Knightley, the Grail Knight of the Lea of the round table (replacing the Pembroke!) of the detective work chapter, is the true spouse and treasure of creative values whom Emma/Ipse/Touchstone 'must marry'. In the light of this we find ourselves thinking of the Droeshout Portrait of Shakespeare, when we hear Harriet's portrait being said by Mrs Weston to be: 'The expression of the eye is most correct, but Miss Smith has not those eyebrows and eyelashes. *It is the fault of her face that she has them not.*' (Ch. 6)

But I gradually realised that the perceived 'cuckoo in the nest' was, - and still is! - not the Stratford man, but the actual, yet erased, anonymised, author, Edward de Vere. The man who set this in stone, the great critic with the most massive authority in his own time, of any English critic at any time, who anchored and welded into position the 'Shakespeare as Institution, the Institutional Shakespeare', whom we know and still reflexly denote in our thinking and our very language, was Dr. Samuel Johnson, and this is an epochal piece of historicity which I believe Jane Austen considered to be quite irreversible, which is why our strategies about the Authorship Question need to be of an order of subtlety of which we have not yet dreamt.

I shall explain what I mean. Here is Johnson (*Preface to Shakespeare*, 1765) installing a Shakespeare who is so definitively Universal, *that it has become beyond question, out of the scope of, or beneath the scope of, questioning*, like Newtonian physics, or the acceptance of days as constituted timewise by 24 hours, or that Britain is an island, or perhaps, Parliamentary Government in Britain in the 19th Century. Something so constituted does not, for the majority, come into question, if at all, without some absolutely radical social shift, and the nearest to that at this time had, of course, been the French Revolution (after Johnson's death in 1784 but coinciding with Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D, 1791). Clearly, as so often in Johnson, it is the culminating realisation of what had been coming into view in the whole earlier 18th Century; but it is clear that he views it as definitive. And the popular analogue of it was provided by Johnson's pupil, David Garrick, via the Stratford Festival of 1769.

Here, then, is the magisterial (and, in the literary critical sense, absolutely mimetic!) Johnson, in *Preface to Shakespeare*
 "Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of

⁹ *Beyond the Romantic Gypsy: Narrative Disruptions and Ironies in Austen's Emma*.
 Laura Mooneyham White in *Bloom*

nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

.....
His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of critics, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rhymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish Usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to shew an usurper and a murderer not only odious but despicable, he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.”

This, now, is the background, as we think about Harriet Smith, and later I try to show how the allusions, which I am coming to, work. But I shall now pause, and return to the whole of the ‘fourth complex’, the ‘Oxford’ complex relating to Harriet, later.

So, Emma is certainly always wrong about Harriet, in one way or another, that is, the very reverse of a telepath. Because her ‘intuitions’ are always governed by egotism, and the desire to be the first to think of them, even when she is ‘on to something’, as with the Dixon intuition, had she replaced ‘Dixon’ with ‘Churchill’, she never submits her first guess to any critique.) If there is an analogy to the continuing belief in the Stratford man’s authorship here, since Emma, up to her epiphany, takes her intuitions as total certainties, as Johnson does ‘his’ Shakespeare, it can certainly work in our thoughts.

The secrets powerfully evoked, consequently, in the next chapter, the Donwell Abbey visit, the way is prepared for Jane Austen making deliberate and allusive use of both her own name and of the surname, Fairfax. But first, not only does Mr Knightley acquire the secret of Jane’s and Frank’s connection, in this chapter, which Emma blunderingly dismisses (Frank Churchill’s own blunder is only the tip of the iceberg, here), but also his love for Emma is as yet a secret from her, and from anyone else but him (including the first time reader, unless very perspicacious). And, of course, Emma, too, does have a *real* secret, which is hidden even from herself, - her love for Mr Knightley.

And she only becomes authentic when this is forced upon her attention by Harriet. Harriet's feelings, once she has got clear of the hollow Mr Elton, are, in a way, more authentic than either Jane's or Emma's (not being desperately in love with him, she is entirely clear what a false chancer Frank Churchill is, and how profound is the quality of Mr Knightley, and returns, independently of Emma, to her true and first love, Robert Martin, whom she has never ceased to value. Psychotherapists today would call this the resolution of the transference, of which Austen is well aware, even though we had to wait till Freud to name it.) Emma chooses her (in *The Enigma of Harriet Smith*, Morris, in *Bloom*, points out what a fine sense of values Harriet has) but never fully recognises what she has (another connection between Jane Fairfax and Harriet Smith, highlighted by Mr Knightley's insistence that Jane Fairfax is the friend, as Emma's equal, whom Emma should have chosen).

There is also the secret which is shortly to explode in Emma's face, namely that Harriet believes herself beloved, not by Frank Churchill as Emma hopes, but by Mr Knightley, of which, we might say, Emma 'never so much as dreamt', despite Mr Weston's remark, which she does not hear, "Emma, you are a great dreamer, I think?" Emma is here the Frankenstein, and Harriet the monster she inadvertently creates. But Harriet is a monster who, despite acquiring, through Emma, genuine self-confidence, nevertheless remains fundamentally authentic throughout the novel. At one level she is no doubt a figure in New Comedy or Commedia Dell'Arte, with elements of buffonery, like Miss Bates, but Jane Austen, as Shakespeare also so naturally does, (in Hamlet for instance, what he does with the legend!!), transfigures them both.

Given Emma's quixotry, it is no wonder, then, that Jane Austen connects this whole uncanny chapter with Canto One of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, in which the uncanny and sombre world of that highly allegorical work is set in motion. In this extraordinary, and, because of the 'Edenic Highbury/Hartfield' mythifications, as in Trilling, op. cit., little attended, chapter of Jane Austen's, the whole world of secrecy mutiplies and mutates and reduplicates, in the indeterminate dusk, constituting a world of 'writing before writing theory', very like the opening of Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, (c.f., Derrida, *The Postcard: Le Facteur de la Verite*), as if there were a continual miasmal spreading, with no limits upon it.

In this key 'detective work' chapter the sequence in outline <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/158/158-h/158-h.htm#chap41> is as follows:

1. It begins with the background to Mr Knightley recognising there is 'something of private liking, of private understanding even', between Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax (in which there is the allusion to Cowper's 'fire at twilight', in *The Task*, 'myself creating what I saw', which returns at the end of the chapter).
2. Then there is the 'false dream' (a dream which does not actually exist, made up by Frank Churchill on the spur of the moment to conceal his blunder in referring inadvertently to a communication, about Mr Perry's setting up his carriage, in a letter which Jane Fairfax has sent him) which mirrors those (actual, but artificially insinuated, dreams) Archimago sends via Morpheus to the Red Cross Knight in Canto One of the *Faerie Queene*. Frank buys a moment of time expressing concern for Harriet's tiredness, then launches into his 'dream', to explain his supposed belief he read it in a letter, denied by Mrs Weston, which in different ways is undermined by both Mr Weston (who also links it with the 'great dreamer', Emma, who is,

however, out of earshot), and Miss Bates.

3. The next situation is more uncanny. The group heads into Hartfield. Mr Knightley notices signs of Frank Churchill trying to no avail to catch Jane Fairfax's eye, but it is inconclusive, and they end up now in a strange situation where Jane Austen plants many clues:

"There was no time for farther remark or explanation. The dream must be borne with, and Mr. Knightley must take his seat with the rest round the large modern circular table which Emma had introduced at Hartfield, and which none but Emma could have had power to place there and persuade her father to use, instead of the small-sized Pembroke, on which two of his daily meals had, for forty years been crowded. Tea passed pleasantly, and nobody seemed in a hurry to move."

Mr Knightley's Arthurian name is the first clue here, and it is immediately confirmed twice (*italics for emphasis, the 'round table' times two*) in the sentence: "take his seat with the rest *round* the large modern *circular table* which Emma had introduced at Hartfield", and Emma's feudal power here is immediately emphasised. Following this is the reference to 'Pembroke', which takes us to the First Folio of Shakespeare (and the forty years *maybe* takes us to the decade in which Johnson and Garrick put the Stratford man definitively on the map, - but also to Jane Austen's birth).

4. Following this, a typical retrospective Austen hint that we are dealing with *word games*; and so that 'Pembroke' is not an accident here (that words are important is signified by Knightley's name and the two allusions to a round table):

" "Miss Woodhouse," said Frank Churchill, after examining a table behind him, which he could reach as he sat, "have your nephews taken away their alphabets—their box of letters? It used to stand here. Where is it? This is a sort of dull-looking evening, that ought to be treated rather as winter than summer. We had great amusement with those letters one morning. I want to puzzle you again." "

5. Next comes Mr Knightley's tracking of the unravelling of the word clusters, which includes the third reference to the 'Cupid' word 'dart' (the fourth will be in Emma's epiphany) (I insert comments after the italics):

"...Mr. Knightley so placed as to see them all; and it was his object to see as much as he could, with as little apparent observation. The word was discovered, and with a faint smile pushed away. *If meant to be immediately mixed with the others, and buried from sight, she should have looked on the table instead of looking just across, for it was not mixed; and Harriet, eager after every fresh word, and finding out none, directly took it up, and fell to work. She was sitting by Mr. Knightley, and turned to him for help. The word was **blunder**;*

[here Harriet metaphorically 'intrudes' into the war games/word games of the others and this is an emblem of her 'invisible/visible' role in this work, whose connection with the SAQ Allegory I shall develop below.]

and as Harriet exultingly proclaimed it, there was a blush on Jane's cheek which gave it a meaning not otherwise ostensible. *Mr. Knightley connected it with the dream;* [This 'dream' does not exist of course but that brings it closer to the Spenser, who is dealing with inserted false dreams]

but how it could all be, was beyond his comprehension. How the delicacy, the discretion of his favourite could have been so lain asleep! He feared there must be some decided involvement. Disingenuousness and double dealing seemed to meet him at every turn. These letters were but the vehicle for gallantry and trick. It was a child's play, chosen to conceal a deeper game on Frank Churchill's part.

.....

[he] clearly heard Emma opposing it with eager laughing warmth. “No, no, you must not; you shall not, indeed.”

It was done however. This gallant young man, who seemed to love without feeling, and to recommend himself without complaisance, directly handed over the word to Miss Fairfax, and with a particular degree of sedate civility entreated her to study it. Mr. Knightley’s excessive curiosity to know what this word might be, *made him seize every possible moment for darting his eye towards it*, [here is the Cupid ‘dart’, which tells us this is the curiosity of love and marital intent] and it was not long before he saw it to be *Dixon*. Jane Fairfax’s perception seemed to accompany his; her comprehension was certainly more equal to the covert meaning, the superior intelligence, of those five letters so arranged. She was evidently displeased; looked up, and seeing herself watched, blushed more deeply than he had ever perceived her, and saying only, “I did not know that proper names were allowed,” pushed away the letters with even an angry spirit, and looked resolved to be engaged by no other word that could be offered. Her face was averted from those who had made the attack, and turned towards her aunt.” And at that point Miss Bates reads her mind, of course.

6. The Spenser connection connects with the dark ‘satanic persuasion’ (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0895769X.2016.1212182?needAccess=true&>) element, and the *Paradise Lost* material (at least three allusions, two to the first pages of *Paradise Lost*, and one to the last), and also across, via the ‘circular table’, which they all sat *round* - Arthurian connection with Mr *Knightley*, - replacing the old Pembroke (allusion to the production of the First Folio, 1623, under the aegis of the Pembrokes); this is all evoked in this chapter. The impact of the secrets, Jane’s especially, bubbles away, connecting Jane Fairfax with the silent ‘Vere’, to which we shall come in a moment. I believe the Spenserian echo is sealed by one of Jane Austen’s low key indications of a verse echo:

“He remained at Hartfield after all the rest, his thoughts full of what he had seen; so full, that when the candles came to assist his observations, he must—yes, he certainly must, as a friend—an anxious friend—give Emma some hint, ask her some question. He could not see her in a situation of such danger, without trying to preserve her. It was his duty.”

.....
“She spoke with a confidence which staggered, with a satisfaction which silenced, Mr. Knightley. She was in gay spirits, and would have prolonged the conversation, wanting to hear the particulars of his suspicions, every look described, and all the wheres and hows of a circumstance which highly entertained her: but his gaiety did not meet hers. He found he could not be useful, and his feelings were too much irritated for talking. That he might not be irritated into an **absolute fever**[another *e ver* of course], by the fire [the fire of love curiosity, again] which Mr. Woodhouse’s tender habits required almost every evening throughout the year, he soon afterwards took a hasty leave, and walked home to the coolness and solitude of Donwell Abbey.”

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/158/158-h/158-h.htm#chap41>

“Long after lay he musing at her mood
Much grieu’d to think that gentle Dame so light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last dull wearinesse of former fight
Having yrockt asleepe his irkesome spright
That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his braine,

With bowres, and beds, and Ladies deare delight
But when he saw his labour all was vaine,
With that misformed spright he backe returnd again.”

So the ‘detective work’ chapter may be regarded as a complete set of instructions as to what is next to come. Thus, the *whole* chapter is an allegory of Spenser’s canto and it is very probable that Jane Austen worked backwards to achieve this effect. As the darkest and most allegorical chapter in the book, and the one which most subverts Trilling’s Edenic idealisations, it is like an instruction manual to how she offers clues. And the allusions to twilight and candlelight, as indeterminates, as with the dusk passages in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, are ancient signifiers of the saturation which implicates the whole dimension of non-mimetic ‘writing’ and ‘text’, as also in *Bleak House* and Poe’s *The Purloined Letter*. There is an implicit surrender to the feminine in such passages.

And thus we also work backwards from the following chapter, (ch. 42), the Donwell Abbey visit chapter. While both Jane Fairfax’s and Emma’s fortunes are heading towards their catastrophes and apotheoses in the realistic world of the ‘realistic (mimetic) novel’, in the allegorical dimension two convergences are indeed happening: the significance of ‘Jane Fairfax’ is coming to fruition and realisation, in the allegorical realm, as we, prompted, turn back, via allusion to *Upon Appleton House*, and, as Emma enters into the realm of her apotheosis and lets go of the world of her self-deception, in her turn there opens out the ‘Emma’ connection with *As You Like It*, and the key figure of Touchstone.

Upon Appleton House and Jane Fairfax

Both are brought into view, in conjunction, in plain sight, in the next chapter, the Donwell Abbey visit, where Mrs Elton says (Arnie Perlstein’s discovery, the significance of which I do not know whether he realises: <http://sharpevessociety.blogspot.com/2007/05/answers-to-puzzle-1.html>) “I see *Jane every* day. But *as you like*. It is to be a morning scheme...”. I have italicised key words. Of course, ‘ever’ by itself here would normally be an entirely gratuitous inference; however, with the direct allusion to *As You Like It*, we attend to everything, and the ‘*fever*’ reference has recurred at the end of the previous chapter.

When we work backwards, we find that Jane Fairfax’s role is signified by her being connected allegorically with the great Andrew Marvell poem, *Upon Appleton House*, which connects Lord Thomas Fairfax, the Civil War Parliamentary General, but also anti-regicide conciliator, with ‘the starry Vere’, one of the ‘fighting Veres’, Lord Horatio Vere, Oxford’s cousin, (arguably alluded to with his other cousin Francis Vere, in the castle guard shift of the opening of *Hamlet*). (This does not bring ‘Oxford’ into view; Harriet Smith, in turn, does that, as we shall see.) His daughter Anne married Fairfax, whose daughter, in turn, Mary Fairfax was the pupil of Andrew Marvell, whose apotheosis is iconised in *Upon Appleton House*. (Two piquant asides: Mrs Weston’s child in *Emma* is named Anna, and Mrs Weston herself is Anne. Anne and Anna are contractions of the Hebrew Hannah, and Hannah is Mrs Weston’s housemaid, who is the daughter of the Hartfield/Woodhouse coachman, who is James. Anne is the mother of Mary the mother of Jesus, according to tradition in the main Christian lineages, and James is the brother of Jesus. Horace Vere is married to Anne, who is the mother of Mary, the focus of Marvell’s poem. So

there is a sacred undercurrent in all this, an element often denied in Austen (Andrew Marvell was friend and peer of the author of *Paradise Lost*).

And, in Wikipedia's entry on Horace Vere, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace_Vere,_1st_Baron_Vere_of_Tilbury there is, with the usual air-brushing out, *just the single line*, as the final line in the entry, about his first cousin:

"Vere was a first cousin of [Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford](#) (1550–1604)".) There is, to cement plausible deniability, no 'Edward' anywhere in the novel, though there is a William!

The Spenserian allusions in the 'detective work' chapter are multiple and not blatantly obvious, but not especially hidden either. But Emma's mirroring in her epiphany of 'he sir that must marry this woman' and "you are not ipse, for I am he", with "It darted through her with the speed of an arrow that no one must marry Mr Knightley but herself", despite the cue of the double reference to Cupid following three earlier cupidian uses of 'dart', actually leaves us with the slender tight rope wire of a single line on which to pin the 'ripple on the surface which should not be there' (*The Deceiver*, Forsyth), unless there is an allusion just before to the Hebrew concept of the true, EMET (a fifth dimension which remains to be explored but about which, as yet, I am cautious). And here there is something shot gun, if one may risk the metaphor, in the uses of the cupid allusions, something like a stage direction, not a complex cross-referentiality, such as we have in the 'detective work' chapter. And the reference to *As You Like It* is almost a simple coded reference, pointing us 'upstairs', so to speak, to the allegory of *As You Like It* in a rather concrete mode.

Where does all this take us? If the 'detective work' chapter is supremely allusive and suggestion-saturated, so to speak, and the Emma cross-bow brutality of reference to *As You Like It* is almost too starkly concrete (which does not make it false but might make it somewhat trivial, which would be a surprise from Jane Austen, though also somewhat 'male'), do we have something transitional? This is where Austen's evocation, as I believe, of *Upon Appleton House*, and the allusion to de Vere, which is only oblique and hidden, tallies with the hidden emblematic meaning nucleus of Jane Fairfax's secrecy, which is combined with much silence.

There is much in *Upon Appleton House* beyond the most famous quotation for Oxfordians which I can at best touch on a little here. The key quotation (verse LXXXI, 91) is that which Melville takes up in *Billy Budd*:

"This 'tis to have been from the first
In a domestic *Heaven* nurst
Under the *Discipline* severe
Of *Fairfax* and the starry *Vere*..."

So the beginning of book II ch. 1 & 2 (19 and 20) of *Emma* is devoted to Jane Fairfax, whose letter of arrival Emma does not expect when she tries to distract Harriet by a visit to the Bates'. Given Jane Austen's general strategy, if we are right, when the name of Fairfax is right in the open in the novel, and it is linked (three times in fact) with 'Vere' in *Upon Appleton House*, we would expect Jane Austen to introduce it with plausible deniability.

So we have the following sentences (italics for the cross allusions)

“But the compassionate feelings of a friend of her father gave a change to her destiny. This was Colonel Campbell, who had very highly regarded Fairfax, as an excellent officer and most **deserving** young man; and farther, had been indebted to him for such attentions, during a **severe** camp-**fever** [here is the second ‘fever’], as he believed had saved his life. These were claims which he did not learn to overlook, though some years passed away from the death of poor Fairfax, before his own return to England put any thing in his power.”

In addition:

“Living constantly with right-minded and well-informed people, her heart and understanding had received every advantage of **discipline** and culture; and Colonel Campbell’s residence being in London, **every** lighter talent had been done full justice to, by the attendance of first-rate masters.”

Nursing, also, is referred to at the end of the previous chapter, by Miss Bates.

In addition, also, the monastic life as a potential prison is dealt with by Marvell in a set of verses about the period of Appleton as the Roman Catholic nunnery, and about Jane Fairfax we have this, in a passage about her friend the Campbells’ daughter marrying Mr Dixon, who as we know plays a major role later in Emma’s self deceptions and persecution of Jane (and here ‘*ever*’ is the final word):

“This event had very lately taken place; too lately for any thing to be yet attempted by her less fortunate friend towards entering on her path of duty; though she had now reached the age which her own judgment had fixed on for beginning. She had long resolved that one-and-twenty should be the period. *With the fortitude of a devoted novitiate, she had resolved at one-and-twenty to complete the sacrifice, and retire from all the pleasures of life, of rational intercourse, equal society, peace and hope, to penance and mortification for ever.*”

All this is quite a lot of veres and deveres and cross references to the relevant verse of *Upon Appleton House*. Yet it does not feel conclusive, perhaps? Would it then be more so if after “These were claims which he did not learn to overlook,” we had, for instance, ‘they remained *evergreen*, his memory honoured and *revered*.”

I think we would say Jane Austen had blatantly let the cat right out of the bag, and she does not want to do this. Yet at the same time when Mrs Elton says, “I see Jane *every day*” there is no way we can accept that as conclusive. And ‘*very*’ and ‘*every*’, etc., are frequent in *Emma* in neutral contexts.

So there has to be a degree of triangulation but not too much. It has to be possible – today as much as in Jane Austen’s own time – that many people can judge this ‘not proven’, not to be convinced. Why? Earlier in this process I argued that I believe she is doing at least three things, all of them in mimicry of Shakespeare. She is disguising her knowledge of the truth and at the same time leaving clues for those acute enough to find them, perhaps disguising more effectively than Edward de Vere himself (see sonnet 76, below), though, stunningly, the ruse of the mask lasted for three hundred years before it was publicly declared by J.T. Looney, and now four hundred years and counting:

“Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
To new-found methods, and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,

And keep invention in a noted weed,
 That every word doth almost tell my name,
 Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
 O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
 And you and love are still my argument,
 So all my best is dressing old words new,
 Spending again what is already spent:
 For as the sun is daily new and old,
 So is my love still telling what is told.”

Secondly, she is providing analogues *within* the works for what happens *outside* of them. And thirdly, in her stark transformed equation quotation that catapults into *As You Like It* and Touchstone’s credo, she is providing a rainbow bridge, or a Niagara Falls tightrope, between the world of the novel and the realm of the existence of the author, in the peculiar double existence which that brings into being, as I believe Shakespeare does in the ‘play within the play’ in *Hamlet*.

<http://hewardwilkinson.co.uk/sites/default/files/Playing-with-the%20Play-within-the%20Play-in-Hamlet.pdf>

Harriet the fourth dimension

I believe all that is true, but it is rounded out by the fourth dimension, the Harriet Smith dimension, to which I now return. Harriet moves from disbelief that Emma’s idea that Mr Elton could seek her in marriage could possibly true, to belief that she may deserve Mr Knightley:

“I never should have presumed to think of it at first,” said she, “but for you. You told me to observe him carefully, and let his behaviour be the rule of mine—and so I have. But now I seem to feel that I may deserve him; and that if he does chuse me, it will not be any thing so very wonderful.” (*Emma*, ch. 47)

So suddenly Harriet has leapt right into the feudal world of Emma’s fantasies. And this is sufficient to dislodge Emma from those fantasies, in her epiphany, which nevertheless leads to *another* identification, in the allegorical embedment of the *As You Like It* great Touchstone climactic passage. So Emma’s ‘feudal’ leanings are a stalking horse for something else. And to this ‘something else’ it is Harriet who points. She does this in laughable fashion, so much so that here if anywhere I wished to ignore the material, but nevertheless the material, with its ‘ripples on the surface which should not be there’, is offered in plain view. Such is Austen’s characteristic method.

The first I noticed, which started me off on all of this, was the ‘famous ox’; this, as Mr Knightley’s indignant reaction shows, is ‘over the top’:

“Emma could not help laughing as she answered, “Upon my word, I believe you know her quite as well as I do.—But, Mr. Knightley, are you perfectly sure that she has absolutely and downright *accepted* him. I could suppose she might in time—but can she already?—Did not you misunderstand him?—You were both talking of other things; of business, shows of cattle, or new drills—and might not you, in the confusion of so many subjects, mistake him?—It was not Harriet’s hand that he was certain of—it was the dimensions of some famous ox.”

.....
 “Do you dare say this?” cried Mr. Knightley. “Do you dare to suppose me so great a blockhead, as not to know what a man is talking of?—What do you deserve?” (*Emma* ch. 54)

Next, in strong association with Harriet, who dithers there, sees Robert Martin there, and so on, we have the ‘ford’, in the form of Highbury’s famous store: Ford’s. (e.g., *Emma*, ch. 21)

And, then, thirdly, we have two exaggerated ‘ripples’ in the form of Frank Churchill’s unexplained stay at Oxford, passed on by Mr Weston (why would Frank Churchill not have come from Enscombe on the Great North Road via London to Highbury?)

whose misplacement is then emphasised in Harriet’s geographical lapse:

“How d’ye do?—how d’ye do?—We have been sitting with your father—glad to see him so well. Frank comes to-morrow—I had a letter this morning—we see him to-morrow by dinner-time to a certainty—he is at Oxford to-day, and he comes for a whole fortnight; I knew it would be so. If he had come at Christmas he could not have staid three days; I was always glad he did not come at Christmas; now we are going to have just the right weather for him, fine, dry, settled weather. We shall enjoy him completely; every thing has turned out exactly as we could wish.”

.....
“Will Mr. Frank Churchill pass through Bath as well as Oxford?”—was a question, however, which did not augur much.

But neither geography nor tranquillity could come all at once, and Emma was now in a humour to resolve that they should both come in time. (*Emma* ch. 23)

What do we make of all this? These instances are so banal (though of course sonnets 153 and 154, the final ones in the sequence, now published by Malone, do refer to Bath), unlike those relating to Jane Fairfax or the ‘I am Ipse’ that comes at Emma’s epiphany, that it is very tempting to disregard them. Indeed I am almost embarrassed to adduce them. But Miss Bates [‘Hetty’] is the living proof that the banal may conceal very important material, as in the ‘detective work’ chapter where she lets Jane’s cat out of the bag. *But who lets the cat out of the bag more emphatically than Harriet!?* And, whether or not the naming of Miss Bates as ‘Hetty’ is an anomaly in relation to Harriet, or an indication of motherhood, either way there is a profound calling of attention to the puzzling elements of the novel, in the three way connection of Miss Bates, Jane Fairfax, and Harriet Smith.

So, then, why the association with Harriet? Well the Grail Knight, Mr Knightley, is assumed by Emma to be at risk of a dreadfully demeaning association, if he marries Harriet. Shakespeare has been installed by Garrick and Johnson as the man from Stratford, quite unassailable in his bourgeoisification. So the feudal aristocrat, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, has in effect been reduced to the status of a cuckoo in the nest, as Harriet momentarily becomes, and it is quite impossible to reinstate him (and certainly that has been his position within modern Stratfordian thinking, and in his failure to ‘catch on’). Hence the banality.

Yet underneath it the Earldom of Oxford is signified, as it is not in the Fairfax/Appleton House chapters. So the sketch is complete and we are invited to think about the transformation in historicity this bourgeoisfiction signifies. We must bear in mind that, after her epiphany, Emma follows Mr Knightley in valuing Robert Martin as a genuinely upwardly mobile prospective gentleman, whom it would be a pleasure to meet, and in accepting that Harriet does very well to marry him, whilst Mr Knightley is now assured of Harriet’s genuine deserving of him.

But Emma is now, on the other hand, within the allegory, welcoming, also, of her

own genuine feudal connection with the ‘Touchstone’ of *As You Like It*, which is installed profoundly along with the epiphany of her love for Mr Knightley. A profound ‘updated’ feudal value system, which is not a caste system¹⁰, comes into view, allegorically as well as actually, and the marriage of Harriet and Robert Martin takes place in the sequence of the three more or less redemptive marriages, which are the analogue of the shared marriages of *As You Like It*. But there Touchstone and Audrey are also married. In some sense the historical transformation of Shakespeare is reconciled indirectly in *Emma*. At certain points Emma’s two selves are mentioned (this connects with both Bruce Stovel’s and Laura Mooneyham White’s analyses): “...confess, Emma, that you did want him to marry Harriet.”

“I did,” replied Emma, “and they cannot forgive me.”

He shook his head; but there was a smile of indulgence with it, and he only said,

“I shall not scold you. I leave you to your own reflections.”

“Can you trust me with such flatterers?—Does my vain spirit ever tell me I am wrong?”

“Not your vain spirit, but your serious spirit.—If one leads you wrong, I am sure the other tells you of it.” (*Emma*, ch. 39)

And that ‘split’ is mirrored in the two selves – ‘You are not Ipse’ – in the Touchstone/William encounter in *As You Like It*, from which Emma’s allegorical identification (and radical feminist claim, see, again, Trilling) is drawn. Like melancholy Jacques, who goes into retreat with Duke Frederick at the end of *As You Like It*, Touchstone is both inside and outside the play (Hughes forgets him entirely, even though he quotes him inadvertently). And Emma’s imagination is not denied by her apotheosis; indeed, aiming an arrow in the air, one might almost wonder whether it became Jane Austen the author.

Jane Austen leaves us with two tantalising ‘supplements’ and ‘remainders’, in psychoanalytic, Lacanian especially, or post-modern/deconstructive terms, one of which is overtly named and chuckled over, while the other remains enigmatically hidden in plain view, as a necessary secret. The former is Emma’s concern that ‘little Henry’, John Knightley’s son, should not be disinherited by Mr Knightley marrying e.g., Jane Fairfax, as had been suggested, e.g., by Mrs Weston:

“It is remarkable, that Emma, in the many, very many, points of view in which she was now beginning to consider Donwell Abbey, was never struck with any sense of injury to her nephew Henry, whose rights as heir-expectant had formerly been so tenaciously regarded. Think she must of the possible difference to the poor little boy; and yet she only gave herself a saucy conscious smile about it, and found amusement in detecting the real cause of that violent dislike of Mr. Knightley's marrying Jane Fairfax, or any body else, which at the time she had wholly imputed to the amiable solicitude of the sister and the aunt.”

Emma becomes mature and realistic, and, whilst remorseful for her sins and failures and misdeeds, is not going to waste energy on false regrets.

But the second one, the secret one, unavowed, - unless this deflected avowal is a displacement of it, and by the nature of the case we *might* expect a displacement, but there is no proof - is Harriet’s secret love of Mr Knightley, which Emma now conceals to protect Harriet, and which ostensibly becomes moot when Harriet re-engages with Robert Martin, whom Emma belatedly, but genuinely, desperately even, now

¹⁰ C.f., Trilling, *Emma*: <https://www.unz.com/print/Encounter-1957jun-00049/>

welcomes as Harriet's spouse. But she does not understand that, in psychoanalytic terms, Harriet has identified with Mr Knightley as her 'ego-ideal' and been liberated by that identification, which then enables her to revert to the man who she had always really loved, and who had remained deeply loyal to her, a bond which in the end turns out unshakeable. For Harriet, Emma has been the creative hothouse which has enabled her intenser development, rounded off through Mr Knightley, and enabling her, in the end, to make the mature choice. Emma does not fully grasp all this.

So, this is left, - now a necessary and moral secret, - nevertheless unavoidably, as the remnant index of Emma's old ways, *which means that Austen has left the whole novel still just poised and suspended at the intersection of values which constitutes it*, in the silent witness of the now happy Harriet. This is the deconstructive point of hidden 'difference' and 'secrecy', corresponding to Jane Fairfax's 'open secrecy', in the novel. And, through Harriet's connections to 'Oxford', above all the 'famous ox' one, which follows her reunification with Robert Martin, the whole authorship complex is drawn into this, and into the ambiguous position with which Harriet's peculiar but central role in the whole thing presents us.

Jane Austen had the pose that she doggedly rejects writing overtly 'world historical' works, like *Bleak House* or *War and Peace*. This is emphasised in famous comments: "I could not sit seriously down to write a serious [*historical*] romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter."

"On no account could she be persuaded to deviate from what she called "the little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much labour." "

"I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress."

But in the allegory, with the transitions in the narrative, she communicates a profound shift in historicity/historical consciousness under the radar. For she has a profound insight into human nature. Already in a work like *Emma*, we have as living presences in her work, writings from the 16th century (Spenser, Shakespeare), the 17th century (Marvell, Milton), the 18th century (Cowper, Johnson), and obviously there are many more. But here already we have the march of historicity, for example, in how concretely the person of Satan is to be taken when we consider self-deception and temptation, but, above all, in her grasp of the dilemmas that a post-feudal civilisation, post-feudal conception of Shakespeare, must face.

However, why I made my remark about the incognito encounter, to which I now return, was that perhaps in some sense the prototypical or archetypal 'incognito encounter' is between the creator and their creation (perhaps literally, on the Road to Emmaus in Luke's Gospel, Luke 24:13-35, if we accept Paul's and John's Christology!)

Not as simple as, "Reader I married him", more elusive, in the liminal space between consciousness and creation. Poe has it in *The Purloined Letter*, which so fascinates psychoanalysts and their interpreters. I believe Shakespeare has it in *Hamlet*, par excellence. And I believe she wanted to show that the essential Shakespeare problem

was still unsolved, that it involved secrecy and concealment and the miasmal reduplication of 'writing', that it involved institutional certainty in a universalised self-deception for the majority, in the case of Shakespeare, hence making possible the maintenance of the deception, and that in some sense the tension between the two dimensions of truth and falsehood, is, as Heidegger also argued regarding *aletheia*, essential to the understanding of humanity, and generative of endless transformations. It is hidden by Jane Austen, no doubt partly because it gave her pleasure to hide things, as a writer, but primarily because she believed it actually was and is implacably hidden in actuality, for the reasons I have suggested, and so she offers, in her hidden treasure hunt of allusions, a parallel to that actuality, and to the practice of 'Shakespeare', in the face of the situation(s) which may have forced the concealment.

And so I believe that therefore she emblematically offered an enactment, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, and their mode of consciousness, of what Shakespeare *did*, by the way she half conceals her own insight into the problem, and, in the transition from the self-revealed Emma to the Touchstone of *As You Like It*, starkly indicates the paradoxical transition from narrator to the (allegorised) writer (thus also confirming that 'Touchstone', too, is the authorial presence in *As You Like It*), and thereby indicates also that all the content of this novel of secrecy and deception is free for us to unfold as a parable of that very 'world historical' realm she claimed she was not interested in or capable of writing about.

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