

From the Garret to the Garden:
Courtship, Personality, and Location in Jane Austen

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Abstract

Jane Austen, as a master of the courtship novel, uses locations and settings to enhance the logistics of her characters' courtships. The interior (drawing rooms, dinners, and balls) and exterior (countryside, gardens, and towns and cities) settings enrich and complement each courting couple's individual and collective personalities and foreshadows the location and success of the marriage proposal. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion* demonstrate the relevance of location to the personalities, compatibility, courtships, and marriage proposals of four couples: Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley, Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, Emma Woodhouse and George Knightley, and Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth. This article explores the courtships of these four characters, demonstrating that each courtship is based in an interior, exterior, or combined location; examining the correlation between personality and location; and analyzing the significance of location in the marriage proposal. Ultimately, the marriage proposal hinges on location—location draws couples together and determines the success of the encounter.

In Jane Austen's novels, location and setting are just as critical as dialogue and character to overall plot. Jane Austen uses interior (drawing rooms, dinners, and balls) and exterior (countryside, gardens, and towns and cities) settings to enrich and complement events in her novels. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion* demonstrate the relevance of location to the personalities, compatibility, courtships, and marriage proposals of four couples: Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley, Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, Emma Woodhouse and George Knightley, and Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth. The interior, exterior, or mixed location of courtship speaks to the couples' individual personalities and compatibility as marriage partners. Each couple's courtship is based in an interior, exterior, or combined courtship location depending on their individual personalities. Pivotal courtship scenes for each couple reveal that the locations of courtship both reflect their individual personalities and demonstrate their compatibility as couples. Ultimately, the marriage proposal hinges on location; the significance of location in the marriage proposal (or, in some cases, multiple marriage proposals and locations for one couple) is that location draws couples together and determines the success of the encounter. In *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*, interior and exterior locations play a major role in defining the courtship process. For Jane and Bingley, Elizabeth and Darcy, Emma and Knightley, and Anne and

Wentworth, the logistics of their courtship are based in a location—interior, exterior, or both—reflective of their individual personalities, compatibility, and eventual marriage proposal.

Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley's personalities are reflected in their interior-based courtship location and marriage proposal. From their first two dances at the Meryton assembly early in *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane and Bingley seem destined to marry one another. The majority of their courtship encounters occur indoors at dances and other gatherings. The interiority of their courtship is appropriate considering both their individual and combined personalities. Jane Bennet is gentle and kind-hearted; her sister Elizabeth exclaims ““You never see a fault in anybody. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my life”” (1:4)¹. But Jane is reserved, and her feelings are hidden from all but Elizabeth: “Jane united with great strength of feeling, a composure of temper and a uniform cheerfulness of manner, which would guard her from the suspicions of the impertinent” (1:6). Bingley is also kind and possesses a pleasing character: “Mr. Bingley was...gentleman-like; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners” (1:3). One trait that becomes critical in their courtship is Bingley's tendency to be guided and swayed by others, especially Darcy. In her inability to think poorly of anyone, Jane too is swayed by society. Jane's reservation and compliance and Bingley's favorable social impressions allow both to function well within the constraints and propriety of society. Bingley and Jane's courtship, reflective of their own abilities to function well within society, develops within society, indoors at public gatherings where they both cater to the rules of society by not mingling exclusively with one another: ““But though Bingley and Jane meet tolerably often, it is never for many hours together; and as they always see each other in large mixed parties, it is impossible that every moment should be employed in conversing together”” (1:6). Their individual personalities are symbolic of their interior, societal-based courtship.

The interior location of courtship is appropriate for Jane and Bingley as characters who move within the proper rules and constraints of society. The movement of their courtship is dictated by other members of society—the stronger, more domineering characters. The critical moments of their relationship occur within interior locations and are guided by other characters. Jane's prolonged stay at Netherfield due to illness, while not fully caused by, is instigated by Mrs. Bennet. Mr. Bennet quips that if Jane ““should die, it would be a comfort to know that it was all in pursuit of Mr. Bingley, and *under [Mrs. Bennet's] orders*”” (1:7, emphasis added). While their interactions during Jane's stay at Netherfield are limited, Jane and Bingley are brought under the same roof by others in their society. Their separation is also dictated by others; both Caroline Bingley's letter to Jane and Mr. Darcy's later explanation of his separating the couple illustrate the role of society in their separation. Demonstrating the interiority of their courtship, Jane and Bingley never exchange words of direct speech. Readers hear of their interactions through other characters or through Jane's descriptions of their encounters to Elizabeth, but their direct conversations are private, transmitted only through the society surrounding them. Societal forces play a role in Jane and Bingley's reunification: Darcy is the force that reunites them, giving his “permission” and allowing Bingley to lead the courtship (3:16). Jane and Bingley are first reunited in the Bennets' home—indoors. They interact again at the Bennets', this time in the dining-room, and Bingley, after glancing “hesita[ntly]” at Darcy, takes the lead, “plac[ing] himself by [Jane]” (3:12). Jane and Bingley, while still indoors, move towards one another.

Reunited with Jane and blessed with Darcy's permission, Bingley is now aligned with society and has society's approval; the marriage proposal becomes imminent: “[Bingley's] behavior...if left wholly to himself, Jane's happiness, and his own, would be speedily secured” (3:12). The relationship can progress

¹ This citation is referring to Part 1 Chapter 4 in this version of *Pride and Prejudice*. Hereafter, the citations from the novels use this notation.

quickly now that Bingley operates with society's blessing. His proposal, like the rest of their courtship, occurs indoors, and while he guides the proposal, Jane's ability to meet with him alone is still dictated by other forces. Thus, the courtship must remain indoors, since Jane still functions within the constraints of society, specifically that of her mother. Mrs. Bennet is unable to regulate Bingley; she "had designed to keep the two Netherfield gentlemen to supper, but their carriage was unluckily ordered before any of the others, and she had no opportunity of detaining them" (3:12). Mrs. Bennet is again the societal force moving Jane closer to Bingley and others away from both: "Mrs. Bennet's invention was again at work to get everybody away from him and her daughter" (3:13). Jane Austen does not include even a synopsis of Jane and Bingley's interaction during the proposal. Elizabeth re-enters the room after being removed by her mother and sees "her sister and Bingley standing over the hearth, as if engaged in earnest conversation; and had this led to no suspicion, the faces of both as they hastily turned round, and moved away from each other would have told it all... Not a syllable was uttered by either" until Bingley "suddenly rose, and whispering a few words to her sister, ran out of the room" (3:13). In the moment of their marriage proposal, Jane and Bingley again exchange no direct speech; this time, neither Jane nor other characters provide a summary of their conversation, demonstrating the interiority of their courtship. Jane and Bingley are both confined indoors, and their relationship is piloted by the confines of others in society.

Another couple in *Pride and Prejudice* demonstrates an exterior based courtship. While Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy meet and interact in indoor as well as outdoor locations, their interactions are most successful when outdoors. Elizabeth and Darcy's courtship and marriage proposal are based in exterior locations, appropriate for their independent personalities. Elizabeth is set apart from her sisters by her "quickness" and intelligence (1:1). She possesses a "lively, playful disposition," "give[s] her opinion very decidedly," and is articulate in conversation (1:4; 2:6). Elizabeth's love of being outdoors and of solitude symbolizes her lively, independent personality. Austen paints Elizabeth's walk to visit Jane at Netherfield with words of energy, movement, and enjoyment—Elizabeth "glow[s]" after her "quick," "springing," and solitary ramble (1:7). In "Jane Austen and her Outdoors," Lisa Altomari describes Elizabeth's connection to the outdoors and what that link says about her personality: "Austen creates a heroine who has a desire for and a bond with the outdoors and all that nature represents: freedom, space, autonomy." Elizabeth's time spent outdoors, both alone and in company, reflects her uniqueness as an intelligent, independent, and articulate heroine. While Austen does not explicitly describe Darcy as a character who loves the outdoors to Elizabeth's extent, he demonstrates a stronger identification with exterior locations over interior locations. Elizabeth admires Pemberley's "natural beauty" and spectacular grounds that indicate the exterior preferences and taste of its owner. For the majority of the novel, Darcy creates unfavorable interior social impressions. Indoors and within large, especially unfamiliar, society, Darcy comes across as "proud," "haughty, reserved, and fastidious" and is "continually giving offence" (1:3; 1:4). Darcy "give[s] offence" toward Elizabeth, even once he begins to find her "bewitch[ing]" and moves toward her: "He began to wish to know more of her, and as a step towards conversing with her himself, attended to her conversation with others. His doing so drew her notice" and her "resistance" (1:6). Darcy's failure with Elizabeth when in interior locations continues throughout the novel; he explains himself, engages her in conversation and dances with her, exposes their similarities, and complements her development of true accomplishments in interior locations, but his efforts are futile (1:18; 2:8). Demonstrating both Darcy and Elizabeth's identification with the exterior world based on their personalities, Elizabeth remains prejudiced against Darcy as long as they are confined in an interior setting.

Despite Darcy's almost unquenchable desire to move towards Elizabeth, his pursuit and courtship of her is unsuccessful when they are indoors; critical moments in their courtship illustrate the exterior nature of their personalities. In his courtship of Elizabeth, Darcy appears stifled in indoor locations, especially

during his visits to the Collins' parsonage: Darcy "frequently sat there ten minutes together without opening his lips; and when he did speak, it seemed the effect of necessity rather than of choice—a sacrifice to propriety, not a pleasure to himself" (2:9). In order to move closer to Elizabeth, Darcy must encounter Elizabeth in an exterior location: "More than once did Elizabeth in her ramble within the park, unexpectedly meet Mr. Darcy" (2:10). Darcy's behavior during their outdoor encounters is described in more positive terms; as opposed to his silent, uncomfortable behavior within the parsonage, "[O]n these occasions it was not merely a few formal inquires and an awkward pause and then away, but he actually though it necessary to turn back and walk with her" (2:10). Sally Palmer, in her article, "'I Prefer Walking': Jane Austen and 'The Pleasantest Part of the Day,'" proposes that Darcy "uses walking as a tactic to run into Elizabeth during his visit to Rosings...in order to further their relationship and draw her into his sphere" (159). As Darcy attempts to move ahead with his courtship of Elizabeth, he recognizes the necessity of exterior location—in this case, walking—to the success of their encounters. Darcy believes he has progressed with Elizabeth through their increasing exterior interaction, but he immobilizes the momentum with his first proposal—indoors, in the Collins' parsonage. Darcy confesses his feelings and is emotionally transparent: "'In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you'" (2:11). But Darcy attempts to relive his "'repressed'" emotions in the very location that represses their exterior personalities (2:11). The interior location undermines Elizabeth's desire for autonomy and brings Darcy indoors, where he usually does not succeed in creating favorable impressions with society or Elizabeth. Both personalities cannot function within the environment of confinement, conventionality, and emotional repression symbolized by the Collins' home. Darcy and Elizabeth are unprepared for marriage—he has not yet overcome his "sense of her inferiority," and she retains her "deeply-rooted dislike" (2:11). The interior location, a home built on a marriage exactly opposite what either Darcy or Elizabeth desire, represents their unsuitability at this moment. Altomari expands on Austen's symbolism in using interior and exterior locations, especially as it applies to Elizabeth:

Austen sets up a polemic between nature and 'social' space and thus establishes a pattern.... [W]hen an event in Elizabeth's life appears as if it is going to imprison or confine her spirit or her wit, her 'self' – Austen sets this event indoors. Yet when something occurs to offer Elizabeth happiness, independence, love – something we know is good for her, Austen sets it out of doors.

Elizabeth refuses Darcy; she knows marrying him now would mean "imprison[ment]" of her "spirit," and she has yet to experience her revelation of herself and others (Altomari). After his unsuccessful proposal and Elizabeth's accusations of his "[un]gentleman-like manner," Darcy again pursues Elizabeth outdoors, this time to give her his letter of explanation (2:11). He has been attempting to explain himself since their first meeting, but he now explains himself in a letter which he delivers outdoors and Elizabeth reads outdoors, while "pursuing her way along the lane" (2:12). This event initiates other outdoor encounters leading to another proposal, but these encounters eventually "offer Elizabeth happiness, independence, love" (Altomari). Elizabeth and Darcy ultimately unite through their success in exterior locations, reflective of their individual personalities. Before achieving another proposal—this time, successful—Darcy again meets Elizabeth outdoors.

Elizabeth and Darcy increasingly 'cross paths' outdoors in their second move towards marriage, the first time at Pemberley. Elizabeth and Darcy "abrupt[ly]" meet on the exterior grounds, in "some of the most uncomfortable [moments] of [Elizabeth's] life" (3:1). But after "start[ing]" initially, Darcy is "strikingly altered": "Never in her life had [Elizabeth] seen his manners so little dignified, never had he spoken with such gentleness as on this unexpected meeting" (3:1). Their meeting on Pemberley's grounds strategically places Elizabeth and Darcy in their preferred location:

Significantly, they do not meet within the walls of Pemberley but, rather, outside, amongst the trees, ponds and fields. Here, they begin to see one another as equals. The reader begins to feel that Pemberley will not be the domestic prison that Longbourn or any of the other patriarchal mansions are, for Pemberley abounds with beautiful, spacious grounds of which Elizabeth will become mistress, where she can challenge and indulge her desire to transcend the boundaries that were traditionally ascribed to her, where she can ramble about—alone or with Darcy—at her leisure. (Altomari)

The encounter at Pemberley allows Elizabeth to see Darcy in his element, on the grounds of his home, and gain a picture of life as mistress of Pemberley. Their walking side-by-side at Pemberley foreshadows a future walk and their future relationship—an open relationship, perfectly suited to their mutual intelligence and respect, a “happy marriage” (3:8). The successful marriage proposal is, appropriately, exterior: “They walked,” and “when Kitty left them, [Elizabeth] went boldly on with [Darcy] alone” (3:16). “If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. *My* affections and wishes are unchanged,” says Darcy (3:16). “The happiness which [Elizabeth’s] reply produced, was such as he had probably never felt before” (3:16). Their moment of resolution and immense happiness occurs in what is now their shared element—walking together, outdoors. Altomari provides a glimpse of Elizabeth and Darcy’s marriage:

With all of their former prejudices resolved, Elizabeth and Darcy are able to come together as equals and nature serves as the lonely witness to their avowal. The scene leads the reader to believe that Elizabeth and Darcy will spend the remainder of their years together walking about the English countryside, immersed in one another’s conversation.

As Altomari describes, Austen alludes to Elizabeth and Darcy’s future in marriage, a future reflective of their exterior personalities and courtship.

While Jane and Bingley and Elizabeth and Darcy display either interior or exterior-based courtships, in *Emma*, Emma Woodhouse and George Knightley’s courtship is based in a mixture of interior and exterior locations, reflective of each of their tendencies to operate predominantly in either interior or exterior locations. Emma is “handsome, clever, and rich,” and lives “nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her” (1:1). She is content within her own little world of Highbury and does not often move beyond it, as demonstrated by the descriptions surrounding the Donwell Abbey and Box Hill outings. While Mr. Knightley constantly visits Emma at Hartfield, it has been “so long since Emma had been at the Abbey,” Mr. Knightley’s home, even though it is only a mile away, and for Mr. Knightley is within walking distance (3:6; 1:1). She has also “never been to Box Hill” (3:6). Emma is influenced by Mr. Woodhouse’s dislike of traveling beyond his home in that she too remains isolated within a small sphere: just as “Mr. Woodhouse...liked very much to have his friends come and see him; and...he could command the visits of his own little circle, in a great measure, as he liked,” Emma also spends much of her time indoors, especially compared with other Austen heroines. Unlike Emma, Mr. Knightley is not confined to interior locations; he travels to and from London to his brother’s home and walks frequently to Hartfield and other locations in the neighborhood. Mr. Knightley has “a cheerful manner,” and like Emma—“the complete picture of grown-up health”—is healthful and active: “Mr. Knightley...[who has]...a great deal of health, activity, and independence, was too apt, in Emma’s opinion, to get about as he could” (1:1; 1:5; 2:8). Elizabeth Toohey, in her article, “*Emma* and the Countryside: Weather and a Place for a Walk,” discusses Mr. Knightley’s exterior position. Mr. Knightley’s status as “the largest landowner in Highbury” who displays “interest and involvement in [his land’s] cultivation” places him outdoors as a gentleman farmer and signifies his exterior personality and location (Toohey 49). Mr.

Knightley is also “one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them” (1:1). His role as a voice of conscience and reason helps develop Emma’s personality, coaching her through interior and exterior events of the courtship. While Emma is predominantly confined to interior locations and functions from a personality limited to her own small social circle, Mr. Knightley displays a personality unconfined by location. He moves within both interior and exterior locations and is the force that draws Emma into exterior locations of courtship; but because Mr. Knightley enters Emma’s interior locations, their courtship is based in mixed locations.

Pivotal moments in Emma and Mr. Knightley’s courtship occur mainly outdoors, demonstrating his ability to draw Emma into exterior locations. Emma is first awakened to Mr. Knightley’s attraction in an interior location—the Crown Inn Ball. She admires his “tall, firm, upright figure” and thinks that “there was not one among the whole row of young men who could be compared with him” (3:2). Emma does not yet see Mr. Knightley as a future husband, but for the first time she sees him as “young” and superior to any other man, except, at this point, Frank Churchill (3:2). Significantly, Emma’s awakening occurs within her own indoor sphere. However, while Emma is ready to dance with Mr. Knightley, she is not quite ready to realize that he is the man for her. Emma has yet to learn to function in the exterior situations which comprise Mr. Knightley’s personality, but he is a few steps ahead of Emma. At her mention of being “not really so much brother and sister,” he exclaims, “Brother and sister! no, indeed” (3:2). Emma and Mr. Knightley move closer together, but they are still indoors, symbolic of Emma’s secluded normality. Emma’s excursion to the Knightley home, Donwell Abbey, is a significant event in their courtship; not only does she leave her own world to enter Mr. Knightley’s, but also she spends time outdoors on the Abbey grounds. Because of Mr. Knightley, Emma is given the opportunity to learn how to function in exterior locations—both outdoors and outside her own world. Again during the Box Hill outing, Emma moves beyond her own world into an exterior location. In his article, “Emma Woodhouse: Betrayed by Place,” John Rogers comments on the Box Hill outing and its role in Emma’s development: “Her journey is a brave and solitary one, though Mr. Knightley is never very far from her side” (170). Rogers continues that Emma feels “betrayed” by location because she has ventured out of her comfort zone, but Mr. Knightley “emerges from the background” to rebuke her behavior and guide her through the learning process marked by location (3:7; 170). Emma fails in an exterior location, but Mr. Knightley criticizes her, leading to her maturity, preparing her for marriage, and giving her the ability to function in multiple locations. Now that Emma and Mr. Knightley have worked through both interior and exterior locations, and Emma has expanded her horizons, Mr. Knightley can draw Emma outdoors and offer marriage and expansion.

Mr. Knightley’s marriage proposal comes while Emma is outside, away from her interior environment. Both display a desire for an exterior location: “Emma resolved to be out of doors as soon as possible.... [Mr. Knightley] meant to walk with her, [he] preferred being out of doors” (3:13). Emma escapes her interior world and enters Mr. Knightley’s exterior world. They are brought together outdoors; Emma feels “her arm drawn within his, and pressed against his heart” (3:13). Mr. Knightley begins,

‘My dearest Emma...for dearest you will always be, whatever the event of this hour’s conversation, my dearest, most beloved Emma—tell me at once.... If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more.... But you understand me.—Yes, you see, you understand my feelings—and will return them if you can. At present, I ask only to hear, once to hear your voice....’ [Emma] spoke then, on being so entreated.—What did she say?—Just what she ought, of course. (3:13)

Emma awakens to Mr. Knightley indoors, but ultimately accepts him outdoors, communicating her maturation. Emma is “in an exquisite flutter of happiness” once she accepts him and as long as he returns

to the house with her (3:14). Once back inside and Mr. Knightley has left, the claims of Emma's interior environment return; Emma "even wept over the idea" of "quitting her father" (3:14). But Mr. Knightley, despite Emma's thought that he "must be sacrificing a great deal of independence of hours and habits," ultimately enters Emma's sphere (3:15). Although she has ventured beyond her habitual interior locations, Emma ends up back in her comfort zone. However, she now knows how to function in both locations through their mixed courtship and is permanently accompanied and guided by Mr. Knightley.

Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth in *Persuasion* also share a courtship of mixed interior and exterior locations. Anne and Wentworth's courtship based in mixed locations reflects their respective personalities. Anne possesses "an elegance of mind and sweetness of character," but the ending of her relationship with Captain Wentworth almost eight years prior produces "an early loss of bloom and spirits" (1:1; 1:4). Anne spends her time for others' benefit, both indoors and outside. Indoors, Anne volunteers to stay behind with little Charles Musgrove after his injury (1:7). Her willingness to stay behind results both from a desire to "escape" seeing Wentworth and from knowing "herself to be of the first utility to the child" (1:7). Outdoors, "only Anne" retains presence of mind after Louisa Musgrove's fall from the Cobb steps: "Anne, attending with all the strength and zeal, and thought, which instinct supplied...still tried...to suggest comfort to the others, tried to quiet Mary, to animate Charles, to assuage the feelings of Captain Wentworth. Both seemed to look to her for directions" (1:1; 1:12). Austen mentions that Anne makes "visit[s] of charity in the village," again demonstrating Anne's selflessness in any location (2:2). Others rely on Anne as a peacemaker, nurse, and counselor: "How was Anne to set all these matters to rights? She could do little more than listen patiently, soften every grievance, and excuse each to the other" (1:6). Anne balances her time spent meeting the other characters' needs with times of solitude. Solitude, often spent outside walking, is necessary for Anne to think and process the events occurring around her and demonstrates her balanced interior and exterior-based personality. Captain Wentworth is "full of life and ardour" and possess a "sanguine temper" and "fearlessness of mind" (1:4). His bold confidence translates into his occupation as a sailor; he is adventurous and well-travelled. As a sailor, Wentworth is continually outdoors: when indoors on his ship, he is surrounded by ocean. Anne, too, is mobile, foreshadowing their compatibility: "Travel is inevitable in the life of a naval officer and, therefore, must be accepted by his spouse. Always on the move, Anne is already prepared for this reality. She 'lives in no fewer than five residences' in *Persuasion* and has become accustomed to traveling" (Sodeman qtd. in Anderson and VonderBecke). Anne's personality is balanced by success and enjoyment in both interior and exterior locations, demonstrating her ability to complement Wentworth as a Navy Officer's wife both at sea and on land, indoors and outdoors. While Anne thrives on her solitary moments indoors and outdoors and Wentworth spends his life outdoors, both interact indoors and out, which continues throughout their courtship.

The defining factor of Anne and Wentworth's courtship is gradual movement towards one other. Between the beginning and end of the novel, Anne and Wentworth move through interior and exterior spaces as the distance between them decreases. Anne and Wentworth start out oceans apart but progressively move closer. One of these critical courtship moments of movement is their walk with the Musgroves leading to Anne's carriage ride with the Crofts. Anne overhears Wentworth telling Louisa of the benefits of a "firm" and decisive character (1:10). Anne learns "how her own character [is] considered by Captain Wentworth," by hearing "a great deal of very painful import," but discovers Wentworth's "remainder of former sentiment" through his role in her riding home in the carriage with the Crofts (1:10). Wentworth quietly suggests "something" to Mrs. Croft, Mrs. Croft then offers Anne a ride, and Wentworth, "without saying a word, turn[s] to [Anne], and quietly obliged her to be assisted into the carriage" with "his hands" (1:10). After being separated first only by the chubby Mrs. Musgrove on the same sofa then by chubby little Walter Musgrove in interior settings, Anne and Wentworth physically touch in an outdoor setting. This outdoor interaction reveals Anne's thoughts on Wentworth's "disposition toward her," while

demonstrating their progression closer together (1:10). Anne and Wentworth continue to interact and move closer together in both interior and exterior locations: Louisa's accident in Lyme Regis, the subsequent carriage ride where Wentworth "place[s] himself between" Anne and Henrietta, and their abrupt meeting at Molland's in Bath (1: 12). Another critical moment in their courtship takes place indoors in Bath at the Octagon Room. Anne and Wentworth engage in lengthy conversation. Anne "advance[s]" and speaks to Wentworth, retaining him for conversation (2:8). Anne ecstatically realizes that Wentworth's "choice of subjects, his expressions, and still more his manner and look...all declared that he had a heart returning to her...He must love her" (2:8). While Anne knows Wentworth is "unshackled and free," Wentworth continues to recognize that Anne may not be free from Mr. Elliot's pursuit (2:6). Anne perspicaciously discerns Wentworth's "jealousy of Mr. Elliot," but she is left with a dilemma—"How was the truth to reach [Wentworth]?" (2:8). Anne's dilemma remains, but she and Wentworth continue to move closer through interior and exterior spaces leading to the moment of their marriage proposal.

Anne and Wentworth interact both indoors and outdoors as they rapidly reach their dénouement. One chapter decides their fate. First they are indoors; Anne speaks to Captain Harville and Wentworth, at a nearby table, overhears the conversation. Anne defends women's, and her own, constancy in love: "All the privilege I claim for my own sex...is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone" (2:11). At intervals, Wentworth shows signs of his attention to Anne's "eager[ness]" in communication; his "pen ceased to move, his head was raised, pausing, listening, and her turned round the next instant to give a look, one quick, conscious look at her" (2:11). This interior scene leads to another; Wentworth leaves, but returns to "[draw] out a letter from under the scattered paper, plac[ing] it before Anne with eyes of glowing entreaty fixed on her for a time," before exiting the room in an "instant" (2:11). Wentworth moves outdoors, but Anne remains inside to read his letter of eloquent declaration:

You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone forever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own than when you almost broke it, eight years and a half ago.... I have loved none but you.... A word, a look, will be enough to decide whether I enter your father's house this evening or never. (2:11)

Anne and Wentworth never exchange direct speech in the succession of indoor scenes leading to their moment of ultimate resolution, demonstrating that although they both function indoors and out, they will eventually converse and decide their future outdoors. Anne and Wentworth meet outdoors on the streets of Bath to "[exchange] again those feelings and those promises which had once before seemed to secure everything" (2: 11). They "decide their direction towards the comparatively quiet and retired gravel walk," establishing their mutual preference for an exterior location to explain their feelings and determine their future. In "Walking a Path Toward Marriage in *Persuasion*," Kathleen Anderson and Tiffany VonderBecke discuss Anne and Wentworth's final outdoor encounter: "This final walk signifies the couple's unification and the maturation of their relationship...After all the years apart and through various obstacles, Anne and Wentworth's paths have met and are now conjoined." Anne and Wentworth begin the novel oceans apart but end the novel walking side by side, demonstrating their progression through interior and exterior locations to finally capitulate into exteriority, appropriate for Anne's love of outdoor walks and Wentworth's seafaring life.

Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*, couples are united in the location where they feel most comfortable, leading to the success of their marriage proposal and alluding to a happy future. Each individual personality plays into the logistics of the couple's courtship. Location's role in courtship testifies to Jane Austen's proficiency in crafting the courtship novel. Interaction with the hero and heroine

ends with the marriage proposal: “Strolling off with their fiancées, the heroines leave the companionship of both the narrator and the reader, transferring their intimacy to their lovers as they move into the territory of marriage where Austen cannot follow” (Palmer 158-159). Austen leaves readers with a glimpse of each couple’s future marriage based on the legacy of their courtship. Through location and personality, Austen paints a picture of each couple’s marriage. Jane and Bingley, Elizabeth and Darcy, Emma and Knightley, and Anne and Wentworth display courtships based in a location indicative of their respective personalities and their compatibility. The success of the marriage proposal hinges on the location of their courtship encounters; inadvertently their future—the acceptance or rejection of the proposal—pivots on location.

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