

**Patricia Michaelson**, University of Texas, Dallas, TX  
**How to Talk Like Mrs. Palmer (and other silly people)**

Dr. Michaelson, with the use of concordances, studies the words used by Jane Austen's characters and how those words influence our reaction to these characters.

In the early novels, the "stupid" characters say "I long to", "I die to", "monstrous glad", "monstrous pretty", "vastly" and "amazingly". Three words used only by "silly" women in Jane Austen's novels are "flirtation", "frightful" and "horrid". These women use a lot of empty intensifiers and their speech contains many exclamation points.

Michaelson noted that the intelligent people in Austen's novels listen more in a conversation than the silly ones do. When they do talk, their speech is longer and more complex. These characters use words like "rational" and "sensible". Austen often uses free indirect speech for these characters.

**James Nagle**, Attorney, Seattle, WA  
**Coaches, Barouches and Gigs, Oh My. Land Transportation in Jane Austen's Time**

Travelling in Jane Austen's day was expensive and dangerous.

A horse cost about 100 pounds to buy. It cost about 120 pounds a year to maintain one horse. Carriages cost between 800 and 1,200 pounds. There were carriage taxes (from 1747) and carriage horse taxes (from 1785) to pay, as well. Many roads, run by turnpike companies under license from the government, charged tolls. Steep roads were a problem but there were often entrepreneurs waiting with a horse to help carriages up a hill – for a fee.

Not only were roads in terrible condition, they were also very dark on moonless nights. Lamp boys could run ahead of the carriage to shed a *bit* of light on the way. The carriage's lights did not illuminate the road – they let others on the road see the carriage.

As a precaution against highwaymen, people often travelled with paste jewellery and often cut their bank notes in two – sending the two sides of the notes separately to their destination.

At an inn, you could rent a horse, rent a carriage or both. Some inns had 2,000 horses. The horses needed to be swapped out (by an inn's ostler) every 10 or 20 miles. Often, a traveler would use his own horses for the first stage (and send them home) and rent horses at inns thereafter, allowing for faster travel.

As these inns weren't very clean, people often travelled with their own linens and silverware.

Nagle discussed the characteristics of the main carriages of the day – the number of wheels, horses and passengers, the driver and/or the postilions – and the overall look and comfort of these carriages. He also reflected on what certain carriages say about their owners in Austen's novels.

Nagle referred to an excellent article by Ed Ratcliffe (*Transports of Delight – How Jane Austen's Characters Got Around* <http://www.jasnanorcal.org/ink9.htm>) which covers much of the detail about Regency carriages and other modes of transport. This article also includes frequent references to carriages in Jane Austen's fiction and some references to transportation in her letters, too.