

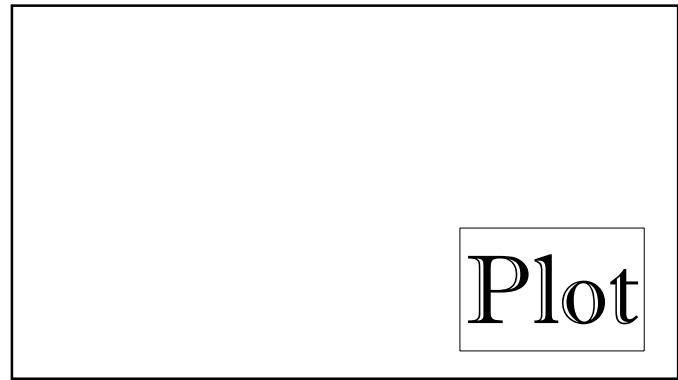


Tracing Jane Austen's Artistry through Six Ball Scenes

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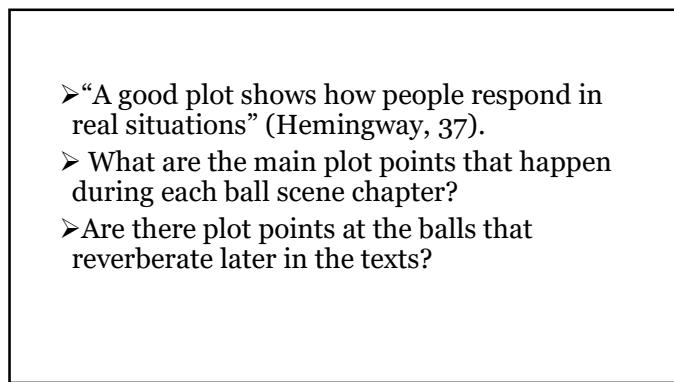


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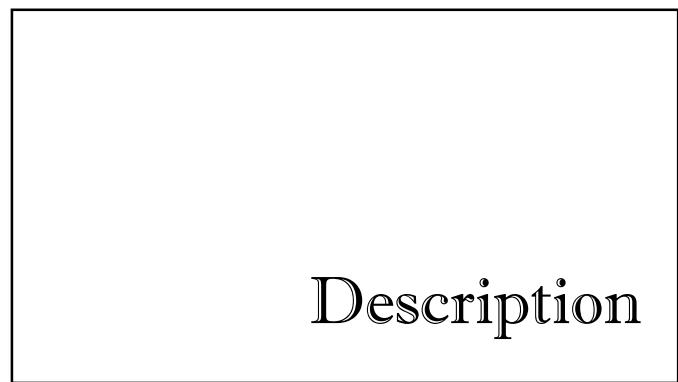


Plot

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Description

Description is text that gives the reader a mental image of a situation. To qualify as description, the text must provide enough detail to make readers believe they are seeing a real person, place, or thing. . . . The best scenic description comes. . . from the observations made by the characters themselves. The attitude and emotions of the character should determine what details she perceives from her surrounding" (Hemingway 63-64).

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“—Emma Watson was not more than of the middle height—well made & plump, with an air of healthy vigour.—Her skin was very brown, but clear, smooth, & glowing—; which, with a lively Eye, a sweet smile, & an open Countenance, gave beauty to attract, & expression to make that beauty improve on acquaintance.” (*The Watsons, Minor Works* [MW] 328)

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A Description from the charming Charles Blake:

“But you may come to Wickstead & see Mama, & she can take you to the Castle.—There is a monstrous curious stuff'd Fox there, & a Badger—anybody would think they were alive.” (*The Watsons*, MW 332-333)

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➤ For each ball scene, how much description is there?

➤ Is it the narrator who voices the description or are parts of the scene described through the heroine's or other characters' eyes?

➤ Do you have a favorite description for each scene?

➤ Is anything missing from the description compared to novels by other authors?

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Dialogue

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Novel	Catharine, or the Bower	The Watsons	Northanger Abbey	Pride & Prejudice	Mansfield Park	Emma
Total # of Speakers	5	11	5	11	8	8
# of Times the Heroine Speaks	17	11	29	25	3	8
# of Times the Hero Speaks	12 (Edward)	0 (Mr. H) 12 (Charles)	16	14	2	8

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Which characters speak directly?

➤ **Catharine, or the Bower:**

➤ **Direct (5):** Catharine/Kitty=17, Edward S=12, Camilla S=11, Mrs Percival=3, Mrs Stanley=1.

➤ **Indirect:** Mr Stanley

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Which characters speak directly?

➤ **The Watsons:**

➤ **Direct (11):** Emma=11, Charles Blake=12, Tom Musgrave=10, Mary Edwards=8, Mrs Edwards=7, Mr Edwards=6, Lord Osborne=6, Mrs Blake=3, Miss Osborne=3, waiter=1; crowd=1.

➤ **Indirect:** Mr Howard, Capt. Hunter

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Which characters speak directly?

➤ *Northanger Abbey*:

➤ **Direct (5):** Catherine Morland=29, Henry Tilney=16, Eleanor Tilney=6, Isabella Thorpe=5, John Thorpe=4

➤ **Indirect:** General Tilney, Mrs. Hughes (and several times direct speakers' speech is summarized)

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Which characters speak directly?

➤ *Pride and Prejudice*:

➤ **Direct (11):** Elizabeth=25, Mr. Darcy=14, Mr. Collins=5, Jane Bennet=3, Caroline Bingley=2, Mr. Bennet=1, Sir William=1, Denny=1, Charlotte Lucas=1, Mrs. Bennet=1, Lydia Bennet=1

➤ **Indirect:** Mr. Bingley, Mrs. Hurst (plus several direct speakers also indirect)

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Which characters speak directly?

➤ *Mansfield Park*:

➤ **Direct (8):** Fanny=3, Edmund=2, Sir Thomas=5, Mary Crawford=3, Henry Crawford=2, William Price=2, Lady Bertram=2, Mrs. Norris=1

➤ **Indirect:** several direct speakers' speech is also summarized, no others

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Which characters speak directly?

➤ *Emma*:

➤ **Direct (8):** Emma=8, Mr. Knightley=8, Frank Churchill=6, Mrs. Elton=6, Mr. Weston=3, Mrs. Weston=3, Mr. Elton=2, Miss Bates=2 (but looooong).

➤ **Indirect:** Jane Fairfax (plus several direct speakers at times)

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➤ For the chapters, which characters' speech is quoted and whose speech is summarized by the narrator?

➤ Any thoughts on why specific characters' speech is not directly quoted?

➤ Any specific dialogue that sparkles in each ball scene?

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Representing Thoughts and Feelings

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How are thoughts and feelings shown?

- 1. Direct quotation
- 2. Reporting by narrator
- 3. Narrator report that mimics the character's speech patterns (Free Indirect Discourse)
- 4. One character (often the heroine) infers another's thoughts, motives, or feelings.

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1. Direct Quotation

- Rarely used by Austen.
- The character's thoughts are presented as if spoken with first person pronouns and quotation marks but clearly are not spoken aloud.

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Example of Direct Quotation

(Henry has just told Catherine that General Tilney asked her name): "With real interest and strong admiration did her eye now follow the General, as he moved through the crowd, and "How handsome a family they are!" was her secret remark." (*Northanger Abbey* 80)

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2. Reporting by Narrator

- The character's thoughts are presented by the narrator using third person pronouns and no quotation marks, but the specific words used do not seem to belong to the character.
- White and Smith call this a focalization: "the narrator renders a character's point of view, feelings, motives, or thoughts"

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2. Reporting by Narrator

An "Austen novel has a certain number of "thinking parts," characters whose consciousness the narrator reveals to us." (Nelles "Omniscience" 119). Nelles counts 10 thinking parts for *Emma*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*; 12 for *Sense and Sensibility*; 13 for *Mansfield Park*; and 19 for *Pride and Prejudice* (119-120). Nelles notes that the frequency of entering a character's consciousness varies within a novel. *MP* and *PP* have the most frequent switches. (128-129)

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Example of Reporting by Narrator

"She said no more, and they went down the other dance and parted in silence; on each side dissatisfied, though not to an equal degree; for in Darcy's breast there was a tolerably powerful feeling towards her, which soon procured her pardon, and directed all his anger against another." (*Pride and Prejudice* 94)

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3. Free Indirect Discourse

Free indirect discourse (FID) “is a mode of speech or thought presentation that allows a narrator to recount what a character has said while retaining the idiomatic qualities of the speaker’s words” (Flavin 51) or, put another way, with “the flavor of the exact words the character would have used in speech or thought” (White & Smith).

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Free Indirect Discourse

- The narrator uses third person pronouns, usually past tense or “reporting tense”, and no quotation marks to set it off (Flavin 51).
- White and Smith call FID a kind of focalization.
- Sometimes FID is called free indirect style or free indirect speech (FIS).

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Example of Free Indirect Discourse

“Fanny felt the advantage; and, drawing back from the toils of civility, would have been again most happy, could she have kept her eyes from wandering between Edmund and Mary Crawford. She looked all loveliness—and what might not be the end of it?” (Mansfield Park 273-4; see *Austen Said* https://austen.unl.edu/visualizations/mansfield_park/28)

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Clues to FID

- Italics are sometimes used to show “that [a character] is literally thinking those exact words, with just that emphasis” (Nelles “Austen’s” 19).
- White and Smith also discuss the narrator using introductory phrases such as “he assured her” or “She thought that” and the use of exclamation points to show FID.

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Why Use FID?

- FID “is often used to create the effect of heightening feelings, intensifying or dramatizing the character’s words, unlike direct speech where the words of the speaker stand on their own without narrator involvement, exposing the speaker directly” (Flavin 52)
- FID is used in all Austen’s novels to “invite ridicule of a character” (Flavin 51, 52). Nelles agrees that all examples of FID fit this pattern in the *Juvenilia* (“Austen’s” 19).

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Spotting FID Can Be Tricky

It can be challenging to identify when the narrator’s neutral voice ends, and the character’s specific voice begins. As William Nelles said: “FID can be slippery, and not every instance is clear cut” (“Austen’s” 21).

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FID in *Catharine, or the Bower*

“She had already received a very severe lecture from her Aunt on the imprudence of her behaviour during the whole evening; She blamed her for coming to the Ball, for coming in the same Carriage with Edward Stanley, and still more for entering the room with him.” (Whose words are being ridiculed here? Continued next page)

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FID in *Catharine, or the Bower*

“For the last-mentioned offence Catharine knew not what apology to give, and tho' she longed in answer to the second to say that she had not thought it would be civil to make Mr Stanley *walk*, she dared not so to trifle with her aunt, who would have been but the more offended by it. The first accusation however she considered as very unreasonable, as she thought herself perfectly justified in coming.” (MW 223; my example)

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Why is FID Important?

“Austen’s employment of FID was revolutionary, for while earlier authors had used it to some degree, it remained to Austen to take advantage of the wide range of how FID could be deployed to manipulate our ironic understanding of her characters.”
continued....

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Why is FID Important?

“As William Galperin (personal communication, 2006) has pointed out, Austen’s discovery of what FID could do was comparable in the history of the novel to the discovery of the atomic bomb in the history of warfare; thereafter things were never the same, and FID became a basic feature of the novel as genre.” (White & Smith)

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4. Reading Minds

One of Jane Austen’s concerns in her novels is “the mental activities of her characters as they engage in the complex process of understanding and evaluating others, especially during the process of finding a suitable marriage partner” (Lau 37).

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Theory of Mind (TOM)

Theory of Mind is a term used in Cognitive Science to describe “the ability to infer the beliefs, feelings, and intentions of others” (Lau 37), a skill essential for human social interaction. “Both getting along with and outmaneuvering others requires the ability to understand what they are thinking, feeling, and intending to do” (38).

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Understanding Others' Motives

Henry smiled, and said, "How very little trouble it can give you to understand the motive of other people's actions."

"Why? What do you mean?"

"With you, it is not, How is such a one likely to be influenced, What is the inducement most likely to act upon such a person's feelings, age, situation, and probable habits of life considered—but, How should I be influenced, What would be my inducement in acting so and so?"

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Understanding Others' Motives

"I do not understand you."

"Then we are on very unequal terms, for I understand you perfectly well."

....

"Well, then, I only meant that your attributing my brother's wish of dancing with Miss Thorpe to good nature alone convinced me of your being superior in good nature yourself to all the rest of the world." (*Northanger Abbey* 132-133).

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David Hume on Interpreting Others

Nelles views Austen's interest in reading others' minds as congruent with 18th century philosophy, quoting David Hume: through life experience, we learn "the principles of human nature" [and] . . . "we mount up to the knowledge of men's inclinations and motives from their actions, expressions, and even gestures, and again descend to the interpretation of their actions from our knowledge of their motives and inclinations" [quoted on 21-22; from *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, Section 8 Of Liberty and Necessity* (1748, 1777)]

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Learning to Read Others' Minds

Lau argues that in *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine must learn to discern "deceit, insincerity, and attempts to manipulate or take advantage of her" because she has had little experience with this before she goes to Bath (39) and that over the course of the novel, she improves in these skills (47). Additionally, this issue is not unique to Catherine, as several other characters in *NA* are poor mind readers, including the General, her parents, her brother, and even Isabella (52-54).

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Learning to Read Others' Minds

Nelles states that characters are using "sociocultural evidence" when they read others' minds (such as age, relationship, etc.) as well as "body language and expressions, especially the eyes" ("Omniscience" 125). Some characters, such as Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax "are good at blocking telepathy" (125). It is harder to read the minds of those outside our social circle (127).

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Learning to Read Others' Minds

Like Austen's narrator, characters must develop: "the ability of a perceptive and thoughtful person, given enough time and sufficient opportunity for observation, to make accurate judgments about people's characters, thought processes, and feelings. Austen's protagonists are markedly less fallible by the end of the novel as they narrow the gap between their growing reliability of judgment and the infallibility of the narrator." (Nelles "Omniscience" 128)

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Examples of Reading Others' Minds

"Among the increasing numbers of Military Men, one now made his way to Miss Edwards, with an air of Empressément which decidedly said to her Companion "I am Capt. Hunter."— Emma, who could not but watch her at such a moment, saw her looking rather distressed, but by no means displeased, & heard an engagement formed for the two first dances, which made her think her Brother Sam's a hopeless case.—"

The Watson's MW 328

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Examples of Reading Others' Minds

"Nothing that she could say, however, had any influence. Her mother would talk of her views in the same intelligible tone. Elizabeth blushed and blushed again with shame and vexation. She could not help frequently glancing her eye at Mr. Darcy, though every glance convinced her of what she dreaded; for though he was not always looking at her mother, she was convinced that his attention was invariably fixed by her. The expression of his face changed gradually from indignant contempt to a composed and steady gravity." *Pride and Prejudice* 99-100; Austen Said does not have any of this as FID

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Examples of Reading Others' Minds

[Edmund and Mary have been dancing and then discussing his becoming a clergyman.] "They had talked, and they had been silent; he had reasoned, she had ridiculed; and they had parted at last with mutual vexation. Fanny, not able to refrain entirely from observing them, had seen enough to be tolerably satisfied. It was barbarous to be happy when Edmund was suffering. Yet some happiness must and would arise from the very conviction that he did suffer." *Mansfield Park* 279; Austen Said has highlight as FID

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Examples of Reading Others' Minds

"Frank Churchill seemed to have been on the watch; and though he did not say much, his eyes declared that he meant to have a delightful evening. . . . Frank was standing by her, but not steadily; there was a restlessness, which shewed a mind not at ease. He was looking about, he was going to the door, he was watching for the sound of other carriages,—impatient to begin, or afraid of being always near her." *Emma* 319, 320; Austen Said does not have any of this as FID

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- For the ball scene chapters, do you see changes over time in how much Austen represents characters' thought and feelings, either directly from the narrator or through the characters' specific words as FID?
- Similarly, are there changes over time in her portrayal of characters' inferences about the thoughts, feelings, and motives of other characters?

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- There is comedy when characters make wrong inferences about others' thoughts and feelings. Some argue that through sharing the joke about the characters' inferential mistakes, we become friends of the narrator. Do you feel that connection with the narrator at all?
- Collins Hemingway gets the last word: "Austen is the one we read because she is the first one to do the novel right" (230).

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